Zero incidents
Zero harm
Zero compromise
Keeping you healthy and safe, every day at work

ESSENTIAL STANDARDS no.10

Risk Assessment

Thames Water

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 that have the potential to cause real harm.
- Communicate the findings of a risk assessment to everyone involved in the activity and get them to sign a receipt of acknowledgment and understanding.
- The task-specific risk assessment must be available at the site throughout the duration of the activity.
- See the Risk Assessment Best Practice and Guidance matrix at the end of this Essential Standard document.

1. Introduction

Risk assessments are a legal requirement that help reduce injuries and ill-health. An employer must:

- make a careful examination of what could cause harm to people in the workplace
- determine the likelihood of that harm occurring
- determine what steps to take, including necessary governance, to reduce the risks of injury and ill-health to an acceptable level

Poor risk management is currently the biggest root cause of all reportable incidents. We all have a moral and legal responsibility to reduce significant risks to as low as is reasonably practicable. This essential standard defines the minimum requirements that Thames Water and their partner organisations should incorporate in their Safety Management System.

2. The Risk Assessment Process

You must follow a number of guidelines to make a risk assessment process effective:

A company specific process/ procedure for managing risk must be in place

Ensure that risk assessments are only written and authorised by competent people

Involve the workforce in the development of risk assessments, where appropriate

Review partners' risk assessments before work starts

Review risk assessments regularly and adapt them if necessary

Ensure risk assessments consider individual job tasks and are 'site specific'. The risk assessor must do a site visit to ensure that the physical environment is considered

Use the 'Best Practice and Guidance' matrix in this standard for developing risk assessments and providing details about the process

Task specific risk assessments should follow this simple process:

3. Contents of a Risk Assessment

Refer to the HSE '5 steps to risk assessment' as guidance when developing a risk assessment:

Step 1: Identify the hazards
Focus on the hazards that are likely to cause harm.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how
Think about the most likely outcome of the hazard.

Step 3: Evaluate the risk and determine control measures
Think about existing measures that are in place and identify any gaps. Remember that control measures identify the management actions that will ensure the work can be carried out safely and without risk to health.

Step 4: Record findings
Try avoid general statements such as 'all operatives to be trained' or 'barriers to be erected'.

Step 5: Review and update as necessary
Use active and reactive monitoring results to ensure that risk assessments continue to be relevant.

4. Task Specific Briefings

After evaluating hazards and risks for the project and environment, pay specific attention to the tasks at hand. Do a task specific assessment briefing at the start of a shift or at the beginning of a new activity. This brings life to the *Safe System of Work* and makes it relevant to the people undertaking those specific tasks. *A Safe System of Work Briefing* or task specific *Safe Plan of Action* describes the sequence and means of construction. It should include the following minimum elements:

- A brief description of the work to be undertaken; including a sketch if necessary
- A list of activity or task specific risks
- The safety controls/measures in place to eliminate/reduce risk of injury
- Details of tools, specialist safety equipment, plant, materials and PPE to be used
- Details of environment (physical) factors
- Details of the required permits to work or authorisations
- Any contingency arrangements if they are required
- Details of the people involved in the work and confirmation that relevant information/instruction (including safety controls) have been satisfactorily communicated
- Names of people who are responsible for implementation and monitoring of the safe system of work and managing and communicating any changes in risks
- Provisions to monitor and review safe systems of work where appropriate

5. Communication and Instruction

Everyone involved in the activity must be briefed on the findings of the risk assessment in a clear and concise manner so that they understand the key risks and controls. The person providing the briefing must describe the following:

The key risks to health

What control measures have been put in place for worker protection

What action is expected of them

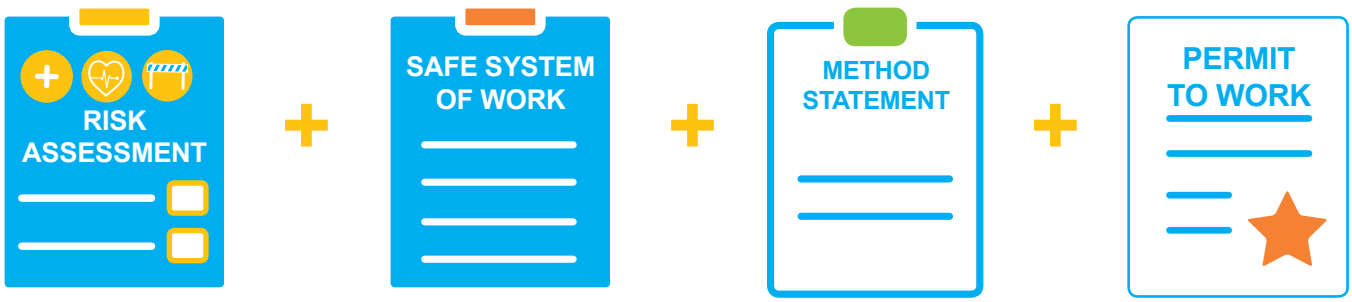
Make sure that the following information is recorded:

