

Simply Safety: Risk Assessments



Risk assessments are an essential part of the process of making places safe.

They are the foundation of managing risks in the workplace and can help to prevent accidents and incidents that result in people being injured or plant and machinery and buildings being damaged. Risk assessments also help employers to identify training needs, defective equipment and unsafe activities. Risk assessments are nothing more than a careful examination of what might happen.

Key Facts about Risk Assessments:

- **What might cause harm or lead to an accident?**

This could be electricity, working at height, the use of hazardous substances, workplace transport.

- **Who might be harmed?**

Many people could face the risk of injury: employees, visitors and members of the public or contractors. Don't forget the vulnerable such as young people or pregnant women.

- **What are the risks?**

Determine what might happen: an accident leading to injury, or damage to buildings or plant. Consider the severity of the outcome, a minor injury? A serious fire? The collapse of a building?

- **What can you do?**

Can the risk be eliminated completely? Are there any controls in place? Can the risk be reduced further e.g. by guarding a machine or changing to a less hazardous substance? Will training those exposed reduce the risk sufficiently? Or will some other controls be needed?

- **Inform, Implement and Monitor**

Tell employees about what you have found and what needs to be done. Fit extra guards, deliver training or change procedures as necessary. Then check to make sure that the controls have been carried out and are effective.

- **Record it**

It is useful to keep records of your findings. They will enable you to check things in the future and deal with changes in the business in a controlled manner. But you only need to record the more significant issues – not every risk assessment. And if you are a small business (less than 5 employees) recording is not required by law.

Simply Safety Sheets are intended to provide a short and simple introduction to the key issues facing business. For more information go to www.norwichunion.com/RiskManager and for consultancy, training courses and more information go to Norwich Union's risk management subsidiary Norwich Union Risk Services www.nurs.co.uk

Simply Safety information sheets are designed to give general information on risk management topics. Readers should take specific advice when dealing with particular situations.

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For more information go to www.norwichunion.com/riskmanager or visit Norwich Union Risk Services website: www.nurs.co.uk.