

# The Complete EHS Glossary: Plain-Language Safety Terms for 2025

This glossary is designed to be your trusted guide to Environment, Health, and Safety (EHS) terms in 2025. Whether you're new to the field or have years of experience, this resource gives you clear, accurate definitions that reflect how safety professionals, regulators, and industries actually use these terms.

Each entry includes a plain-language definition and a real-world example to show how the term applies on the job. Wherever possible, definitions are based on official sources such as OSHA, NIOSH, EPA, ISO, and ANSI standards. We've removed jargon, kept the language simple, and made the structure easy to follow.

The glossary is organized into focused sections, like Core Concepts, PPE, Chemical Hazards, Construction Safety, Emergency Response, Reporting, and Risk Management. This makes it easier to find what you need, whether you're writing a safety policy, prepping for training, completing a report, or just brushing up on the basics.

Use this glossary as a practical reference, a training aid, or a quick refresher. It's built to help you work safer, stay compliant, and strengthen your understanding of what good safety looks like, one term at a time.

## Table of Contents

Core Concepts & Safety Fundamentals	Site Safety
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	OSHA Reporting Tools & Logs
Chemical & Hazard Communication	Performance Metrics (KPIs)
Physical and Biological Hazards	Auditing, Compliance & Enforcement
Environmental Compliance	Risk Analysis & Strategic Management

## Core Concepts & Safety Fundamentals

**Accident:** A sudden, unplanned event that causes injury, illness, or damage. For example, if a worker slips on a wet floor and breaks their wrist, that's an accident.

**Control Measure:** An action taken to remove or reduce a hazard. Control measures can include changing equipment, adjusting processes, or improving ventilation. For example, installing a guard on a machine to keep hands away from moving parts is a control measure.

**Corrective Action:** A step taken to fix the root cause of a problem so it doesn't happen again. For example, if a worker is burned due to a missing warning label, adding labels and updating procedures would be considered corrective action.

**EHS (Environment, Health, and Safety):** A system of policies and practices that protect people, property, and the environment at work. For example, an EHS program may include safety training, emergency plans, and chemical handling rules.

**ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance):** A framework used to evaluate how organizations manage risks and opportunities related to sustainability and ethical practices. For example, an ESG strategy may include reducing carbon emissions (Environmental), promoting workforce diversity (Social), and ensuring transparent leadership practices (Governance).

**Exposure:** Contact with a chemical, physical, or biological hazard through breathing, touching, or swallowing. For example, a worker who breathes in dust from cutting concrete is being exposed to a hazardous substance.

**Hazard:** Anything with the potential to cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, machinery, or noise. For example, a damaged extension cord on a wet floor is a hazard that could cause electric shock.

**Hierarchy of Controls:** A safety system that ranks ways to reduce risk, starting with the most effective: eliminate the hazard, substitute it, use engineering controls, apply administrative controls, and finally, use PPE. For example, replacing a toxic chemical with a safer one is higher on the hierarchy than wearing gloves.

**Incident:** An unplanned event that could have or did result in injury, illness, or damage. For example, a worker dropping a tool from a ladder that doesn't hit anyone is still an incident.

**Industrial Hygiene:** The practice of identifying, evaluating, and controlling workplace conditions that can cause illness or injury. For example, measuring noise levels and recommending ear protection is part of industrial hygiene.

**Job Hazard Analysis (JHA):** A process that breaks a job into steps to identify and control hazards before work begins. For example, before doing electrical repairs, a JHA would check for shock risks and lockout procedures.

**Mitigation:** An action taken to reduce the severity or likelihood of harm from a hazard. For example, adding anti-slip tape to stairs in a wet area helps mitigate the risk of falls.

**Near Miss:** An event where something almost caused harm but didn't. For example, if a load slips off a forklift and lands just inches from a worker, that's a near miss.

**Preventive Action:** A step taken to stop a potential problem before it occurs. For example, training workers on new safety procedures before starting a new machine is preventive action.

**Risk:** The chance that a hazard will cause harm, combined with how severe that harm could be. For example, the risk of falling is high when working on a roof without fall protection.

**Risk Assessment:** The process of finding hazards, figuring out how likely and serious they are, and deciding how to control them. For example, a risk assessment for a painting job might identify chemical fumes and require ventilation.

