

RISK ASSESSMENT 1.01



GENERAL

Risk Assessment involves identifying the hazards arising from work activities (or present in the environment) and evaluating the extent of the danger involved. The Assessment should quantify this danger and determine what (if anything) is required to reduce it to a reasonable level. Start off by considering the risk in its 'raw state'; don't assume any controls are already in place. Paint a picture of all the things that will be done to manage the danger.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Occupational Safety and Health Act 1970 (UK) requires:

"... a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm" In order to achieve this, the employer needs to recognize the hazards and assess how likely they are to cause harm.

Specific Assessments:

Any high-risk activity, including work at height, hot works, structures, hazardous materials etc. The EPA requires assessment of risk to the environment.

SUITABLE AND SUFFICIENT

To be of any value, an Assessment needs to be appropriate to the work & risks involved. It must: identify all significant hazards; take account of all those people affected; identify & prioritise controls required; controls should be reasonable & proportionate; should enable legislative compliance & result in remaining risk being low. RA should remain valid for reasonable period of time.

RA should be carried out by a **Competent Person**, one who has sufficient **Knowledge**, **Attributes** (skills), **Training**, and **Experience** and understands his or her own **Limitations**.

DEFINITIONS

Hazard - something with the potential to cause harm

Risk - the likelihood that the hazard will actually result in harm or loss, combined with the potential severity of outcome.

Control Measure – procedure, system or physical object(s), introduced to mitigate either the Hazard itself or the reduce likelihood of an accident actually occurring.

Reasonable- no tricks here, reasonable means just that: be *reasonable*, i.e., proportionate and balanced. The law does NOT require zero risk.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. Identify hazards
2. Identify who might be harmed
3. Evaluate risk
 - * *Estimate adequacy of existing controls*
 - * *Likelihood of incident occurring*
 - * *Severity of potential consequences*
 - * *Recommend further action - elimination or control*
4. Record assessment
5. Monitor & Review

Ask PETE...

PETE can help **identify hazards**: think of the **People, Environment, Tasks** and **Equipment**. What hazards arise from each of these aspects? Combine observation of the work with Job Hazard Analysis (which is a fancy way of saying "break each job down into constituent activities"). Critically, talk to people to find out the reality on the show floor.

Who might be harmed? Account for *everyone* who may be affected by an accident/failure: Employees, maintenance staff, cleaners, contractors, and the public. Are there special risks to vulnerable people (young, elderly, disabled, pregnant, shift workers, lone workers etc.) activities?

RISK RATING

Risk Rating = Likelihood and Severity

Likelihood – Consider the frequency of occurrence and the number of people exposed
Severity – Consider the potential outcome of if the accident *did* happen. Don't go crazy, but be realistic about the worst case

Don't get too tied up with numbers. Severity and Likelihood *combine*, they don't simply multiply on a scale of 1-5.

MONITOR

You need to check that the Risk Assessment is actually working. Are there still accidents or near misses? Are the controls appropriate, or actually being used?

REVIEW

You should review your assessment when there is new equipment, technology, premises, and personnel. There may be changes in Code or Guidance, or perhaps new information regarding risk is published after an incident. ...and if you are still having accidents or near misses, you definitely need to review things.

BENEFITS OF RISK ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Prevention of accidents, incidents, ill health; legal compliance; reduction in claims, complaints and cost; reduced insurance and healthcare costs; encourages worker participation, ownership and a positive safety culture. In the event of an accident, can be used to demonstrate a systematic approach to safety management.

HIERARCHY OF EFFECTIVENESS

Start at the top and work your way down.

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- Eliminate** GET RID OF THE HAZARD ALTOGETHER
 - Substitute** FOR A SAFER SYSTEM OR MATERIAL
 - Isolate/Segregate** PHYSICALLY SEPARATE
 - Safe systems of work** PLAN TO DO IT RIGHT
 - Warning systems** FOR WHEN IT IS WRONG
 - IIT&S** INFO, INSTRUCTION, TRAINING, SUPERVISION
 - PPE** THE **LAST LINE OF DEFENCE**