

ERICPD Explained

As well as learning about the law, health and safety management systems, risk assessment etc. after 13 weeks on the NEBOSH Certificate probably the most important tool I came away with was **ERICPD** which is an acronym for defining the hierarchy of hazard control.

Eliminate
Reduce
Isolate
Control
Personal Protective Equipment
Discipline

The hierarchy of control is used to remove or reduce hazards and risks and should be used during a risk assessment. The idea is that you start by choosing methods from the top of the list and work your way down if required.

As an example imagine in a manufacturing factory where operators need to clean machine rollers regularly with a chemical like MEK because of a build up of glue from the processed material; presenting hazards from the chemical and a risk of getting hands injured in the rollers. When considering the hazards it is easy to get sucked into PPE, safe systems of work and training but the best way is to use ERICPD.

Eliminate – why are we cleaning the rollers in the first place, can the supplier improve the material? Are we using too much pressure on the rollers? Can we coat the rollers with a non-stick material? Maybe this is the end of the story – the safest control measure is to eliminate the hazard completely.

Reduce or Substitute – OK so we cannot eliminate but can we improve it by doing some of the above things so that we need to do it less often, can we reduce the number of people who are allowed to clean the rollers so they can be made experts, can we use a less hazardous chemical for cleaning the rollers.

Isolate – This one is not particularly relevant in this case but let's say the chemical was extremely toxic and only applied to one machine maybe we could screen the machine off maybe in a separate room and isolate it from the rest of the workers and have local controls.

Control – This is where we consider organizational and technical controls such as safe systems of work, procedures, training, supervision, local exhaust ventilation, machine guards, safety devices and tools to carry out the task to keep hands away from the rollers etc.

Personal Protective Equipment – such as wearing suitable and well-maintained gloves, eye protection and respirators.

Discipline – make sure that all controls are monitored reviewed and enforced.