**Root Cause:** The main reason something went wrong, often hidden beneath surface-level issues. For example, if a worker trips on clutter, the root cause might be poor housekeeping and a lack of cleaning schedules.

**Safety Culture:** The shared values, beliefs, and behaviors that shape how seriously people take safety at work. For example, a workplace where employees feel comfortable reporting hazards shows a strong safety culture.

**Safety Data Sheet (SDS):** A required document that gives detailed information about a chemical, including its hazards and how to use it safely. For example, an SDS for paint might list fire risks and first aid instructions.

**Stop Work Authority:** A policy that gives any worker the right to stop a job if they think it's unsafe. For example, a worker who sees a frayed rope on a crane can stop the job until it's fixed.

**Workplace Hazard Assessment:** A formal check of the work area to find hazards and decide what protective equipment or controls are needed. For example, inspecting a warehouse for forklift traffic and requiring high-visibility vests is part of a workplace hazard assessment.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

**Donning and Doffing:** Donning means putting on PPE, and doffing means taking it off. This must be done in a specific way to avoid contamination or injury. For example, a healthcare worker puts on gloves and a gown before entering a patient room (donning) and removes them carefully afterward to avoid spreading germs (doffing).

**Fall Protection:** A system or equipment used to keep workers from falling or to reduce the harm if they do. This includes harnesses, guardrails, and nets. For example, a roofer using a harness attached to an anchor point is using fall protection.

**Fit Test:** A procedure to make sure a respirator fits the wearer properly and creates a seal. OSHA requires this before a worker uses a tight-fitting respirator. For example, a worker undergoes a fit test to check if their N95 respirator seals tightly to their face.

**Hearing Protection:** Equipment used to reduce noise exposure that can cause hearing loss, like earplugs or earmuffs. For example, a factory worker wears earmuffs near loud machinery to protect their hearing.

**PPE (Personal Protective Equipment):** Gear worn to protect against health or safety risks at work. It includes items like gloves, goggles, helmets, and respirators. For example, a painter wears PPE that includes gloves and a respirator to protect against fumes.

**Respirator:** A mask or device worn to protect the user from inhaling harmful dust, fumes, gases, or lack of oxygen. For example, a worker in a paint booth wears a respirator to avoid breathing in toxic vapors.

**Safety Footwear:** Shoes or boots designed to protect the feet from hazards like falling objects, punctures, or chemicals. For example, a warehouse worker wears steel-toed boots to protect their feet from dropped boxes.

## Chemical & Hazard Communication

**Carcinogen:** A substance that can cause cancer in people. Some carcinogens may cause harm after long-term exposure, even in small amounts. For example, asbestos is a known carcinogen that can cause lung cancer if its fibers are inhaled over time.

**Combustible:** A substance that can catch fire and burn, but not as easily as something labeled flammable. For example, diesel fuel is combustible, it burns when heated but won't catch fire as quickly as gasoline.

**Corrosive:** A chemical that can burn or destroy living tissue and damage metal through contact. For example, strong acids like hydrochloric acid are corrosive and can cause serious skin burns.

**Flammable:** A material that can catch fire easily and burn quickly when exposed to heat or flame. For example, paint thinner is flammable and should be kept away from sparks or open flames.

**Globally Harmonized System (GHS):** A worldwide standard for labeling chemicals and sharing safety information. It includes pictograms, signal words, and hazard statements. For example, a chemical with a red diamond symbol and the word "Danger" follows GHS rules.

**Hazard Communication (HazCom):** OSHA's rule that requires employers to inform workers about chemical hazards using labels, safety data sheets, and training. For example, workers who use cleaning chemicals must be trained under HazCom.

**Oxidizer:** A chemical that can cause or speed up a fire by releasing oxygen. It may not burn itself but helps other materials burn faster. For example, hydrogen peroxide in high concentrations is an oxidizer used in labs.

**Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL):** The highest level of a substance that workers can be exposed to during a work shift, according to OSHA. For example, OSHA sets a PEL for silica dust to limit how much a worker can breathe in during an 8-hour day.

**Pictogram:** A picture symbol used to show a chemical's hazard. Under GHS, these are placed in red diamonds on labels. For example, a skull and crossbones pictogram means the chemical is poisonous.

