



Key Messages

- **A risk assessment is essential to ensuring effective management of health and safety risks**
- **A health and safety management system must include a company specific process for identifying and managing risk**
- **A risk assessment must be specific to the location and activities involved**
- **A risk assessment should focus on those hazards which have the potential to cause real harm**
- **The findings of a risk assessment must be communicated to everyone involved in the activity who must sign to acknowledge receipt and understanding**

Introduction

Risk assessments are a fundamental part of any effective safety management system. The primary purpose of risk assessment is to reduce deaths, serious injuries and ill-health, as well as being a legal requirement. Risk assessments allow you, as a manager, to make a careful examination of what, in your workplace, could cause harm to your employees and others, the likelihood of that harm occurring and what steps you need to take to reduce the risks of injury and ill-health to an acceptable level – including necessary supervision to monitor adherence.

As a manager, you have both a moral and legal responsibility to reduce significant risks to as low as is reasonably practicable.

Poor risk management is currently identified as the biggest root cause of all reportable accidents. As a result, the Health and Safety Leadership Team have developed an initiative to focus on the importance of getting risk assessment right. This essential standard has been developed to identify the key responsibilities and competencies required to ensure that everyone manages risks effectively.

The risk assessment process

In order for a risk assessment process to be effective you must ensure that:

- A company specific process/procedure is in place for managing risk
- Risk assessments are written by managers/supervisors. Leaving operatives to develop their own risk assessments is not legal.
- There is a systematic approach to identify significant hazards (which have the potential to cause real harm) and associated risks.
- Risk assessments are individual to job tasks and need to be 'site specific' – a site visit will ensure that the physical environment is considered.
- Anyone preparing risk assessments is competent. This includes:
 - Having sufficient experience and knowledge in order to appreciate hazards and risks
 - Having core training in the management of health and safety, for example SMSTS, SSSTS or equivalent
 - Having training in the individual company process/procedure for managing risk
- Where appropriate, the workforce are involved in the development of risk assessments.
- Risk assessments must contain suitable information which allows an employee to understand what hazards they may be exposed to when carrying out the task.



- Contractors/sub-contractors risk assessments are reviewed prior to work being carried out.
- Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and adapted as necessary.

Remember, generic risk assessments are not site specific and are therefore not considered to be suitable on their own.

Contents of a risk assessment

When developing a risk assessment you should refer to the guidance set out in the HSE '5 steps to risk assessment'.

Information and instruction

Everyone involved in the activity must be briefed on the findings of the risk assessment in a clear concise manner so that they understand:

- What control measures have been put in place for their protection
- What action is expected of them
- What to do if the control measures cannot be implemented or do not provide adequate protection

The briefing must be recorded and should identify:

- Details of the risk assessment (reference name/number)
- The person giving the briefing
- Date of briefing
- Names of people being briefed
- Signatures of people being briefed

Where possible, the briefing should take place at the point of work. A copy of the risk assessment must be attached to the briefing.

Safe system of work

For many activities, properly prepared risk assessments are sufficient to manage the risks. However, where the task is particularly complex or where the sequence of events is paramount to maintaining safety, the risk assessment may need to be supplemented by a method statement and necessary permits.

Monitoring

Checking that work is proceeding in accordance with the risk assessment is an essential part of any monitoring/inspection process. Where differences between agreed working methods and actual site practices are identified, additional investigation should be carried out to understand the cause of the deviation and to implement the necessary action to rectify.

The attached table details the requirements of those who have specific responsibilities in relation to preparing and monitoring risk assessments. It outlines the key competencies, procedural requirements and monitoring arrangements to ensure effective risk control.

Senior Managers and Directors are expected to provide visible leadership on site and be active in the review, checking and audit of risk assessments as part of their routine monitoring activities.

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Risk Assessment



| Responsibility of | Competence | Procedural Requirements | Monitoring Arrangements |
|---|--|---|--|
| Manager/Supervisor | <p><u>Mandatory</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of company specific risk assessment process • Core safety training such as SMSTS, IOSH managing safely or company equivalent <p><u>Optional – Role Dependant</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational Leadership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit location of work before preparing the risk assessment • Involve workforce/site supervisor with preparation of risk assessment • Prepare site specific risk assessment • Link to method statement if one is generated. • Use the relevant company templates or guidelines to develop the risk assessment • Communicate findings of the risk assessment with everyone affected by the work at the point of work. • Manage changes to method or environment. • Confirm the period of review • Ensures that the risk assessment and other relevant documents eg lift plan, are retained at the point of work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular inspection to ensure that site practices reflect the risk assessment • Regular review to ensure the continued effectiveness of the control measures. • Review to confirm the validity and of the risk assessment and relevancy of control measures • Record findings of inspections. • Ensure that any subcontracts are following these requirements |
| Others input to risk assessment – (eg. Engineers, H&S professionals, management peers etc). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As for Manager/Supervisor above | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where possible visit location prior to reviewing the risk assessment • Verify hazards are identified and included in method statement if one is provided • Where input from other personnel, risk assessments to be reviewed and signed off by manager with authority to instruct work to proceed. | As detailed by individual company procedure. |
| Supervisor on Site | <p><u>Mandatory</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of company specific risk assessment process • Core safety training such as | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure control measures are in place • Ensure people engaged in work activities are competent • Ensure all persons involved in the task are | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out regular inspections to ensure that works are in accordance with the risk assessment. |

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| | SSSTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspirational Leadership | briefed and understand the hazards and controls to be applied. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there is a record of briefing provided and signed by those involved in the activity • Ensure a copy of the risk assessment and supporting documents are held at the place of work • Stop work if control measures are not adequate/suitable • Feedback proposed changes to Manager/Supervisor for approval. | |
| Workforce | <u>Mandatory</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TW Safety Passport <u>Optional</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard recognition training • Company specific risk assessment process training • Toolbox talk engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively contribute and provide feedback on risk assessment. • Cooperate and play part in implementing controls and safe methods of work detailed in the risk assessment • Undertake work in accordance with the risk assessment. Stop work if this cannot be achieved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report any safety concerns or changes that may affect health and safety to the supervisor. |
| Some company procedures require an additional independent risk assessment review process, as part of their management systems. This approach is not considered as part of this Essential Standard. | | | |