

Estates and Facilities

Guide to Carrying out a Risk Assessment

Introduction

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of the hazards and risks associated with the work you do. You can then decide whether you have taken enough precautions to prevent people being harmed or if you need to do more. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill as a result of the work you do.

Do not over complicate the risk assessment process by using technical terms or corporate jargon that some people may not be familiar with, try to use plain English.

There are nine simple steps to carrying out a risk assessment using the E&F Risk Assessment form, and these are explained in detail below.

Each step below is linked to the boxes that must be completed on the risk assessment form.

Step 1

Identify the hazards associated with the work activity and list them individually in the boxes available on the risk assessment form. Remember a hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm eg electricity, moving parts of machinery, slippery floors, sharp objects etc

Step 2

Identify who might be harmed as a result of being exposed to the hazards. Don't forget to include members of the public, contractors, students and visitors etc. We have a greater duty of care to protect people that may be vulnerable eg children, disabled people. We need to take additional precautions to make sure vulnerable people are safe.

Step 3

Ask yourself, how **SEVERE** would the injuries be if there was an accident?

Try to be realistic and consider the injuries that are most likely.

Indicate how severe the injuries are likely to be by placing an x in the box provided.

Note: Typically, a *minor injury* would be a small cut, bruise or abrasion whereas a *major injury* would potentially require the injured party to take time off work or maybe a reduced workload eg light duties.

Step 4

Ask yourself, what is the **LIKELIHOOD** that the hazard will cause an injury?

Indicate the likelihood of the hazard causing an injury by placing an x in the box provided.

Step 5

Multiply the **SEVERITY** by the **LIKELIHOOD** to find the risk rating for each hazard.

The **RISK RATING** you have arrived at for each hazard should be written in the box at the end of each row.

Step 6

Take the highest **RISK RATING** number and place it in the appropriate RISK Rating box.

Step 7

Considerations and control measures

Write down your thoughts about how you are going to prevent the hazards from causing harm.

In controlling risks you must apply these principles, in this order:

- **Avoid the risk altogether** eg do the work in a different way.
- **Substitute the way the work is done for a less dangerous approach** eg install windows that can be cleaned from the inside of the building, removing the need to use ladders etc.
- **Combat the risk at source** eg if the steps are slippery, treat them or, replace them, do not automatically display a warning sign and allow it to be the permanent solution.
- **Give priority to control measures that protect everyone**, not just the individual eg providing an employee with a fall arrest harness will only prevent that individual from falling, whereas providing edge protection will protect everyone from falling, as well as any materials or tools that may be dropped.
- **Provide employees with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** to guard against hazards eg safety goggles, protective footwear, hard hat etc.

- **In all cases you must provide employees with suitable and sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision** to enable them to carry out the work both safely, and in the way you know will be the least dangerous.

Step 8

Reassessing hazards

Reassess each of the hazards now that you have introduced control measures to reduce the risk of accidents happening.

To reassess each hazard follow **Step 3**, **Step 4**, **Step 5** and **Step 6** for each hazard.

Step 9

Communicate the risk assessment to everyone involved in the activity.

Note: Risk assessments should be reviewed when anything about the activity or the people doing it changes, they should also be reviewed periodically to ensure that the control measures are working properly.