**Short-Term Exposure Limit (STEL):** The highest level of exposure allowed over a short period (usually 15 minutes) without harm. For example, a solvent might be safe for a few minutes but harmful if someone is exposed for longer than its STEL.

**Signal Word:** A word on a label that tells how dangerous a chemical is. "Danger" means more severe hazards, and "Warning" means less severe. For example, a chemical labeled "Danger" may cause death if inhaled.

**Threshold Limit Value (TLV):** A recommended limit for chemical exposure over a workday, set by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH). For example, the TLV for ammonia helps guide safe air levels in cold storage warehouses.

**Time-Weighted Average (TWA):** The average amount of a chemical a worker can be exposed to over an 8-hour shift. For example, if a worker is exposed to a high level of a gas for one hour and low levels the rest of the day, their TWA helps measure overall exposure.

**Toxic:** A substance that can cause serious harm or death if swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed. For example, pesticides are toxic and must be handled with special care to avoid poisoning.

## Physical and Biological Hazards

**Arc Flash:** A sudden burst of electricity that jumps through the air between conductors, creating heat, light, and pressure that can cause serious burns or injury. For example, touching live wires in an open electrical panel without protection can cause an arc flash.

**Biohazard:** Any biological substance that can cause harm to people, including bacteria, viruses, and medical waste. For example, used needles in a hospital are a biohazard and must be handled in special containers.

**Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP):** Harmful germs found in human blood that can cause disease, such as HIV and hepatitis B. For example, a janitor cleaning up spilled blood must wear gloves to avoid contact with BBPs.

**Cold Stress:** A condition where the body can't stay warm due to cold temperatures, leading to frostbite, hypothermia, or trench foot. For example, a worker on a construction site in winter who doesn't wear insulated clothing may suffer from cold stress.

**Decontamination:** The process of removing or neutralizing hazardous substances from people, equipment, or surfaces. For example, after a chemical spill, workers may need to wash their gear and shower before leaving the area.

**Ergonomics:** The science of designing work tasks and tools to fit the worker and reduce strain or injury. For example, adjusting a desk height and using a proper chair helps improve office ergonomics.

**Heat Stress:** A condition caused by working in high temperatures that can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. For example, a roofing worker who isn't drinking water or taking breaks may collapse from heat stress.

**Hot Work Permit:** A written approval required before doing tasks like welding or cutting that could cause fires. For example, before welding a pipe indoors, a worker must get a hot work permit and follow fire safety rules.

**Lockout/Tagout (LOTO):** A safety procedure that turns off and locks machines so they can't be started during maintenance. For example, before repairing a conveyor belt, a worker uses LOTO to shut off and lock the power.

**Noise-Induced Hearing Loss:** Permanent damage to hearing caused by loud noise over time. For example, a worker near loud machinery without ear protection may lose hearing from repeated exposure.



## Emergency Preparedness & Response

**AED (Automated External Defibrillator):** A portable device that checks a person's heart rhythm and gives an electric shock if needed to restart it. For example, if someone collapses from sudden cardiac arrest, a trained coworker can use an AED to help save their life before emergency services arrive.

**CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation):** A life-saving technique that uses chest compressions and rescue breaths to keep blood and oxygen moving in someone whose heart has stopped. For example, if a person stops breathing after a workplace accident, trained employees can start CPR while waiting for an ambulance.

**EAP (Emergency Action Plan):** A written plan that explains what workers should do during an emergency like a fire, chemical spill, or severe weather. For example, an office's EAP may include evacuation routes, emergency contacts, and how to report an incident.

**Evacuation:** The process of safely leaving a building or area during an emergency. For example, during a fire alarm, workers follow marked exits and meet outside at a designated location, that's an evacuation.

**Fire Watch:** A person assigned to look out for fire hazards during or after hot work like welding or cutting. For example, after a worker finishes torching metal, a fire watch stays in the area for 30 minutes to watch for sparks or smoke.

**First Aid:** Immediate care given to someone who is injured or suddenly sick, before professional help arrives. For example, putting a bandage on a deep cut or helping someone with heat exhaustion are first aid steps.

