

Procedure	Date of Issue: April 2019
Title: Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure	Rev: 1
Issued to: Web	Replaces Issued Dated: Dec 2012

## Introduction

It is a general legal requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) to carry out risk assessments. There are also specific requirements under other regulations to carry out specialised assessments, for example, manual handling, the use of chemicals, lasers, radiation, noise and machinery etc.

The following procedure should be adopted for general risk assessments of an area, task, process or activity. It is based on the HSE guidance "Five Steps to Risk Assessment".

Risk assessment should be undertaken systematically so as to ensure that all significant hazards are identified, along with those persons at risk, the likelihood of each hazard occurring, and the likely severity were the hazard to occur. Where appropriate, adequate control measures must be decided upon, using the hierarchy of risk. These control measures must then be implemented to ensure the risk mitigation is complete "as far as is reasonably practicable".

## Important Details

Importantly the first details recorded on the risk assessment should be:

- company name
- description of what is being assessed
- the name of the person(s) carrying out the assessment
- the date of assessment
- the assessor(s) signature(s)
- suggested review date (although this may be sooner, should any factor change)

## **Identifying Hazards**

An examination of the work area, task, activity or process should be undertaken by those who are involved or have experience of the subject matter, and should initially involve listing all associated hazards (a hazard is something which has the potential to cause harm, and could occur):

### **Examples of hazards:**

Chemicals and substances  
Dust / Fume inhalation  
Electricity  
Fire Machinery  
Manual handling  
Noise  
Lighting  
Slipping / Tripping hazards  
Vehicles  
Falls from height  
Using Display Screen Equipment

### **Identify those at risk:**

Next the persons carrying out the risk assessment need to identify those persons at particular risk from the particular work area, task, activity or process.

Some examples of the type of persons likely to be at risk, depending on the specifics of the assessment, may include:

#### **Who?**

Employees  
Trainees  
Students  
Contractors  
Visitors  
General public

#### **What?**

Equipment  
Property  
Materials  
Environment

In deciding who or what may be harmed, the assessor is beginning the process of assessing the risk.

### **Assess the risk**

The assessors then need to identify the likelihood that the hazard could occur, and the probable severity, were the hazard to occur:

“It is probable that a chef may cut their finger on a kitchen knife whilst cutting vegetables and the severity would likely be a minor injury (a minor cut or laceration). So this should be recorded in the assessment.”

The assessors should use The Robert Gordon University key detailed below, for measuring likelihood and severity:

<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Severity</b>
Certain	Probable death of 1 more persons
Probable	Severe injury, loss of limb, severe burns
Possible	Minor injury, cuts, bruising, minor burns
Unlikely	No ill effect

Further examples or advice on assessing the risk is available from the Occupational Health and Safety Department.

### **Identify control measures that are already in place**

The assessor then needs to identify control measures that have already been implemented. For example, if a manual handling task is being assessed, the assessor may note that the load has already been broken down in to smaller amounts to make smaller lighter loads.

Once all existing control measures have been noted, the assessors then need to decide if the level of risk is at the lowest possible level, and whether this is tolerable, if the level of risk is not tolerable, additional control measures will require to be implemented to reduce the risk level further.

If the risk cannot be reduced to a tolerable level, then the area, task, activity or process must not be carried out and must be re-designed or alternate means of operating decided upon.

### **Control the risk**

Any intolerable risks identified in your assessment should be eliminated or reduced "as far as is reasonably practicable" to an acceptable level. This should involve considering any current risk control measures and assessing whether any further measures can be taken to reduce the risk. The following hierarchy of risk control should be used:

#### **Eliminate**

The best way to reduce a risk is to remove the hazard. If the hazard is significant, eliminate it at source and remove any risk attached – e.g. do not do the task, outsource or negate the risk by other means.

#### **Substitute**

If removing the risk completely cannot be achieved, the hazard should be substituted for something which presents less of a risk - e.g. cleaning

products with bleach can be harmful. An alternative product without bleach might suffice.

### **Contain**

Preventing access to a hazard - e.g. using a guard over a sharp blade or keeping hazardous chemicals locked in a suitable container - is important when removing the hazard completely, is not practical.

### **Reduce exposure**

Reducing exposure to a hazard means that the likelihood of harm occurring is less, and so reduces the risk - e.g. computer users can lower the risk of upper limb disorders by doing tasks away from their PC regularly.

### **Training and supervision**

The provision of information, training and supervision will help to make sure people follow procedures and are aware of the risks when working with hazards.

These measures only work together with other controls.

### **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

PPE should only be considered as a last resort, once the risk level has already been reduced adequately.

### **Welfare facilities**

Facilities for washing or first aid should be supplied.

The assessment should be recorded on an RGU Risk Assessment Form and should be held in an accessible place for those who are involved in the process. The form also acts as an improvement action plan and should be used for tracking implementation of control measures. The findings should be made known to the employees it affects and information / training must be given.

It is not necessary for the Occupational Health and Safety team to hold records centrally. However, an audit programme will be established at which time access to local records will be a prerequisite. The assessments should therefore be available for audit purposes.

## **Review**

A risk assessment must be reviewed if there is any significant change to the area, activity/task, process or other significant element, or if there is any other reason to suspect it is no longer valid. It is good practice to review assessments regularly to ensure they are still accurate and controls remain in place.