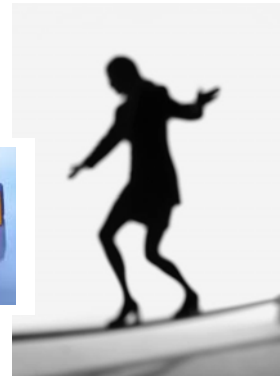


For: OCC Managers  
Heads of all Establishments and Settings  
Governors/Management Committees  
Trade Union Safety Representatives  
Employee Noticeboards  
Intranet



## RISK ASSESSMENT

### LEGISLATION

**Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended)**  
**The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**

### Purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that, as the employer, Oxfordshire County Council fulfils its statutory requirement to assess risks to its employees and to other people who may be affected by its activities.

### Scope

In practice the responsibility to assess risks is delegated to managers and supervisors in all Council establishments and settings.

### Information

*The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations* require all employers to assess risks to their employees, and others who may be affected by their activities, specifically to:

- carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- identify workplace hazards by focusing on the risks that are significant ie (the ones with the potential to cause real harm)
- decide who might be harmed and how
- evaluate the risks (by considering how likely the risk is to occur and how severe) the outcome might be and then decide on any precautions
- record the significant findings and implement them
- review the risk assessment and update as necessary.
- communicate the outcomes of risk assessments to relevant employees

Issued by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, Shared Services, Unipart House, Garsington Road, OXFORD, OX4 2GQ

Risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people in the workplace (including activities undertaken), and the process of identifying sensible control measures that will help prevent accidents and incidents from occurring.

The law does not expect all risks to be eliminated but it does require employers to protect people, 'so far as is reasonably practicable', by risk assessing tasks, ensuring that the risk assessment is both suitable and sufficient and by putting in place measures to control risks reducing them to their lowest possible level.

The level of detail required in a risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk. Those carrying out risk assessment should refer to relevant sources of information, such as legislation, appropriate guidance, supplier manuals, and manufacturers' instructions, including trade press, to ensure that the assessment is both 'suitable and sufficient'. Some workplace activities require specific risk assessment under other regulations. These include:

- Manual Handling
- Use of Display Screen Equipment
- Control of Substances Hazardous Health
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment PPE
- First Aid

Risk assessments carried out under such regulations do not need to be repeated in addition under the Management Regulations, as long as they cover all significant risks.

Risk assessment is the key process in successfully identifying and helping to prevent possible causes of incidents and accidents when proactive measures are taken. In any event, **it is a legal obligation** and must be completed. Failure to undertake risk assessment will not only increase the risk of incidents occurring but will inevitably **lead to enforcement action by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or other enforcement body**. There is no doubt that risk assessment can result in significant savings to the organisation, not just monetary but also on legal/humanitarian grounds, providing additional justification for management commitment in terms of time and resources.

## **Responsibilities of Managers/Heads of Establishments/Settings**

Directors are accountable for ensuring that risk assessments have been fully implemented in their Directorate, with responsibility for ensuring risk assessments are delegated to managers/heads of establishment/settings and carried out.

Risk assessments can be undertaken on a local basis by supervisors of an activity provided the person is competent, i.e.

- has suitable training in basic risk assessment techniques
- has a thorough knowledge of the work activity and the associated hazards.

Training in basic risk assessment is available through the Learning and Development Team. In some cases specific technical skills may be required, in these cases you should refer to 'competent advice' which may be available in-house or you may need to contact a specialist body such as suppliers of plant, equipment and chemicals.

**NB It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that competent persons are involved in carrying out risk assessment.**

## Assessing the risks in your workplace

A **hazard** – is something that has the **potential to cause harm** i.e. slippery floors, lifting activities, electricity, chemicals, etc



**Hazard:** A shark has the potential to cause harm

A **risk** is the **likelihood and consequence of that harm being realised.**

By following five basic steps you will be able to successfully carry out a risk assessment (See below and Annex 1).



**Risk:** of shark attack on the beach – low/non-existent



**Risk:** of shark attack in the water – may be high

## Five Steps to Risk Assessment

1. Look for the hazards
- ↓
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
- ↓
3. Evaluate the risk and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
- ↓
4. Record and communicate significant findings
- ↓
5. Review the assessment and revise it if necessary

Use the RA1 Form contained in Annex 2 to record your risk assessment. For further information see the HSE Guide – 5 Steps to Risk Assessment.

You should review all risk assessments **annually**. However, should a significant change occur, don't wait, review at the time and amend your existing assessment.


### Responsibilities of employees

Risk assessments need to consult the people who do the work. Employees should co-operate in the risk assessment process, and have a duty to co-operate with any safety procedures or control measures that are put in place as a result of the risk assessment.

### Important additional information

**A risk assessment is not just a paper exercise; it should be a working document that must be communicated to all relevant employees and others, particularly new employees who may be unfamiliar with the environment.**

**For further information and advice:**

	email and web addresses	
<b>Specialist:</b>		
HSE	web address: <a href="http://www.hse.gov.uk">www.hse.gov.uk</a> <a href="#">HSE Guide - 5 Steps to Risk Assessment</a>	0845 345 0055
H&S Training Learning & Development	email: <a href="mailto:LandD.sharedservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk">LandD.sharedservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>	01865 797123
<b>General:</b>		
Health, Safety & Wellbeing Team	email: <a href="mailto:healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk">healthandsafetyhelp@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>  web address: <a href="http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety">http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/links/intranet/healthandsafety</a>	01865 797222

## GUIDANCE ON THE FIVE STEPS TO RISK ASSESSMENT

### Step 1 Identify the hazards

First you need to work out how people could be harmed. When you work in a place every day it is easy to overlook some hazards, so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- Walk around your workplace and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Identify significant risks likely to arise, disregard trivial risks associated with life in general.
- Involve your employees or their representatives in the process, and use their experience, knowledge and expertise. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.
- Remember to consider long-term hazards to health in terms of exposure to noise over a period of time or exposure to a hazardous substance.
- If you are planning an event or activity, either on-site or off, carry out a risk assessment in advance to ensure that appropriate controls are in place to manage the risk.
- Consider activities outside the workplace – i.e. visits to clients by employees.
- Check manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for substances and equipment as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and control measures.
- Your incident, accident and near-miss records will give you an indication of what incidents and injuries are occurring.
- Consider the hazards posed to other persons, as well as employees.

### Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how

Identify who could be harmed i.e. pupils, people working in the area, cleaners, visitors, maintenance workers, members of the public and in each case identify how they might be harmed i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur.

Certain groups of people need special consideration so please ensure you check requirements and guidance in these cases.

- New and young workers
- New or expectant mothers
- People with disabilities
- Those whose first language is not English
- Students on work experience
- Lone workers
- Mobile workers
- Elderly workers



If you work in a shared workplace with others, you will need to ensure risk assessments have been undertaken in your area.

### Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having identified the hazards you need to decide what to do about them and the best way of doing this is to:

- Look at what controls you already have in place and how the work is organised.
- Then compare this with best practice - relevant information such as:
  - legislation
  - appropriate guidance
  - supplier manuals and manufacturers instructionsto see if you should be doing more to bring yourself up to standard.

The aim is to:

- **Avoid** the risk altogether by eliminating it wherever possible
- **Combat the risk at source**, reduce exposure to the harm by substituting something less hazardous (e.g. if a floor is slippery treat with a non-slip surface rather than put in a hand rail)
- **Adapt work** to the individual - isolate or contain the risk
- Use **technological and technical processes** to control risk (they often make the work safer and more efficient)
- Have adequate **procedural controls** in place
- Ensure adequate **information, instruction, training and supervision** are in place
- Issue **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** if necessary, following appropriate risk assessment.

Involve employees and their representatives when deciding on what controls to use to ensure that what you propose will actually work and will not cause additional risks. Monitor the controls you have put into place to ensure that they are being followed.

### Step 4 Record any significant findings and implement any actions/control measures

You need to be able to demonstrate that:

- a proper check of the task was undertaken
- you ascertained who might be affected
- you dealt with all the significant hazards, taking into account the number and type of people who could be involved
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low
- your staff were involved in the process and informed

You may be able to introduce simple, effective controls, such as providing information, instruction, training and supervision to staff, or by introducing safe systems of work, however in some cases there may be a number of controls that need to be introduced.

These need to be prioritised in order of those most likely to cause harm to people. If a number of controls are necessary it is a good idea to provide a plan of **how the actions are to be achieved, by whom, and by when.**

The form Risk Assessment Record (RA1) can be used to record significant risks. For manual handling, control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH) and display screen equipment risk assessments please see the specific guidance on the Health, Safety & Wellbeing intranet pages.

## **Step 5 Review your risk assessment and update if necessary**

Your risk assessment will only be valid as long as things stay the same. You will need to review your risk assessment if:

- a change to your work environment occurs
- an accident occurs
- new equipment or substances are introduced
- there is a change to relevant legislation
- a work procedure or process changes.

## **Benefits of Risk Assessment**

As part of an overall health and safety strategy there are significant benefits from having an integrated approach to risk prevention:

- It can lead to a reduction of risk.
- It can help identify priorities.
- It can help ensure resources are being directed at greatest areas of risk.
- It can improve health and safety management systems within the organisation.

<b>Activity / Process / Operation</b> (If the activity or process is complex it may require more than one risk assessment)	
<b>Identify the hazards (anything that can cause harm):</b>	
<b>Who might be harmed and how?</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>Estimate Risk Level (H/M/L) now</b> <sup>2</sup>
<b>What measures are in place to reduce the risk?</b> <sup>3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11</sup>	<b>Estimate Risk Level now</b> <sup>12</sup>
<b>What further action is needed to reduce the risk? (State actions)</b>	<b>Specify dates</b>

<sup>1</sup> Consider the number of people exposed

<sup>2</sup> Estimate initial risk High, Medium or Low

<sup>3</sup> Has all the health and safety information been obtained including policies, procedures etc?

<sup>4</sup> Can the hazard be eliminated or safer substitution achieved?

<sup>5</sup> Consider all necessary control measures including procedural and technical controls

<sup>6</sup> Are controls to the required standard and regularly maintained?

<sup>7</sup> Have emergency action plans been considered?

<sup>8</sup> Is training and instruction adequate and information available?

<sup>9</sup> Is supervision adequate?

<sup>10</sup> Is PPE required?

<sup>11</sup> Is health surveillance required?

<sup>12</sup> Estimate risk level achieved – High, Medium or Low



**Relevant employees who need to be informed of this risk assessment (employees to sign when they have read).**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>
1		2	
3		4	
5		6	
7		8	
9		10	
11		12	
13		14	

Where more than 14 employees need to be informed how will this be done?

How will you ensure it has happened?

**Monitoring Arrangements** (eg Before each use/occasion, during handover/staff meeting, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually during site inspection etc)

**Review Date/Frequency**

<p><b>Name of Assessor</b></p> <p><b>Job Title</b></p> <p><b>Date of Assessment</b></p>	<p><b>Signed</b> (Manager/Head of Establishment/Setting)</p> <p><b>Name</b></p> <p><b>Date</b></p>
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