



General Risk Assessment

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Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Policy statement	2
1.2	Status	2
1.3	Training and support	2
2	Scope	2
2.1	Who it applies to	2
2.2	Why and how it applies to them	2
3	Definition of terms	3
3.1	Risk assessment	3
3.2	Hazard	3
3.3	Risk	3
3.4	Suitable and sufficient	3
4	Policy/guidance	3
4.1	What is a risk assessment?	3
4.2	Types of risk assessments	3
4.3	Hazard control	4
4.4	Assessment process	4

1 Introduction

1.1 Policy statement

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to carry out “suitable and sufficient” risk assessments to ensure that any significant risk arising from its undertaking are assessed and either removed or reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

This policy provides guidance on the overall risk assessment process. It outlines the arrangements for identifying, evaluating and reducing risks by completion of suitable and sufficient risk assessments.

1.2 Status

Thanet Health Community Interest Company (TH CIC) aims to design and implement policies and procedures that meet the diverse needs of our service and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. Consideration has been given to the impact this policy might have in respect to the individual protected characteristics of those to whom it applies.

This policy is written in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

1.3 Training and support

TH CIC will provide guidance and support to help those to whom it applies understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Additional support will be provided to managers and supervisors to enable them to deal more effectively with matters arising from this policy.

2 Scope

2.1 Who it applies to

This document applies to all employees of and visitors to the TH CIC, in some circumstances members of the public, other individuals performing functions in relation to the TH CIC, such as agency workers, locums and contractors, who may be exposed to the risk of harm, loss or damage arising out of the activities undertaken by the TH CIC.

2.2 Why and how it applies to them

Risk assessments involve identifying hazards in the workplace and either eliminating or reducing the risks by adding precautions or control measures. By completing risk assessments, the work activities and the working environment will be a safer and healthier workplace.

3 Definition of terms

3.1 Risk assessment

A risk assessment involves a careful examination of the workplace and work activities to identify what could cause harm to people and consideration of the measures and actions to be taken to either eliminate or reduce the risks so far as is reasonably practicable.

3.2 Hazard

Something with the potential to cause harm, injury, loss or damage.

3.3 Risk

The likelihood and severity of that harm, injury, loss or damage occurring.

3.4 Suitable and sufficient

The assessment should be adequate and fit for purpose and designed to meet a required need. The risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk.

4 Policy/guidance

4.1 What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment provides a safe working environment which, as far as is reasonably practicable, is free from the risk of harm, loss or damage.

The assessment identifies the hazards that may cause significant risk and those who may be affected. It determines the existing control measures and identifies any additional requirements in order to remove or reduce those risks.

A risk assessment must also take into account:

- The methods and procedures used in the processing, use, handling or storage of any substances, etc
- The actual and the potential exposure of workers
- The measures and procedures necessary to control such exposure by means of engineering controls, work practices and hygiene practices and facilities

4.2 Types of risk assessments

There are a variety of different risk assessments required under separate Health and Safety legislation including:

General Risk Assessment which is a general examination of the workplace and working environment as required by the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) which is an assessment relating to the use of hazardous chemicals and substances in the workplace.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) which is an assessment examining those employees who use DSE including computers and laptops as a significant part of their normal work (daily for continuous periods of an hour or more).

Manual Handling assesses those employees who are required to undertake any moving or handling task which involves the potential risk of injury.

Working at Height assesses those employees who are required to undertake any form of working at height using equipment such as ladders and step ladders.

Ad hoc assessments for high risk groups such as disabled workers, new and expectant mothers, young workers.

4.3 Hazard control

As part of completing the assessment and in order to help identify methods to control each specific hazard, the following categories should be considered in priority order:

- Elimination (including substitution)
- Engineering controls
- Administrative controls
- Personal Protective Equipment (last resort)

4.4 Assessment process

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) best practice details a five-step approach for completing a risk assessment.

Step 1: Identify the hazards

Identify the most foreseeable hazards and the ones that could have the greatest impact. Hazards could be related to the workplace, work activities, the environment, equipment or substances.

To ensure that all hazards are found:

- Consider all aspects of the working activity/task to be completed
- Include non-routine activities such as maintenance, repair or cleaning
- Review accident/incident/near miss records
- Include people who work off site such as working from home, on other sites, drivers, teleworkers, visiting clients, etc
- Review the method by which the work is organised (include age and experience of people completing the work, systems being used, etc.)
- Identify foreseeable unusual conditions (e.g. power outage)

Step 2: Identify the people at risk

Identify those who could be exposed to the risk such as employees, visitors, contractors and members of the public.

