



RECOGNIZING PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS ON THE JOBSITE



WHAT ARE PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS?

Psychosocial hazards are the “invisible hazards” on the job. They aren’t tools, machines, or chemicals—they’re the pressures, demands, and workplace conditions that can wear people down mentally and physically.

They affect how we think, behave, focus, communicate, and stay safe.

These hazards come from how work is organized, how people are treated, and the support (or lack of support) people receive. Because they’re not always visible, we usually notice them through how someone feels or behaves.

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT THIS?



When we recognize psychosocial hazards early, we prevent small stressors from becoming big problems—like burnout, mistakes, or serious incidents. Talking about these hazards helps us:

- Turn “invisible stress” into something we can fix
- Build a respectful work environment
- Support each other before things reach a breaking point
- Keep everyone performing safely and at their best

A respectful jobsite starts with knowing what’s getting in people’s way.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS IN CONSTRUCTION?

Some hazards show up more often in construction. Watch for things like:

- **Excessive workload** due to unrealistic deadlines, rework, long hours or short staffing
- **Lack of support** or inconsistent direction especially when working alone, isolated or when there is no back up from teammates
- **Poor social climate:** bullying, harassment, hazing, or disrespect normalized as “just how construction is”
- **Low worker influence** over scheduling, task planning, or how work gets done.
- **Poor communication or unclear roles** such as missing information, changing plans without notice, and mixed messages.
- **Environmental stressors:** heat, noise, weather, cramped work areas, or even no access to bathrooms.

These are signals—not judgments. They tell us that something needs attention or a conversation. You can find more information about what you can do to mitigate these hazards in the *Respect Works Managing Psychosocial Hazards Action Tracker*.

CREW ENGAGEMENT

TYLER'S STORY



Tyler, a concrete finisher, had been pushing through extended shifts and a compressed project schedule. For several weeks, he grew noticeably quieter and more irritable. His concentration slipped, small errors increased, and eventually he tripped while carrying formwork—not due to lack of skill, but cumulative fatigue.

When his supervisor checked in after the incident, Tyler admitted he hadn't slept well in days, the team was bickering amongst themselves and he felt too pressured to speak up. He was worried about letting the team down and believed the arguing and exhaustion was “just part of the job.”

THE SOLUTION

The supervisor recognized the workload and pace, team conflict, and Tyler's exhaustion as psychosocial hazards, not an individual failure. The supervisor asked Tyler what would be helpful, and they discussed options together with the team. They adjusted work design for the whole team by reducing excessive hours, redistributing workload during peak periods, and building in short daily check-ins to surface fatigue and pressure early. Within a few weeks, Tyler was feeling much better, and the team was performing at a high level etc. Everyone noticed team's effectiveness and morale improved.

The takeaway: Psychosocial hazards build up quietly, but they can have very real safety consequences.

ENCOURAGE FEEDBACK OR DISCUSSION

Share Tyler's story with your crew. Explain what psychosocial hazards look like on your site, then invite honest input. Here are simple prompts to get everyone talking:

Team prompts

- What's getting in your way today?
- Does anyone need help or task clarification before we start?
- Is the workload reasonable, or do we need to shift things around?
- Anything stressing the team that we should fix?

Individual prompts — “Let me know if...”

- You're feeling rushed and not able to keep up
- You're overloaded and too distracted
- You notice disrespect or conflict
- You're too tired to work safely
- You don't have the tools or time to do the job safely
- I can do something to support you

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Psychosocial hazards are real—and preventable.
- Everyone may experience psychosocial hazards differently.
- We can only fix what we can recognize early.
- Your voice helps protect the whole crew.