



HANDOUT 14

Risk Assessment

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 there is a specific requirement for all employers and self-employed persons to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments of the workplace and individual activities, to identify the risks to workers and any others who may be affected.

You must:

- Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to workers and any others who may be affected by your activities
- Review the risk assessment if you believe it is invalid or there has been a significant change in circumstances
- Where you employ more than five people you must record the significant findings of your assessments

The main goal of any risk assessment process is to identify the measures that need to be taken to establish a safe system of work and an efficient system of safety management. Any existing hazards and the level of risk should be identified; all efforts should then be made to reduce the risk to as low as possible. If the present method of carrying out the activity is eventually established as the only practicable safe method, then management must fully inform employees of the reasons why the method of work must be adhered to. A suitable of supervision and training must be arranged to ensure that the method of work is fully understood and complied with (see Section 1.1 HSWA, Employers duties).

You must identify a competent person to carry out the necessary risk assessments for your organisation.

To be competent they must have:

- Received appropriate training
- Adequate knowledge
- Suitable experience of the activities concerned; and
- An awareness of their own limitations

Location/Site									
Task/Activity									
Assessment Completed by				Assessment Date					
Signature				Review Date					

Probability (P)	Severity (S)				
	Minor	Low	Medium	High	Major
Almost Certain	5	10	15	20	25
High	4	8	12	16	20
Medium	3	6	9	12	15
Low	2	4	6	8	10
Improbable	1	2	3	4	5

Multiply Severity x Likelihood to create an assessment score. If score is in orange or red section then additional control measures must be incorporated to reduce severity/likelihood.

(S) Minor: Very minor injury, no time lost other than first aid treatment	Low: Significant incident or injury requiring first aid e.g. strain, laceration	Medium: Moderate injury or illness leading to loss of time or temporary disability	High: Permanent disability, chronic condition	Major: Fatality to one or more people. Severe incident loss or damage
(P) Improbable: Loss, accident or illness very unlikely to occur	Low: Situation generally well managed but lapse could occur	Medium: Insufficient controls in place. Loss could occur	High: High probability that accident or incident will occur	Almost Certain: Extremely likely to occur. Management controls are absent

Ref	Identified Hazards	No controls			Control Measures	With Controls			Further Action Required
		Likelihood	Severity	Score		Likelihood	Severity	Score	
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									

Persons At Risk							
Users of product	Members of public	Visitors	Other workers	Young persons	Other (specify)		
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)							
Eye Protection	Safety Helmet	Ear Protection	Respiratory Protection	Safety Boots	Safety Gloves	Face Protection	Safety Overalls
Other PPE (specify):							

To carry out a risk assessment you should take the following steps:

1. Identify activities/tasks

It may help to prepare a list of all the tasks and activities that you carry out. Some of these may be simple tasks whereas others may be complex activities.

2. Determine the hazards

You now need to identify the hazards associated with the task. A hazard is the ability of something to cause harm, loss or damage and has the potential to interrupt or interfere with a process or person, e.g. an unguarded machine, a trailing cable.

3. Identify who may be harmed

Consider who in your workplace may be affected by a particular hazard. This may be employees, visitors, members of the public etc.

4. Assess the significant risks

Risk is the chance or probability of the hazard being realised and harm occurring. Your answers should be limited to high, medium, low or insignificant risk. Many factors will contribute to the level of risk, e.g. the number of people who may be affected, the severity or outcome in terms of injury damage and loss etc.

5. Consider and implement controls to reduce risks

Wherever possible you should eliminate the hazard. e.g. selecting a different machine or a change of process may eliminate a hazard. Where eliminating the hazard is not possible you must reduce the risk as low as possible. Your priority should be to provide safe place controls, which are physical or mechanical measures intended to make the place or equipment safe.

This type of control measure protects everyone, e.g. machine guarding. Information, instruction and training, and personal protective equipment are all forms of control measures. However, these types of controls only protect individual workers and should not be used in isolation, they should be used in addition to safe place controls and are a last resort control measure.

6. Record the findings and inform workers

Employers with 5 or more employees must record the significant findings of their assessment and must pass on the information to employees and those affected by the activity. You must tell workers why a particular work method has been selected and how control measures should be used and maintained. Consulting workers on the initial results of your risk assessments may provide valuable information on alternative control measures that could be used.

7. Review and revise as necessary

You must regularly review your risk assessments to ensure that the controls are still effective when you suspect that the assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the matters to which it relates. This may include use of new or different machinery or equipment, changes in the work method or a different operator. If the review reveals that changes to your assessments are required, you should revise the risk assessment and inform your employees, this may require further training depending upon the changes made.