Also consider the individuals or groups of people who could be most vulnerable such as young or inexperienced workers, persons with disabilities, new/expectant mothers as well as those who work closest to the hazard. Should certain individuals or groups exist (such as new/expectant mothers), an additional more detailed specific risk assessment will be required.

Step 3: Evaluate the risk

Identify and detail all the existing control measures. They could include policies and procedures, safe working practices, building arrangements, maintenance inspections information, instruction training, supervision, personal protective equipment. Based on these controls, evaluate whether these measures are suitable and sufficient to prevent the risk from occurring.

A common practice to evaluate the level of risk can include a matrix as detailed below which considers the controls in place and the likelihood of the risk occurring with these controls in place together with the severity of the risk if these controls failed.

On the matrix, select two categories to reflect the likelihood versus the severity. Join these categories together inside the matrix to identify the risk rating. Once the risk rating has been established, now consider what further control measures could be implemented or action taken to reduce the risk rating to a lower score. Document additional control measures which might remove the risk altogether or reduce the likelihood/severity and then score the risk for a second time based on implementing the additional controls. This will enable the residual risk identified to be considered acceptable to work with.

In order to rank or prioritise risk the following example is given:

Table 2 Risk Assessment by the British Standards Organization			
Likelihood of Harm	Severity of Harm		
	Slight Harm	Moderate Harm	Extreme Harm
Very unlikely	Very low risk	Very low risk	High risk
Unlikely	Very low risk	Medium risk	Very high risk
Likely	Low risk	High risk	Very high risk
Very likely	Low risk	Very high risk	Very high risk

Definitions for likelihood of harm

Very likely: Typically experienced at least once every six months by an individual

Likely: Typically experienced once every five years by an individual

Unlikely: Typically experienced once during the working lifetime of an individual

Very unlikely: Less than 1% chance of being experienced by an individual during their working lifetime

Definitions for severity of harm

Potential severity of harm: When establishing potential severity of harm,

information about the relevant work activity should be considered, together with:

- a) Part(s) of the body likely to be affected
- b) Nature of the harm, ranging from slight to extremely harmful

Slightly harmful: (e.g. superficial injuries; minor cuts and bruises; eye irritation from dust; nuisance and irritation; ill-health leading to temporary discomfort)

Harmful: (e.g. lacerations; burns; concussion; serious sprains; minor fractures; deafness; dermatitis; asthma; work-related upper-limb disorders; ill-health)

Extremely harmful: (e.g. amputations; major fractures; poisonings; multiple injuries; fatal injuries; occupational cancer; other severely life-shortening diseases; acute fatal diseases)

Definition for risk level

Tolerability guidance on necessary action and timescale:

Very low: These risks are considered acceptable. No further action is necessary other than to ensure that the controls are maintained.

Low: No additional controls are required unless they can be implemented at very low cost (in terms of time, money and effort). Actions to further reduce these risks are assigned low priority. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the controls are maintained.

Medium: Consideration should be given as to whether the risks can be lowered, where applicable, to a tolerable level and preferably to an acceptable level, but the costs of additional risk-reduction measures should be taken into account. The risk-reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period.

Arrangements should be made to ensure that controls are maintained, particularly if the risk levels are associated with harmful consequences.

High: Substantial efforts should be made to reduce the risk. Risk-reduction measures should be implemented urgently within a defined time period and it might be necessary to consider suspending or restricting the activity or to apply interim risk-control measures until this has been completed. Considerable resources might have to be allocated to additional control measures. Arrangements should be made to ensure that controls are maintained, particularly if the risk levels are associated with extremely harmful consequences and very harmful consequences.

Very high: These risks are unacceptable. Substantial improvements in risk-control measures are necessary so that the risk is reduced to a tolerable or acceptable level. The work activity should be stopped until risk controls are implemented that reduce the risk so that it is no longer very high. If it is not possible to reduce the risk, the work should remain prohibited.

Note: Where the risk is associated with extremely harmful consequences, further assessment is necessary to increase confidence, in the likelihood of harm.

Step 4: Record the findings

TH CIC will ensure all the information is recorded on the risk assessment form, detailing the additional control measures that need to be considered to manage the risks.

TH CIC will ensure the assessment findings and subsequent action are communicated to anyone who may be exposed to the risk.

Step 5: Review the assessment

The risk assessment will be reviewed immediately if the process/situation changes, if new equipment is introduced or if legislation is amended. Otherwise the assessment will be reviewed annually.