

## 1. Introduction

Risk Assessments are required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Every employer must make a risk assessment of:

- the health and safety of employees who are exposed to whilst they are at work; and
- the risks to the health and safety of persons not in their employment arising out of or in connection with the work being undertaken.

One of the important things to remember about Risk Assessments is that they must be appropriate; i.e. 'suitable and sufficient' regards to the nature and scale of the task or location; the likelihood of the risks; and the severity of the risks; and be understandable and repeatable.

Failure to carry out a proper risk assessment could result in an accident occurring and people being injured. In some cases, even if no harm was in fact caused, an offence can be committed even if the assessment was done in accordance with the existing guidelines were introduced in February 2016 for Health and Safety and Hygiene offences. The size of any fines levied will be based on the severity of the offence, the status of your company, and the financial resources of the company. The Court could potentially levy fines that would put the company out of business altogether if the Court deems that this is an acceptable consequence of the offence.

In addition, if the Court finds a company to be guilty of "consent, connivance or neglect" in relation to most serious offences, they can be liable for even a prison sentence up to a maximum of 2 years. So it is essential for companies to make sure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out.

For businesses in the private sector, there is also the HSE's Fee For Intervention (FFI) which can be up to £5000.

## 2. What are Hazards and Risks?

A hazard is something that has the potential to cause harm (this can include articles, substances, plant or machinery, noise, etc.) in the working environment and other aspects of work organisation.

A risk is the likelihood of an accident or injury occurring as a result of a hazard being realised. The extent of the risk will depend on:

- the likelihood of that hazard being realised; and
- the potential severity of the harm that could be caused by resultant injury or adverse health effects; and
- the population which is exposed to the hazard, i.e. the number of people who might be exposed to the hazard.

So a risk assessment involves identifying the hazards present in any working environment or arising out of the work being undertaken and evaluating the extent of the risks posed by those hazards, and the measures or precautions and their effectiveness.

It should identify how the risks arise and how they impact on those affected. This information is needed to make decisions on how to manage those risks so that the decisions are made in an informed, rational and structured manner, and the action taken is proportionate.

### **3. Five Steps to Risk Assessment**

1. Look for and identify the hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the level of risk(s) arising from the hazards and decide whether the existing precautions are sufficient or whether more should be done.
4. Record your findings.
5. Review your assessment and revise it if needed.

## Five Steps to Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment Form				RA Ref No:			
Assessor	Job Title	Assessment Date	Review Dates / Initials				
Assessment task or location:							
Persons at risk	Frequency	Details	Are any disabled?	Comments			
Staff			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Contractors			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Visitors			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Gen. Public / Others			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
Hz No.	Hazard description	How are persons affected?	Level of Risk			Existing controls	Further controls / action
			P	S	R		
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
<b>Probability (P)</b>		5=very likely, 4=likely, 3=quite possible, 2=possible, 1=unlikely					
<b>Severity (S)</b>		5=fatal, 4=severe, 3=moderate, 2=slight, 1=negligible					
<b>Risk (R)</b>		0-8=low risk, no action required. 9-15=medium risk, ensure adequate controls are in use. 16-25=high risk, stop operation & implement control measures					

© Simply-docs – Risk Assessment Form

1. Look for and identify the hazards;
2. Decide who might be harmed and how;
3. Evaluate the level of risk(s) arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done;
4. Record your findings;
5. Review your assessment from time to time and revise it if necessary

If you look at the Risk Assessment form above, you will see the columns almost mirror the five steps.

The risk assessments in this folder are based around a 5 x 5 matrix – Probability x Severity= Risk

Probability	Severity
5 = Very likely	5 = Fatal
4 = Likely	4 = Severe/life changing
3 = Quite possible	3 = Moderate
2 = Possible	2 = Slight
1 = Unlikely	1 = Negligible

Probability	5	10	15	20	25
	4	8	12	16	20
	3	6	9	12	15
	2	4	6	8	10
	1	2	3	4	5
	Severity				

## Risk

<b>16 - 25 = High Risk</b>	Stop, implement controls
<b>9 - 15 = Medium Risk</b>	Ensure adequate controls in place
<b>0 - 8 = Low Risk</b>	No action needed

Below is a fully worked example showing you how to fill in the blank template.

