HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS
FOR A SAFER WORKPLACE

Montana State Fund

Wherever the workplace, always following the Hierarchy of Controls helps ensure the safest workplace possible – and so the safest workers. Identify the known and potential dangers involved in your workplace and work tasks and then apply this guide:

The goal is to **eliminate** each hazard completely. Start with the hazards that pose the biggest threats and the ones that are easiest to mitigate.

If the hazard can't be eliminated, move down to **substitution** of the hazardous item for something that poses less danger. And so on. It's possible that the best the employer / management can do immediately is to put workers in personal protective equipment. But because **PPE** is the least effective means of protecting people, work back up the pyramid as quickly as possible.

Hierarchy of Controls

Most effective

Least effective

Level	Description
Elimination	Physically remove the hazard
Substitution	Replace the hazard
Engineering Controls	Isolate people from the hazard
Administrative Controls	Change the way people work
PPE	Protect the worker with Personal Protective Equipment
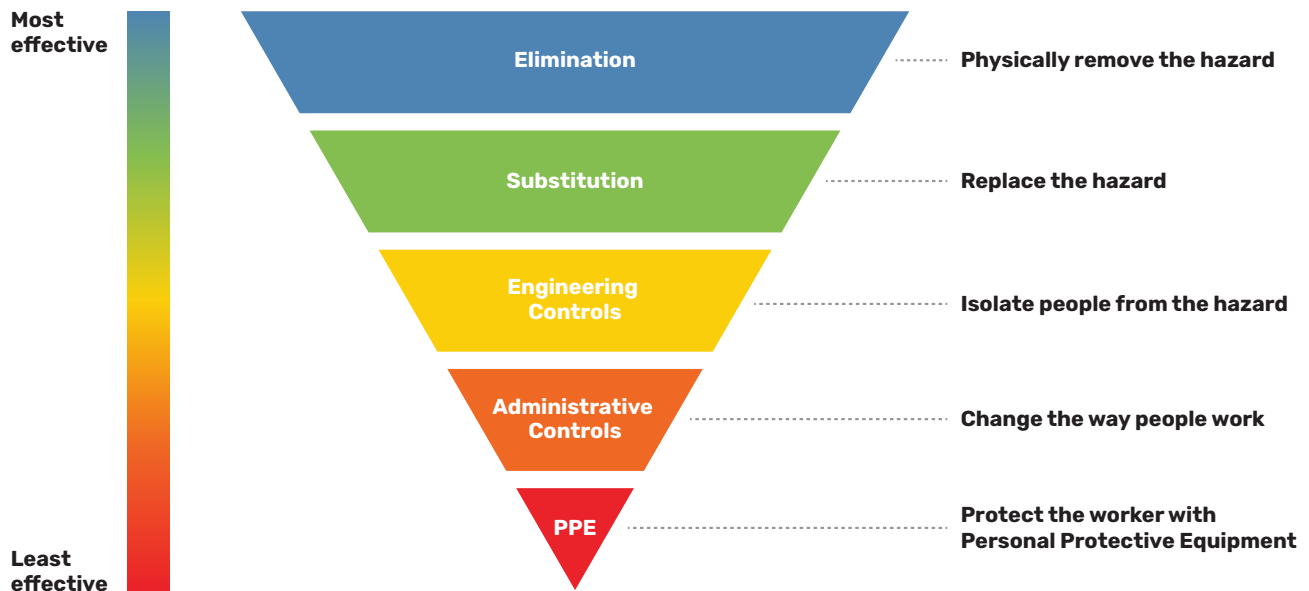
Here's a real-world example to get you thinking about your specific workplace and products. In this example, part of the production of your business's product requires use of some loud equipment to achieve the needed result. So, to keep you and your workers safe from hearing damage, management would, going from most effective to least effective:

Elimination	Get the danger, the noise, out of the building completely by subcontracting this piece of production to a company that has the specialized equipment and training to get it done in a way that puts no worker in danger.
Substitution	Seek out and swap for equipment that does the same job but is potentially less risky to workers.
Engineering controls	Change the physical space by adding a specifically designed isolation shield or enclosure; kind of like giving the noise its own small, sealed room.
Administrative controls	Limit exposure to the noise by scheduling multiple workers throughout each shift, thereby limiting the amount of time any one worker is stationed at this piece of equipment. (Or immediately close to it.)
PPE	Make sure all workers using and working near this equipment have and use approved hearing protection.