



Risk Assessments

Aims & Objectives

Aim

- To understand the importance of assessing risks in the workplace

Objectives

- Know what a Risk Assessment is
- Understand the importance in having a positive attitude to safety
- Know and understand the dangers that can occur on-site
- Understand how to prevent accidents
- Know how to observe safe practices

Risk Assessments

What is a Risk Assessment?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines a risk as:

- “...is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Workers and others have a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures”
- Essentially it is a technique for preventing accidents and ill health by helping people to think about what could go wrong and ways to prevent problems.
- Formal risk assessments must be carried out in every workplace.

Who can undertake a Risk Assessment?

- Anyone can undertake a risk assessment, although specific assessments such as manual handling and specialist equipment assessments usually require some degree of training.
- Those carrying out the assessment should be familiar with the task being assessed and health and safety practices.
- All risk assessments should be documented and be made available to any worker on-site.

How to prevent accidents happening

- Examine the workplace and all its activities to assess what could go wrong.
- Select safe controls to prevent accidents from happening.
- Implement health and safety measures and check them regularly to ensure that they remain effective.

Hazards & Risks

It is important to understand the difference between a hazard and a risk:

- A **HAZARD** is anything that may cause harm (such as chemicals, electricity, etc).
- A **RISK** is the likelihood that somebody could be harmed by these and any other hazards.

Examples of hazards

- Falling objects
- Fire
- Electricity
- Sharp tools
- Noise
- Harmful substances
- Damaged working platforms
- Site transport

Factors to consider when undertaking a Risk Assessment

- Degree of possible harm
- Likelihood of occurrence
- Number of persons at risk
- Frequency of exposure to risk
- Specific acts or regulations covering the work
- Type and effectiveness of protection / preventative measures already in place
- Identification of 'risk' workers e.g. new or temporary staff
- Improvements to be made to preventative measures

Hazards in the workplace should be removed if possible. Sometimes, there is no alternative but to allow the hazard to remain. If this is the case it is important to reduce the risk. By:

1. Placing barriers around the hazard
2. Putting-up warning signs to make people aware that there is a hazard

Five Steps

The Health and Safety Executive's **Five steps** to **risk assessment**.

Step 1: Identify the hazards

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step 4: Record your findings and implement them

Step 5: Review your risk assessment and update if necessary

Safe Practices

Rules for the observation of safe practices

- Be alert at all times
- Maintain personal hygiene
- Protect yourself and other people
- Know emergency stop procedures
- Report all hazards