



FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
SKILLS FOR LIFE

RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

Last Update: September 2023

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Introduction

A risk assessment is an important tool in protecting employees and students, by analysing hazards and identifying risk reduction measures. The law requires that everything 'reasonably practicable' is done to protect people from harm. It helps to focus on the risks that really matter in the workplace – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can be effective in controlling risks.

Aims and Objectives

To ensure that staff understands the process of risk assessment and how it can be integrated into effective management practices.

The Arrangements for Applying the Policy

Staff will ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out for all tasks, activities, locations, and work activities that present a significant hazard in their area(s) of responsibility.

Staff must plan, coordinate, and monitor how risk assessments will be managed locally.

Actions must include the following: -

- Establishing the activities/tasks/locations/work equipment to be assessed.
- Identifying competent people to carry out the assessments.
- Defining the system to manage completed assessments, any associated actions, communication, and review.
- Establish communication and information sharing for the outcomes of the risk assessment with all staff and others who may be affected by the risk.
- To involve staff and their representatives in assessing the risks; and
- Refer risks to the appropriate senior manager or forum/committee where they cannot be managed locally.

Employees are required to:-

- Be aware of risk assessment and control measures for their area of work.

Cooperate with and engage in the risk assessment process.

- Use and comply with control measures implemented to ensure the health and safety of themselves or others; and
- Report any workplace hazards or concerns regarding health and safety of themselves or others.
- Carry out “on the spot” (dynamic) risk assessments within the context of their own competencies and in consultation with others, as situations arise. (see section 1c and Glossary of Terms)

Procedure

1. Stages of Risk Assessment

a) Identify the hazards

Managers and staff will identify all the hazards associated with their area of responsibility that could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Hazards can be identified by:

- Observing the task or area.
- Referring to available guidance and information about best practice.
- Looking at accident and ill-health records.
- Checking manufacturers’ instructions or data sheets.
- Asking staff for their views.

b) Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard the groups of people who might be harmed and how must be identified.

The groups of people to be considered include:

- Staff with particular requirements e.g. new and young workers, people with disabilities, new or expectant mothers.
- Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers who may not be in the workplace all the time.
- Members of the public, service users, pupils; and
- Shared workplaces – how the work affects others and the risks to staff from those who share the workplace.

c) Evaluate/assess the risks and decide on the precautions to control the risks

Evaluating/Assessing the risk

For each hazard identified the level of risk must be evaluated (High/Medium/Low). This evaluation may include the level of harm presented by the hazard, the number of people involved, and the likelihood of the harm occurring.

Once the level of risk is established, managers must consider what control measures are already in place and what actions are already being taken to reduce the risk, consider whether these are suitable and sufficient and whether further control measures are required.

Controlling the Risk

When controlling risks the following principles should be applied, where possible in the following order:

- Eliminate the hazard altogether.
- Substitution by something less hazardous or risk.
- Prevent access to the hazard e.g. by guarding.
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard e.g. putting barriers between pedestrians and traffic.
- Create safe methods of work and safe systems of work designed to reduce the risk.
- Issue personal protective equipment e.g. clothing, footwear, goggles etc.
- Provide welfare facilities e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination.
- Provide suitable information, instruction and training.
- Ensure appropriate supervision.

Dynamic Risk Assessment

On rare occasions there may be a need for staff to undertake a Dynamic Risk Assessment. In these circumstances staff must work within the context of their own competencies and in consultation with others where possible. The need for a dynamic risk assessment may arise when an unforeseen event occurs, and a previously unidentified risk becomes apparent. Once the dynamic risk assessment has taken place, a formal written risk assessment record must be made of this as soon as is reasonably practicable after the event.

Individual risk assessments

All pupils have their own individual risk assessments which can be found on the database or hard copies in their class file. These are purely an indication of the risk that a pupil poses on an average day. Every risk assessment must also consider the additional risk arising from pupils' emotional state and risk-taking behaviours.

Off-site activities

See Educational visits and Risk assessment policy

General risk assessments

Assessments of processes or areas rather than an individual person should be recorded on the General Risk Assessment Form.

Other Risk Assessments

This General Risk Assessment Form may not be suitable for use for recording risks to individuals, complex risk assessments or where there is agreed standard documentation for inter-agency working. Where this is the case, specific forms have been created, and are referenced in the Standard Documents section below.

The most appropriate form should be used to record the risk assessment; Our Health & Safety leader can advise on suitable format or.

Risk assessments in other Health and Safety Policy areas.

A number of risk assessment forms have been developed relating to specific policy areas e.g.

- Educational visits and risk assessments
- First Aid
- Fire Safety
- Intimate Care
- Health & Safety
- Supervision of Children & young people
- Stress
- Working alone

e) Review

Managers should review assessments.

- At regular intervals not exceeding one year
- Following a significant change and/or
- If there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid e.g. after an accident, ill-health incident, violent incidence or malfunction has occurred.
- The risk assessment must remain up to date and valid and available at 'point of use'.
- Once a risk assessment is obsolete it must be archived for a minimum of 5 years.

Communication

Managers shall ensure that the persons at risk are provided with comprehensive and relevant information on the identified risks and the preventive and protective control measures. Everyone should understand what they must do and why. Where necessary, job safety instructions should be issued to individual employees and appropriate training provided.

Training

Managers responsible for the planning, coordination and monitoring of risk assessments must receive appropriate risk assessment training. Staff involved in the creation of risk assessments (e.g. as part of a risk assessment team) must receive training in the risk assessment process.

Monitoring

Managers shall monitor the effectiveness of control measures and ensure that physical control measures are used, installed correctly and suitably maintained.

Employees shall report any defects in control measures, personal protective equipment, etc immediately to their manager.

Specialist Advice

It is important when completing risk assessments to be aware of individual limitations in terms of knowledge and competence. If further support is required managers should contact the Health & Safety Leader for advice.

Legislative Framework

- The Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992

Further advice and Information

Health and Safety Executive (HSE): www.hse.gov.uk/

Glossary of Terms

Risk Assessment

A careful examination of what, in the workplace, could cause harm to people so that a decision can be made as to whether there are enough precautions in place or more should be done to prevent harm.

Hazard

Anything that has the potential to cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer etc.

Risk

Is the chance, high, medium or low that somebody could be harmed by the hazard, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

Harm

Is the actual injury or ill-health suffered by those exposed to the hazard?

Dynamic Risk Assessments

A risk assessment which takes place during work in progress as a need arises (“on the spot”). In these circumstances a previously prepared risk assessment may not be in place as the situation has not been previously foreseeable. Once the dynamic risk assessment has taken place, a formal written risk assessment must be made of this as soon as is reasonably practicable after the event.