

# **Completing Risk Assessments – Health and Safety Guidance**

## **1. Introduction**

This guidance is aimed at helping people undertake risk assessments in the workplace. A risk assessment is an important step in protecting the health and safety of staff, students and visitors, as well as a legal requirement, (the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MH Regs) and other relevant statutory provisions), and University policy.

The MH Regs impose a duty on employers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments of all significant hazards in the workplace which pose risks to employees and anyone else who may be affected by any work activity. Where the risk assessment made under the MH Regs identifies significant specific hazards, such as hazardous chemicals or noise, a risk assessment dealing with those hazards must be undertaken. This is a requirement of relevant legislation. E.g. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Coshh) 2002 or the Noise at Work Regulations 2005. Separate University policies deal specifically with these topics. (Please refer to the University Health and Safety Service (UH&SS) website, ([UH&SS website](#)) for further information)

Risk assessments help you focus on the significant risks that really matter in the workplace. Those with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily prevent or control risks. For example, ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip, or cupboard drawers are kept closed to ensure people do not walk into them.

For most, that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure that the most

Departmental Safety Officers (DSO) when required, or, where specialist input is needed, the UH&SS).

### **3. How to assess general risks in the workplace**

Follow the five steps in this guidance:

**Step 1**

**Identify the significant hazards**

**Step 2**

**Decide who might be harmed and how**

**Step 3**

**Evaluate (quantify) the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether additional controls are needed**

**Step 4**

**Record**



harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare or trade associations, reputable companies, other Universities).

Firstly, look at what you are already doing. Think about what controls you have in place and how the work is organised. Then compare this with the risk rating and decide whether the risk is now tolerable or acceptable. If not, (if the risk remains substantial or

bring the risk down to at least tolerable levels. In asking yourself this, consider the hierarchy of controls:

1. **Elimination:** Can I get rid of, (avoid), the hazard altogether?  
If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely and the risks reduced to an acceptable level? When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:
2. **Substitution:** Try a less risky option (e.g. use a machine that vibrates less than the former or a chemical that is less hazardous but does the same job);
3. **Engineering controls:** Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding or enclosure);
4. **Administrative controls:** Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard, e.g. (e.g. washing facilities for removal of contamination, limit peoples exposure.
5. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other safety equipment:** Issue protective clothing, footwear, goggles, ear defenders, and / or, equipment such

correctly.

**PPE is the last resort – can be very effective, but must be used in combination with other controls!**

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents is a low-cost precaution considering the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost a lot more, if an accident does happen.

Involve staff, so that you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice

#### **Step 4**

##### **Record your findings and implement them**

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice, will make a difference when looking after staff, students and visitors. Writing down the results of your risk assessment, and sharing them, encourages you to do this.

A number of formats are acceptable as follows;

For routine risks which occur on a regular basis, the attached generic risk assessment form, (**See; Appendix A on page 8**), School / Departmental is an acceptable format for recording the risk assessment.

The following link takes you to an online COSHH risk assessment form which also

safety policy.

has an integral generic risk assessment form which can be used.

Link;

[https://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/healthandsafety/downloads/CO\\_SHH%20Risk%20Assessment%20Safety%20Documentation.pdf](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/media/wwwlboroacuk/content/healthandsafety/downloads/CO_SHH%20Risk%20Assessment%20Safety%20Documentation.pdf)

One off activities, in particular research projects where there is a significant risk, should be under the supervision of an academic supervisor, or in Support Services, a responsible manager.

One off high risk activities involving plant, premises and services should be covered by a health and safety method statement, linked into the risk assessment. This would include non routine deliveries and collections of a high risk nature, for example special deliveries of materials, machinery or the installation and removal of plant and machinery requiring special transport and mechanical handling



## Document management table

Revision date	Document owned by	Author / revised by	Summary of revision	Date of next revision
V1 September 2009	UH& SS	H Weaver	-	
V2 November 2011			Amended risk evaluation tables. New references to new Schools structure added. Tidied up text, format.	
V3 June 2012			Added new links to H&SS website and amended further information section.	
V4 November 2014			Risk assessment policy approved by HSEC in Feb 2014. Guidance updated to reflect new policy. Added reference to new risk assessment policy. Section added to Step 2.	
V5 February 2017			Update references and formatting 0 1 28560 1EW* nB/F	

## Appendix A



If risk remains Substantial or Intolerable, what additional controls are required? (14)

Action plan: (15)

Ref No	Further action required	Action by whom	Action by when	Done

(Residual) risk rating taking into consideration additional controls? (16)

Checked /validated by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Notes to accompany the generic risk assessment form**

The use of this form is recommended by the UH&SS. It is strongly recommended that it be used for all new assessments, and when existing assessments are being substantially revised. However, its use is not compulsory. Providing the assessor uses the same approach and addresses the same issues; alternative layouts may be used.

- (1) Date:** Insert the date that the assessment form is completed. The assessment must be valid on that day and subsequent days, unless circumstances change and amendments are necessary.
- (2) Assessed by:** Insert the name and signature of the assessor. Assessments should be carried out by a competent person. A competent person is someone with sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to properly carry out the task.
- (3) Checked / Validated by: (\*delete one).**

**Checked by:** Insert the



detailed assessment has already been done in another format, the master risk assessment can simply cross-reference to other documentation. For example, the activity might be the use of a carcinogen. The hazard is exposure to hazardous substances and the existing control measures might be listed in a Coshh assessment. Controls might also include use of qualified and/or experienced staff

This document forms