



8. Risk Management

Risk Management is the process used to analyse a situation and then work towards minimising harm towards people or property.

Everyone is responsible for contributing to risk management by reporting risk issues and or removing the cause where possible e.g. electrical leads left out risking tripping hazards, tools left out which could slip and cause injury.

The committee is responsible for reviewing and assessing risk and developing the necessary actions to mitigate or eliminate the hazard. Risk should be a regular agenda item for committee meetings.

Where a possible risk is identified it must be reported to the committee, **anyone can do this.**

The committee will assess the risk and decide the appropriate actions to control it.

Assessing Risk Process

Spot the Risk

The first step is to walk around the Shed and find the obvious things that could put the health or safety of anyone in your workplace in danger.

A risk is anything that has the potential to cause injury, illness or damage to anyone's health. Some of the risks will be able to be fixed straight away such as picking up an electrical lead that may cause someone to trip, cleaning up a spill on the floor or moving a frequently used or heavy item onto a lower shelf.

Also talk to the members. The people who do the job regularly are the best people to advise about any risks associated with their work. Ask members which tasks cause problems or make them concerned.

- **Use safety checklists**

These are a good way to help you identify some of the common risks.

- **Review manufacturers information**

Review the information available from designers or manufacturers including materials safety data sheets and instructions and also product labels.

- **Check injury records and incident reports**

By looking at your injury records, you will be able to get a good idea of what is causing your members' injuries.

Assess the Risk

When the risks are identified, the level of risk needs to be established.

It is necessary to identify the likelihood of a risk causing injury, illness or damage to health.

The list of risks may be surprisingly long, with some posing more safety risks than others.

It is necessary to decide which risks are more serious than others, so that they can be dealt with first.



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To assess the risk associated with each risk, ask these questions:

What is the potential impact of the risk?

How severe could an injury or illness be?

What is the worst possible damage the risk could cause to someone's health?

Would it require simple first aid only?

Cause permanent ill health or disability?

Could it kill?

How likely is the risk to cause someone harm?

Could it happen at any time or would it be a rare event?

How often are workers exposed to the risk?

Answering these questions will help you assess the risk level of the risk, whether it is a low, moderate, significant or high risk.

Fix the Problem

When the risks are spotted and their risk assessed, ways need to be developed to fix them. This is known as risk control is the third step.

The aim is always to remove a risk completely from the workplace.

Where this is impractical, other alternatives will be systematically worked through.

Sometimes this will result in more than one control measure to reduce the exposure to risks.

Control Measures

Eliminate the risk.

For example, repair damaged equipment; use a lifting machine to do the lifting in the workplace; stop using a dangerous chemical.

If this is not practical, then:

Substitute the risk with a safer alternative.

For example, break down larger loads into smaller, lighter loads; use a less toxic chemical.

If this is not practical, then:

Isolate the risk

For example, restrict access to risky work areas or machines; use chemicals in a safe dedicated work area.

Use engineering controls

For example, place guards on dangerous parts of machinery; use a trolley to move heavy loads, provide extraction for dusty operations.



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If this is not practical, then:

Use administrative controls.

Have clear safety notices on machines; change work practices: train members in safe work procedures; carry out routine maintenance of equipment.

If this is not practical, then:

Use personal protective equipment (PPE).

Provide workers with protective equipment such as gloves, masks or ear defenders/plugs and train them to use PPE correctly.

Risk Management is not a one-off event, it is an ongoing process. Once the risks are identified, assessed and resolved, they should be followed up with the fourth step of the risk management process.

Evaluate results

Evaluation is an important step in the Risk Management process to find out if the changes have resolved the risk problem.

Talk to the members and ask these questions:

- Are the changes making a difference?
- What do members think?
- Will the solutions reduce risks and prevent injury or illness?
- Do they create new risks or increase the risk of existing ones?
- Are there any ways to make further improvement?

Set a date to re-evaluate the task, choosing a timeframe appropriate to the task and the risk involved. This could be anywhere between a week and three years.