**Incident Command System (ICS):** A system used to manage emergencies by assigning roles and responsibilities, often used by first responders and large organizations. For example, during a chemical spill, ICS helps assign someone to lead evacuation, another to contact emergency services, and others to assist with first aid.



**Muster Point:** A safe place where workers gather during or after an emergency, like a fire or evacuation. For example, if an alarm goes off in a warehouse, everyone leaves the building and meets at the muster point to be accounted for.

**Rescue Plan:** A written plan that explains how to safely remove someone from danger, especially in high-risk work like confined space entry or fall arrest. For example, if a worker is suspended in a harness after falling, the rescue plan explains how to lower them to safety quickly and safely.

## Environmental Compliance

**Air Emissions:** Gases or particles released into the air from sources like factories, vehicles, or equipment. For example, a power plant releases air emissions when it burns fuel to make electricity.

**CAA (Clean Air Act):** A U.S. law that sets rules to limit air pollution and protect air quality. For example, the Clean Air Act requires factories to install filters to reduce harmful emissions.

**CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act):** A U.S. law that funds the cleanup of hazardous waste sites and holds polluters responsible. For example, CERCLA helped clean up a polluted factory site where toxic chemicals were left in the soil.

**CWA (Clean Water Act):** A U.S. law that regulates pollution in rivers, lakes, and other waters. For example, a facility must get a permit before discharging treated wastewater into a nearby stream under the Clean Water Act.

**Environmental Impact:** The effect an activity or site has on the air, water, land, and wildlife. For example, building a new road might increase stormwater runoff and affect nearby streams, that's an environmental impact.

**Environmental Management System (EMS):** A structured approach to managing environmental responsibilities, often based on ISO 14001. For example, a company may use an EMS to track waste, reduce energy use, and stay compliant with laws.

**EPCRA (Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act):** A U.S. law that requires facilities to report the storage and use of hazardous chemicals to local agencies. For example, a chemical plant reports its inventory under EPCRA so local responders know what hazards are on-site.

**Greenhouse Gas (GHG):** A gas that traps heat in the atmosphere and contributes to climate change, such as carbon dioxide or methane. For example, a truck fleet releases GHGs when it burns fuel.

**Hazardous Waste:** Waste that can be dangerous to health or the environment, often due to its toxicity, flammability, or reactivity. For example, leftover paint with harmful chemicals is hazardous waste and must be disposed of under special rules.

**LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design):** A green building certification system that recognizes energy-efficient, sustainable building practices. For example, an office building that uses solar panels and recycles construction materials may earn LEED certification.

**NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System):** A permit program under the Clean Water Act that controls how facilities discharge pollutants into water. For example, a factory must have an NPDES permit to release treated water into a river.

**RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act):** A U.S. law that governs how hazardous and non-hazardous waste is managed from creation to disposal. For example, under RCRA, a manufacturer must label, store, and track hazardous waste properly.

**Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC):** A federal rule that requires facilities to prevent oil spills and have a plan to respond if one occurs. For example, a warehouse with large oil tanks must have an SPCC plan to prevent leaks from reaching water.

**Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP):** A written plan that outlines how a site will prevent pollution from rain runoff. For example, a construction site installs silt fences and drains to keep muddy water from flowing into nearby streams, as required by its SWPPP.

**Sustainability:** Practices that protect the environment, conserve resources, and support long-term health and safety. For example, a company switching to reusable packaging to reduce waste is promoting sustainability.

**TSCA (Toxic Substances Control Act):** A U.S. law that gives the EPA authority to regulate new and existing chemicals. For example, under TSCA, companies must test certain chemicals for health risks before using them in products.

**Universal Waste:** A type of hazardous waste that is common and easier to manage, like batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and some pesticides. For example, a facility collects used batteries in a labeled container as universal waste.

**VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds):** Chemicals that easily turn into vapors and may cause health problems or contribute to air pollution. For example, paint thinners and certain cleaning products often contain VOCs.

**Waste Management:** The safe handling, storage, and disposal of waste to protect health and the environment. For example, separating regular trash from hazardous waste and recycling materials is part of good waste management.

**Water Discharge:** The release of water or wastewater from a site into a sewer, stream, or other body of water, usually under a permit. For example, a food processing plant discharges treated wastewater into a river as part of its permitted operation.

