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# **Risk Assessment Procedure**



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1	Creation	2008
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# Risk Assessment Procedure

## 1. Introduction

It is a general legal requirement of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) to carry out risk assessments. There are also specific requirements under other regulations to carry out specialised assessments, for example, manual handling, the use of chemicals, lasers, radiation, noise and machinery etc.

The following procedure should be adopted for general risk assessments of an area, task, process or activity. It is based on the HSE guidance “Five Steps to Risk Assessment”.

Risk assessment should be undertaken systematically so as to ensure that all significant hazards are identified, along with those persons at risk, the likelihood of each hazard occurring, and the likely severity were the hazard to occur. Where appropriate, adequate control measures must be decided upon, using the hierarchy of risk. These control measures must then be implemented to ensure the risk mitigation is complete “as far as is reasonably practicable”.

## 2. Definitions

**Hazards:** A hazard is a potential source of harm or adverse health effect on a person or persons.

**Risk:** A risk is the potential (likelihood) that a person may be harmed and suffer adverse health effects (severity) if exposed to a hazard.

**Control/Mitigating Measure:** Control/mitigating measures include actions that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of a risk being realised or reduce the severity of a risk if it was realised.

## 3. Risk Assessment

### 3.1 Arrangements for implementation

Assessments will be recorded on the Robert Gordon University Risk Assessment Template or a pre-agreed variation of this form, and in accordance with The Robert Gordon University risk assessment procedure.

The exceptions to this would be where a specialised risk assessment is required, for example using lasers or radiation, COSHH, fire, DSE (workstation). This list is not exhaustive. The School or Department may amend the form to suit a specific technical risk, providing the format is agreed and recorded by the Department of Governance and Compliance.

Records will be held by the School or Department, in the area to which they apply, and will be accessible for employees or students for information purposes, and for auditing purposes.

### 3.2 Important Details

Importantly the first details recorded on the risk assessment should be:

- organisation name
- description of what is being assessed
- the name of the person(s) carrying out the assessment
- the date of assessment

- the assessor(s) signature(s)
- suggested review date (although this may be sooner, should any factor change)

### 3.3 Identifying Hazards

An examination of the work area, task, activity or process should be undertaken by those who are involved or have experience of the subject matter, and should initially involve listing all associated hazards (a hazard is something which has the potential to cause harm, and could occur):

#### Examples of hazards:

- Chemicals and substances Dust / Fume inhalation
- Electricity
- Fire
- Machinery
- Manual Handling
- Noise
- Lighting
- Slipping / Tripping hazards
- Vehicles
- Falls from height
- Using Display Screen Equipment

### 3.4 Identify those at risk:

Next the persons carrying out the risk assessment need to identify those persons at particular risk from the particular work area, task, activity or process.

Some examples of the type of persons likely to be at risk, depending on the specifics of the assessment, may include:

<b>Who?</b>	<b>What?</b>
Employees	Equipment
Trainees	Property
Students	Materials
Contractors	Environment
General Public	
Visitors	

In deciding who or what may be harmed, the assessor is beginning the process of assessing the risk.

### 3.5 Assess the risk

The assessors then need to identify the likelihood that the hazard could occur, and the probable severity, were the hazard to occur:

“It is probable that a chef may cut their finger on a kitchen knife whilst cutting vegetables and the severity would likely be a minor injury (a minor cut or laceration). So, this should be recorded in the assessment.”

The assessors should use the Robert Gordon University key detailed below, for measuring likelihood and severity:

Likelihood	Severity
Certain	Probable death of 1 or more persons
Probably	Severe Injury, Loss of Limb, Severe Burns
Possible	Minor injury, cuts, bruising, minor
Unlikely	No ill effect

Further examples or advice on assessing the risk is available from the Department of Governance and Compliance

### 3.6 Identify control measures that are already in place

The assessor then needs to identify control measures that have already been implemented. For example, if a manual handling task is being assessed, the assessor may note that the load has already been broken down in to smaller amounts to make smaller lighter loads.

Once all existing control measures have been noted, the assessor then needs to decide if the level of risk is at the lowest possible level, and whether this is tolerable. If the level of risk is not tolerable, additional control measures will require to be implemented to reduce the risk level further.

If the risk cannot be reduced to a tolerable level, then the area, task, activity or process must not be carried out and must be re-designed or alternate means of operating decided upon.

### 3.7 Control the risk

Any intolerable risks identified in the assessment should be eliminated or reduced “as far as is reasonably practicable” to an acceptable level. This should involve considering any current risk control measures and assessing whether any further measures can be taken to reduce the risk. The following hierarchy of risk control should be used:

#### Eliminate

The best way to reduce a risk is to remove the hazard. If the hazard is significant, eliminate it at source and remove any risk attached – e.g. do not do the task, outsource or negate the risk by other means.

#### Substitute

If removing the risk completely cannot be achieved, the hazard should be substituted for something which presents less of a risk - e.g. cleaning products with bleach can be harmful. An alternative product without bleach might suffice.

#### Contain

Preventing access to a hazard - e.g. using a guard over a sharp blade or keeping hazardous chemicals locked in a suitable container - is important when removing the hazard completely is not practical.

#### Reduce exposure

Reducing exposure to a hazard means that the likelihood of harm occurring is less, and so reduces the risk - e.g. computer users can lower the risk of upper limb disorders by doing tasks away from their PC regularly.

#### Training and supervision

The provision of information, training and supervision will help to make sure people follow procedures and are aware of the risks when working with hazards.

These measures only work together with other control.

#### **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

PPE should only be considered as a last resort, once the risk level has already been reduced adequately.

#### **Welfare facilities**

Facilities for washing or first aid should be supplied.

### **3.8 Records**

The assessment should be recorded on an RGU Risk Assessment Form and should be held in an accessible place for those who are involved in the process. The form also acts as an improvement action plan and should be used for tracking implementation of control measures. The findings should be made known to the employees it affects and information / training must be given.

It is not necessary for the Department of Governance and Compliance to hold all risk assessment records centrally. However, an audit programme has been established at which time access to local records will be required. The assessments should therefore be available for audit purposes.

### **3.9 Review**

A risk assessment must be reviewed if there is any significant change to the area, activity/task, process or other significant element, or if there is any other reason to suspect it is no longer valid. It is good practice to review assessments regularly to ensure they are still accurate and controls remain in place.



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