- 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 for the first activity briefing or at the start of each week
- Signature of the manager/supervisor putting people to work for the first and each repeat daily briefing thereafter
- A declaration that workers understand the briefing content before the briefer signs to confirm that the brief has been carried out

Hold the briefing at the point of work where possible. Attach a copy of the risk assessment to the briefing and retain on site throughout the duration of task.

6. Complex Tasks

Supplement the risk assessment with a method statement and necessary permits if a task is particularly complex or where the sequence of events is paramount to maintaining safety.



Plan how the information in a method statement will be communicated to the person undertaking the work. Consider how much information they can reasonably be expected to retain. Method statements must therefore be concise, specific and focus on the key requirements needed to ensure that the work activity can be carried out safely and without risk to health.

Use activity specific briefings to communicate the relevant elements of the wider project's Risk Assessment and Method Statement (RAMS) documents.

If you include too much information within a method statement, essential information might not be communicated effectively and this could lead to incidents. For example, inappropriate material includes a lengthy overview of the whole project, design calculations, project organograms, names and addresses of suppliers, project duty holders and routes to hospitals.

Instead you should use sketches, diagrams and other visual standards to help to illustrate the control measures.

7. Monitoring

Check work is proceeding in accordance with the risk assessment. This is an essential part of any monitoring/ inspection process. If you notice differences between agreed working methods and actual site practices, you should carry out an investigation to understand why and to implement actions to rectify them.

The attached table provides the specific responsibilities for preparing and monitoring risk assessments. It outlines the key competencies, procedural requirements and monitoring arrangements to ensure effective risk control. Senior Managers and Directors must provide visible leadership on site and be active in the review, checking and audit of risk assessments as part of their routine monitoring activities.

Responsibility	Competence	Procedural Requirements	Monitoring Arrangements
Manager/Supervisor	**Mandatory** • Knowledge of company specific risk assessment processes • Core safety training such as SMSTS, IOSH Managing Safely, or company equivalent • NEBOSH General Certificate, Diploma **Optional – Role Dependant** • Supervisory Leadership Training	• Visit the location of work before preparing the risk assessment • Involve the workforce/site supervisor in preparation of the risk assessment • Prepare site specific risk assessments • Link to a 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 place of work • Manage changes to methods or the work environment • Confirm the period of review • Ensures that the risk assessment and other relevant documents such as lift plans, are retained at the point of work	• Regular inspections to ensure that site practices reflect the risk assessment • Regular reviews to ensure the continued effectiveness of the control measures • Reviews 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 (Engineers, H&S professionals, management peers etc.)	• As for Manager/Supervisor above	• Where possible visit the location prior to reviewing the risk assessment • Verify that hazards are identified and included in the method statement if one is provided • Where there is input from other personnel, risk assessments must be reviewed and signed off by a manager with authority to instruct work to proceed	• As detailed by individual company procedure
Supervisor on Site	**Mandatory** • Knowledge of company specific risk assessment processes • Core safety training such as SSSTS • Supervisory Leadership Training	• Ensure control measures are in place • Ensure people engaged in work activities are competent • Ensure all people involved in the task are briefed and understand the hazards and controls to be applied • Ensure that there is a record of briefing provided and signed by those involved in the activity • Ensure that 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 a Manager/Supervisor for approval	• Carry out regular inspections to ensure that works are in accordance with the risk assessment
Workforce	**Mandatory** • TW Safety Passport **Optional** • Hazard recognition training • Company specific risk assessment process training • Toolbox talk engagement	• Actively contribute and provide feedback on risk assessment • Cooperate and play a 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	• Report any safety concerns or changes that may affect health and safety to the supervisor