## Site Safety

**Aerial Lift:** A machine used to raise workers to high areas, such as bucket trucks or scissor lifts. For example, a worker uses an aerial lift to install lights on a ceiling without using a ladder.

**Competent Person:** Someone who has the training and experience to recognize job hazards and has the authority to fix them. For example, on a construction site, a competent person checks trenches each day for signs of collapse.

**Confined Space:** An area that is large enough to enter, has limited ways in or out, and is not meant for people to work in regularly. For example, a tank that needs to be cleaned inside is a confined space.

**Confined Space Entry Permit:** A written form that outlines the hazards, safety steps, and approval needed before entering a confined space. For example, a permit is required before a worker enters a storage tank to clean it.

**Crane:** A machine used to lift and move heavy materials using a hoist, wire ropes, or chains. For example, a crane lifts steel beams onto the top of a new building.

**Excavation:** Any man-made cut, cavity, or trench in the ground, typically made by digging. For example, digging a hole to install a sewer pipe is an excavation.

**Fall Arrest System:** A safety setup that stops a person from hitting the ground if they fall. It usually includes a full-body harness, a lanyard, and an anchor. For example, a worker on a roof wears a fall arrest system tied to a secure anchor point.

**GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter):** A device that shuts off electricity if it senses a ground fault or current leak, helping to prevent shocks. For example, outdoor power tools are plugged into GFCI outlets to protect workers from electric shock.

**Guardrails:** A barrier installed along edges, platforms, or walkways to prevent falls. For example, scaffolding used above six feet must have guardrails on all open sides to keep workers from falling.

**Hoist:** Equipment used to lift or lower heavy loads using ropes, chains, or cables. For example, a hoist lifts materials up to workers on a high scaffold.

**Permit-Required Confined Space:** A confined space that has serious hazards like toxic gases, low oxygen, or the risk of engulfment. For example, a chemical storage tank that contains harmful vapors is a permit-required confined space, and special entry procedures must be followed.

**Qualified Person:** Someone who has the knowledge, training, and certification to do specific work safely, such as inspecting scaffolding or operating cranes. For example, only a qualified person can set up and approve a scaffold for use.

**Scaffold:** A temporary structure used to support workers and materials during construction, repair, or cleaning at height. For example, painters use scaffolds to safely reach the upper levels of a building.

**Shoring:** A system that supports the walls of an excavation to prevent them from collapsing. For example, shoring is installed in a trench deeper than five feet to protect workers from cave-ins.

**Trench:** A narrow excavation deeper than it is wide, usually used for installing pipes or cables. For example, a two-foot-wide, eight-foot-deep hole dug to lay a water line is a trench.

## Injury & Illness Reporting

**DAFW (Days Away From Work):** A work-related injury or illness that causes an employee to miss at least one full day of work. For example, a worker sprains their ankle on the job and stays home for three days to recover, that is recorded as DAFW.

**FAC (First Aid Case):** A minor injury treated with basic care that does not count as an OSHA recordable incident. For example, if a worker cuts their finger and is treated with a bandage and antiseptic, it's a first aid case (FAC).

**LTI (Lost Time Incident):** A work-related injury or illness that results in the employee being unable to work one or more days after the incident. For example, a warehouse worker injures their back and misses two full days of work, that's an LTI.

**MTC (Medical Treatment Case):** A work-related injury or illness that requires care beyond first aid but does not result in lost time. For example, a worker gets a deep cut that needs stitches but returns to work the next day, this is an MTC.

**Non-Recordable Injury:** An injury that does not meet OSHA's criteria for being recorded, such as those requiring only first aid. For example, a worker with a minor burn that is treated with a cold pack and returns to work immediately has a non-recordable injury.

**OSHA Recordable:** An injury or illness that must be logged on OSHA forms because it involves medical treatment beyond first aid, restricted work, days away, loss of consciousness, or death. For example, a broken bone treated at a clinic is OSHA recordable.

**Recurrent Case:** A repeat of a previous injury or illness, which may be treated as a new case or continuation depending on how much time has passed and whether the condition fully resolved. For example, if a worker re-injures the same shoulder months after full recovery, it may be logged as a new, recurrent case.

**Return to Work Program:** A plan that helps injured workers come back to work safely, often through light-duty or modified tasks. For example, an employee recovering from surgery may return under a return to work program that limits lifting and bending.

