

# Risk Assessments

Risk assessments form the cornerstone of UK health & safety legislation and the requirement for organisations to prepare risk assessments are clearly outlined in a number of health and safety acts and regulations.

In particular the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require all employers and self-employed persons to assess the risks to workers and any other person who may be affected by their undertaking. Regulation 3 requires that employers should undertake a systematic review of the work that they undertake and record the significant risks and findings of that assessment (Risk Assessment). Risk assessment also fits into a four-part process for risk control, through the setting of health and safety standards, as follows:

1. Hazard identification.
2. Risk assessment.
3. Risk control - the selection of suitable measures to eliminate or control risks.
4. Implementing and maintaining control measures.

## Useful Definitions

**Hazard:** Something with the potential to cause harm.

**Risk:** The likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard is realised.

## What is the Purpose of a Risk Assessment?

- Risk Assessments need to be carried out on a regular basis by competent people
- Risk Assessments provide an independent and objective assessment and evaluation of the risks to those carrying specific work activities
- They specify the control measures needed to manage the risks
- They help to reduce risks to the lowest level, forming part of the safe system of work

## Recording the Risk Assessment

Employers with five or more employees must record the significant findings of their risk assessment. It needs to be part of an employer's overall approach to health and safety and where appropriate should be linked to other relevant health and safety documents (e.g. method statements and the health and safety policy). This record would normally be in writing but can also be recorded electronically as long as it is retrievable.

Various formats can be used, though it is important that employers select or develop a format appropriate to the works that they undertake. Assessments **MUST** be **suitable and sufficient**, this means that you must consider all of the potential hazards, those who may be affected by the hazard and implement controls that will eliminate or reduce the risk of harm as far as is practicable.

## Preventive and Protective Measures

In deciding upon the preventive and protective control measures, the following principles should be applied:

1. It is always best if possible to avoid the risk altogether.
2. Combat risks at source.
3. Wherever possible, adapt the work to the individual.
4. Take advantage of technological and technical progress.
5. They should form part of a coherent policy and approach.
6. Give a priority to those measures which protect the whole workplace.
7. Workers need to be involved, and understand what they need to do.
8. A positive 'safety culture' should be developed within the organisation.
9. PPE should only ever be relied upon as the last line of defence against a known hazard.

## Who Should Carry Out The Risk Assessments?

Risk assessments must be completed by a competent person(s), either internally or externally (consultant), as long as the risk assessor has suitable knowledge, understanding and practical experience of the subject of the risk assessment. It is recommended that you seek the advice and support of a competent Health and Safety Advisor, such as Safety Services Direct Ltd, your advisor can then provide you guidance and assistance; review your documentation or complete the Risk Assessment process on your behalf.

## How can Safety Services Direct Ltd Help?

Safety Services Direct Ltd can assist you in complying with your risk assessments duties by either providing completed examples of relevant risk assessments; providing software tools that enable you to quickly and efficiently complete your own risk assessments, or by writing bespoke site specific risk assessments for your organisation/work. You will then be able to comply with the needs of your clients and current health and safety regulations, enabling you to concentrate on your core business.

As part of your risk assessment writing service, we can also generate and append the necessary safe systems of work, method statements and COSHH assessments, presenting the whole document in a professional format to help demonstrate the competence and professionalism of your organisation to existing and potential clients, as well as insurance companies, employees, enforcement agencies and others who may need to see them.

**For more information on our Risk Assessment Writing Service, call us today on:**

**08453 669933**

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