

Home Tree School 25-26
23.5 - Risk Assessment Policy and Guidance

What is risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in an employee's work, could cause harm to them, so that it can be weighed up whether the Proprietor has taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) requires employers to assess the risks to staff, students and others who may be affected by their undertaking, and to record the significant findings of the assessment and any group of employees as being especially at risk. All staff should be alert to changing circumstances and should take appropriate actions to reduce or stop an activity if the level of risk seems inappropriate. Risk assessments are also required by other legislation, i.e. COSHH, Manual Handling, Visual Display Screen Equipment etc. The results of and risk assessment and subsequent control measure should be made know to the staff, students and visitors concerned. In assessing the risks in the workplace, the Proprietor will require the Health and Safety Manager to:

- look for the hazards;
- decide who might be harmed and how;
- decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;
- record the findings;
- review the assessment and if necessary, revise it.

Requirement of Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should identify the significant risks arising out of work or an activity. The level of detail in a risk assessment should broadly be proportionate to the risk, with the risk assessment undertaking the following:

- ensuring that all relevant risks or hazards are addressed;
- addressing what actually happens during activities;
- ensuring that all groups of employees and others who might be affected are considered;
- identifying groups of workers who might be particularly at risk e.g. students, inexperienced workers, students and staff with additional needs and
- taking account of existing preventative or precautionary measures.

Regular and systematic inspections and risk assessments of all potential hazardous substances and work activities will be made by, or under the authority of, the executive responsible for health and safety and will take into account all the relevant regulations and code of practice. Specialist advice will be obtained if necessary and the risk assessment will be reviewed periodically. The significant findings will be recorded and appropriate preventative and/or protective measures taken as necessary.

Complying with both regulatory requirements and best practice guidelines, our risk assessments also take into consideration that visitors, including those who deliver pupils to the school and collect them, can have younger and older children with them, who of necessity will have to enter the premises.

Our risk assessments are working documents which will be rigorously monitored, and formally reviewed on an on-going basis by the school's health and safety officer as well as the staff caring for the children. In support of this process risk assessments will be an agenda item at the quarterly meeting of the Health and Safety Committee.

In addition to the relevant risk assessments being located in the relevant rooms/areas, they will also be available for inspection in the school office.

Looking for Hazards

You can look for hazards by:

- consultation and conducting inspections of the workplace;
- analysing jobs;
- adopting a “what if” approach;
- listing all Acts and Regulations as they apply to the workplace.

Manufacturers’ instructions, accident records, ill health records, etc., can help to identify hazards.

Advice to all staff

Look only for hazards which you could reasonably expect to result in significant harm under the conditions in your workplace. Use the following examples as a guide:

- slipping / tripping hazards (e.g. poorly maintained floors or stairs);
- fire (e.g. from flammable materials);
- chemicals (e.g. Battery Acid);
- moving parts of machinery, (e.g. blades);
- work at height, (e.g. from mezzanine floors);
- pressure systems, (e.g. gas systems and bottles);
- vehicles (e.g. tractors & trailers);
- electricity (e.g. poor wiring);
- dust fume (e.g. welding);
- manual handling;
- noise;
- poor lighting;
- low temperature.

IS RISK ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED?

Have you already taken precautions against the risks from the hazards you listed? For example, have you provided:

- adequate information, instruction or training?
- adequate systems or procedures?

Do the precautions:

- meet the standards set by a legal requirement?
- comply with a recognised industry standard?
- represent good practice?
- reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable?

If so, then the risks are adequately controlled, but you need to indicate the precautions you have in place. You may refer to procedures, manuals, company rules, etc giving this information. If the risk is not adequately controlled, an ‘action list’ should be written.

Who Might be Harmed?

There is no need to list individuals by name, just groups of staff conducting similar work, or why they may be affected, e.g.:

- office staff;
- maintenance staff;
- contractors;
- people sharing your workplace;
- operators;
- cleaners;

- members of the public.

Pay particular attention to:

- staff with disabilities;
- visitors;
- inexperienced staff;
- lone workers.

Recording the Findings

You do not need to keep a record if you have fewer than five employees, although it is useful to keep it written down. If more than five staff are employed, significant hazards and conclusions must be recorded and staff should be informed of the findings.

The Proprietor should be able to show that:

- a proper check was made;
- you asked who might be affected;
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards;
- the precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is low.

Keep the records for future reference: an inspector may ask for them or if you become involved in any legal action they will be required.

WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO CONTROL THE RISK?

What more could you reasonably do to reduce these risks which you found were not adequately controlled?

You will need to give priority to those which affect large numbers of people and / or could result in serious harm. Apply the principles below when taking further action, if possible in the following order:

- remove the risk completely;
- try a less risky option;
- prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding or fencing);
- organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard;
- issue personnel protective equipment;
- provide welfare facilities (e.g. washing facilities for removal of contamination and first aid).

Review and Revision

If there is a significant change in working practices, e.g. purchase of new machinery or substances, employment of new staff, etc., this could present new hazards. You don't need to amend your assessment for trivial changes, only for significant ones.

It is good practice to review assessments from time to time to ensure precautions are still working effectively.

Staff involved in promoting Health and Safety

All staff carry out a risk assessment of their specific rooms and surrounding areas and complete a Room Safety Audit at regular intervals.

Risk Assessments

In order to create a safer environment at the school and also to comply with HSE regulations, we are required to carry out Risk Assessments of any activity that involves a hazard. A hazard is defined as an activity that has the potential to cause harm to either children, staff, visitors or members of the public. The risk assessments by staff in their rooms and for local off-site activities will be based on the LCP Risk Assessments 2nd Edition.