**RWC (Restricted Work Case):** An injury or illness where the worker cannot perform all of their normal job duties but can still work with restrictions. For example, a worker with a hand injury is assigned to desk work instead of their usual warehouse job, that's an RWC.

**Work-Related Injury:** An injury or illness caused or made worse by events or exposures at work. For example, a fall on a wet floor at the job site that causes a sprained wrist is a work-related injury.

**Work Restriction:** A limitation placed on an injured worker by a medical professional that prevents them from doing some or all parts of their regular job. For example, a doctor says an employee with a back strain can't lift more than 10 pounds, that's a work restriction.

## OSHA Reporting Tools & Logs

**OSHA 300 Log:** A form used by employers to record work-related injuries and illnesses. It includes details like the employee's name, the type of injury or illness, the job being performed, and how many days were missed or restricted. For example, if a worker breaks their arm on the job, the company logs the injury on the OSHA 300 form with the date, nature of the injury, and days away from work.

**OSHA 300A Summary:** A yearly summary of all the work-related injuries and illnesses recorded on the OSHA 300 Log. It does not include names but shows totals for cases with days away, job restrictions, and other key statistics. For example, at the end of the year, a company posts its OSHA 300A Summary in a common area to show how many workplace injuries occurred that year.

**OSHA 301 Incident Report:** A detailed form that explains how a specific work-related injury or illness happened. It includes information like the time, place, and events leading to the incident. For example, after an employee suffers a back injury while lifting a box, the safety manager completes an OSHA 301 form describing what happened and how the injury occurred.

## Performance Metrics (KPIs)

**DART Rate (Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred Rate):** A calculation that shows how often workers experience serious injuries or illnesses that result in lost workdays, restricted duties, or job transfers. For example, if a company has a DART rate of 2.5, that means for every 100 workers, about 2.5 had serious incidents requiring time off or modified work.

**Incident Rate:** A general measure of workplace injuries or illnesses, often used interchangeably with TRIR or TCIR depending on how it's defined. For example, a company with an incident rate of 1.8 had fewer reported injuries than an industry average of 3.0.

**Lagging Indicator:** A safety metric that tracks events that have already happened, such as injuries, illnesses, or near misses. For example, the number of recordable injuries in a year is a lagging indicator, it shows how safe the workplace was after the fact.

**Leading Indicator:** A safety measure that tracks actions taken to prevent incidents before they happen, like training or inspections. For example, tracking how many safety audits are completed each month is a leading indicator because it helps predict and prevent future incidents.

**Lost Workday Rate:** A measure of how many injuries or illnesses resulted in missed workdays, calculated per 100 full-time employees. For example, if four workers each missed two days due to injuries, the lost workday rate helps show the impact of those absences.

**Near Miss Rate:** A metric that tracks how often near misses, unplanned events that could have caused harm, are reported. For example, a company encourages workers to report close calls, and they track near miss rate to identify unsafe conditions before injuries happen.



**Safety Observation Rate:** The number of safety checks, audits, or behavior observations completed during a period. For example, a supervisor performs 10 safety observations per week and uses the data to coach workers on better practices.

**Severity Rate:** A calculation that reflects how serious injuries are by looking at the number of days lost due to work-related incidents. For example, a company with few injuries but many lost days may have a high severity rate, showing that the injuries they do have are serious.

**TCIR (Total Case Incident Rate):** Another name for TRIR, measuring the total number of OSHA-recordable incidents per 100 full-time workers in a year. For example, if a company reports 5 total recordable injuries over 200,000 hours worked, its TCIR is 5.0.

**TRIR (Total Recordable Incident Rate):** A standard safety metric that shows the number of OSHA-recordable injuries and illnesses per 100 full-time employees per year. For example, if a company has 3 recordable incidents and 100 full-time employees, its TRIR is 3.0.

## Auditing, Compliance & Enforcement

**Abatement:** The process of fixing or removing a hazard identified during an inspection. For example, if OSHA finds an open electrical panel, the company must close or repair it as part of abatement.

**Audit Finding:** A problem or concern found during a safety or environmental audit that may require action. For example, an audit finding may show that fire extinguishers haven't been inspected monthly as required.