Risk Assessment Form						RA Ref No: Off1	
Assessor		Job Title		Assessment Date		Review Dates / Initials	
A.N Other		Office Manager		22 <sup>nd</sup> Nov 2011		21 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2012	
Assessment task or location:		Main entrance/reception area					
Persons at risk	Details	Frequency	Are any disabled?		Comments		
Staff	Receptionist	All day	Yes	No			
Contractors	Na		Yes	No			
Visitors	Sales reps	As and when	Yes	No			
Gen. Public / Others	Na		Yes	No			
Hz No.	Hazard description	How are persons affected?	Level of Risk			Existing controls	Further controls / action
			P	S	R		
1	Slips trips and falls	Ripped carpet by door has caused some people to trip	5	4	20	None	Repair/renew carpet. Short term use warning signage
2	Fire	Smoke or fire could injure anyone in area	2	5	10	Fire doors from factory kept closed. Extinguishers serviced annually	Ensure Fire RA is carried out
3	Collision with motor vehicles	Vehicles using car park could cause injury to pedestrians	4	4	16	None	Create markings on roadway for pedestrians. Install safety signage
4	Noise from adjacent factory	Noise from factory machinery has detrimental effect on receptionist's hearing and use of telephone	4	4	16	Fire door kept closed most of the time - ineffective	Carry out noise assessment and act on results
5							
<small>Probability (P) 5=very likely, 4=likely, 3=quite possible, 2=possible, 1=unlikely                  Severity (S) 5=fatal, 4=severe, 3=moderate, 2=slight, 1=negligible                  Risk (R) 0-8=low risk, no action required. 9-15=medium risk, ensure adequate controls are in use. 16-25=high risk, stop operation &amp; implement control measures</small>							
© Simply-docs – Risk Assessment Form							

### 1. Look for and identify the hazards

In the worked example we can see the hazards are listed as-

Trips and falls: Fire: Collision with moving vehicles in the car park: Noise from the adjoining factory.

## **2. Decide who might be harmed and how**

- a. Those who may be affected by these hazards are the receptionist and any sales reps who may call.
- b. Then in column 2 we list how they may be affected, in this case, there is a ripped carpet that has already caused people to trip; Fire and smoke, possibly from the factory; the risk of pedestrians being run over by cars in the car park; noise from the factory potentially causing the receptionist long term hearing problems, and preventing from using the phones properly now.

## **3. Evaluate the level of risk(s) arising from the hazards and decide whether the existing precautions are sufficient or whether more should be done**

- a. In the column marked 'Existing Controls' you will put whatever measures you already have in place. In this case there are no measures to manage the ripped carpet or the manoeuvring vehicles; there is a fire door separating the factory from the reception area and there are serviced extinguishers to hand; and the fire door serves to act as a sound barrier to the noisy factory processes/machinery.
- b. Are these sufficient? Obviously not, so you would input the extra measures into the final column – Further Controls/Action.
- c. The trip hazards would need to have the carpet replaced as soon as possible but in the short term putting up warning signage would help.
- d. Has a Fire Risk Assessment been carried out? You would need to check and arrange for that.
- e. The car park would need fixed barriers to be completely safe, but if that is not practicable, the minimum you would need to do is have clearways painted onto the ground to show pedestrian walkways and then install signage to show everyone where they can go.
- f. The fire door is clearly not good enough to keep the noise out, so you would need to commission a proper noise assessment and then act on the findings. A short term solution may be to build a lobby between the two rooms.

## **4. Record your findings**

- a. It is vital to remember that a risk assessment is not a stand-alone tool. It is only the first step in reducing the level of risk. Once you have carried out your risk assessments you need to transfer your further controls information to your Action Plan.
- b. In the Action Plan you need to show who is to be responsible for making sure tasks are done, so you put in what work is needed, who will organise/do it, how important it is – by using the Priority key at the bottom of the sheet you can decide if something needs to be done immediately or can be delayed for a month or two, or more if necessary.

Risk Assessment - Action Plan						
Assessor	Job Title	Start Date	Review Dates			
A N Other	Office Manager	22 Nov 2011	22 Dec	22 Jan	22 Feb	22 Mar
Assessment task or location:						
RA No.	Action Required	Priority	By Whom	Target Date	Completion Date	Initials
Off1/1	Repair/renew carpet.	A	T Boss	22 Dec		
Off1/1	Supply warning signage as temporary measure	A	AN Other	29Nov		
Off1/2	Ensure Fire RA is carried out	B	AN Other	22 Jan		
Off1/3	Create markings on roadway for pedestrians. Install safety signage	A	AN Other	22 Dec		
Off1/4	Carry out noise assessment and act on results	C	AN Other	22 Feb		
Off1/4	Build lobby between reception and factory floor	B	T Boss	22 Jan		
<b>Priority Key</b> A – Immediate   B – One month   C – Two months   D Three months						
© Simply-docs – HS.GEN.04 Risk Assessment Action Plan						

The important thing to remember is an acronym – **SMART**

In health and safety terms this stands for:

**S** - Specific

**M** - Manageable or measurable

**A** - Achievable

**R** - Relevant or Realistic

**T** - Time tabled/ time specific

All the 'further controls' in the right hand column meet the SMART requirements.

## 5. Review your assessment and revise it if needed

- Finally, remember that carrying out a Risk Assessment is not a one off exercise. Work environments change, people's skill levels change - both up and down, machines and tools, and materials change.
- You should revisit your Risk Assessments once you have completed your remedial works on the action plan and then regularly to make sure that you remain aware of the hazards in your workplace.