**Citation:** A formal notice from OSHA that a rule has been violated. It includes the standard that was broken and often a deadline for correction. For example, if workers are exposed to loud noise without hearing protection, OSHA may issue a citation for violating noise standards.

**Corrective Action Plan (CAP):** A written plan that explains how a company will fix a safety or compliance issue. For example, after a fall hazard is cited by OSHA, the employer submits a CAP to install guardrails and retrain staff.

**EPA (Environmental Protection Agency):** The U.S. government agency that creates and enforces environmental laws to protect human health and the environment. For example, the EPA regulates air emissions and hazardous waste disposal.

**General Duty Clause:** A part of the OSHA Act (Section 5(a)(1)) that requires employers to keep the workplace free from serious recognized hazards, even if no specific rule exists. For example, if a company ignores a known fire risk, OSHA may issue a citation under the General Duty Clause.

**Inspection:** A review of the workplace to check for compliance with safety and health rules, either by OSHA or internally. For example, OSHA may inspect a site after a complaint, an injury, or as part of a scheduled program.

**Imminent Danger:** A situation where a hazard is likely to cause death or serious harm right away. For example, a worker inside a trench with no protection from cave-in faces imminent danger.

**Notice of Contest:** A formal response from an employer who disagrees with an OSHA citation and wants to challenge it legally. For example, after receiving a citation, a company files a Notice of Contest to argue the hazard was already corrected.

**OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration):** The U.S. federal agency responsible for enforcing workplace safety and health laws. For example, OSHA sets rules for PPE, fall protection, and recordkeeping across industries.

**Record Retention:** The requirement to keep certain safety or training records for a specific time. For example, employers must keep OSHA 300 Logs for five years after the year they cover.

**Repeat Violation:** A citation for a hazard similar to one previously cited at the same company or worksite. For example, if OSHA cited a business for blocked fire exits last year and finds the same issue again, it's a repeat violation.

**Serious Violation:** A situation where a hazard could cause death or serious harm, and the employer knew or should have known about it. For example, failing to provide fall protection on a roof is usually considered a serious violation.

**Settlement Agreement:** A legal agreement between OSHA and an employer to resolve citations, often including a reduced fine and a promise to fix the hazards. For example, a company may agree to provide extra training in exchange for a lower penalty.

**Violation:** Breaking a safety or health regulation, as determined by OSHA or another authority. For example, not having emergency exits clearly marked is a violation of OSHA rules.

**Willful Violation:** A violation committed with clear knowledge of the rules and with intentional disregard for safety. For example, continuing to send workers into unsafe trenches after previous warnings could lead to a willful violation citation.

## Risk Analysis & Strategic Management

**Benchmarking:** The process of comparing your company's safety performance to others in the same industry to identify areas for improvement. For example, if your company has a higher injury rate than the industry average, benchmarking shows where you may need to improve.

**EHS Dashboard:** A digital tool that displays real-time safety and environmental data such as incident rates, training status, and audit results. For example, a safety manager uses an EHS dashboard to check whether monthly inspections are complete and if the TRIR is trending up or down.

**Incident Trending:** A review of incident data over time to spot patterns or recurring problems. For example, if slip-and-fall incidents keep happening near a specific loading dock, incident trending can help identify the issue so it can be fixed.

**KPI Target:** A specific goal set for a key performance indicator (KPI), used to measure progress. For example, a company may set a KPI target to complete 100% of monthly safety observations on time.

**Risk Matrix:** A chart used to estimate the level of risk by comparing how likely something is to happen with how severe the outcome would be. For example, a task that is very likely to cause serious injury would be placed in the high-risk corner of the matrix.

**Risk Score:** A number calculated based on the likelihood and severity of a hazard, used to rank and prioritize risks. For example, a high risk score for working near energized wires might lead to added controls before the job starts.

**Root Cause Analysis:** A structured process to find the main reason why an incident or problem happened, not just the surface issue. For example, after a worker slips, a root cause analysis might reveal that the real problem is a lack of regular floor cleaning, not just the spilled liquid.

**Safety Maturity Model:** A tool that shows how advanced an organization is in managing safety, ranging from reactive (fixing problems after they happen) to proactive (preventing problems before they occur). For example, a company that tracks near misses and acts on them is moving toward a higher level of safety maturity.