

## Risk Assessment

### Background

Risk assessment is a recognised tool aimed at ensuring that hazards and associated risks are recognised and appropriately controlled.

The definition of “risk assessment” is *“a careful examination of what in your work could cause harm and a decision as to whether enough has been done to control the risk or if further actions are required”*.

People worry that risk assessment is difficult but it is much like real life when we risk assess all the time without consciously knowing we do it. For example driving or crossing the road or “baby proofing” your home when a little one is on the way.

The purpose of risk assessment is to think about what could go wrong before it goes wrong and to prevent people getting hurt.

You are not expected to remove all hazards and risks completely, just control them appropriately.

A “hazard” is *“anything with the potential to cause harm”*. E.g. a knife has a sharp blade

“Risk” is *“the likelihood of harm occurring and the severity of the harm should it occur”*. E.g. likelihood of harm is increased if your hand is slippery when holding the knife and a cut is the potential harm.

Risk is often calculated using a risk matrix showing likelihood x consequence with numerical values but it doesn't have to be this complicated, risk can simply be calculated as high, medium or low.

An example risk matrix is below:

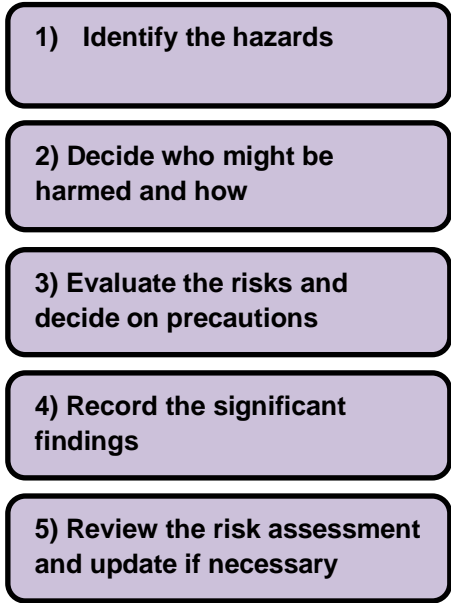
<b>LIKELIHOOD</b>	Almost Certain	5	10	15	20	25
	Likely	4	8	12	16	20
	Possible	3	6	9	12	15
	Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
	Rare	1	2	3	4	5
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
		<b>CONSEQUENCE</b>				

### Legislation

Risk assessment is a legal requirement under the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999)**.



The Health and Safety Executive recommends a 5 step approach to risk assessment:



A risk assessment should be “suitable and sufficient”, what this means is it should:

- Follow a systematic approach
- Identify all significant hazards
- Identify who is at risk
- Consider specific regulations
- Include non-routine operations
- Take existing control measures into account
- Should allow for a plan of action

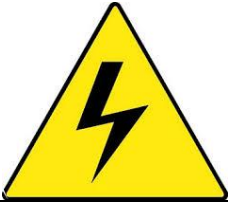




When determining control measures the “hierarchy of control should be used” with the first consideration being – can you eliminate the hazard? If not, can you reduce the risk, prevent contact with the hazard, would a safe system of work help?


Personal protective equipment is always a last resort as it is a control measure which only protects individuals and fails easily due to reliance on people:



## Key Requirements

Some of the key requirements relating to risk assessment are shown in the table below:

Key Requirement	Content of requirement
Identify the hazards	 <p>Have a look around the workplace and consider the activities taking place.</p> <p>Picture: <a href="http://www.chem.queensu.ca">www.chem.queensu.ca</a></p>
Decide who might be harmed and how	<p>Include employees, volunteers, members of the public, visitors, contractors (where appropriate) and vulnerable people such as young persons, new and expectant mothers and people with disabilities or learning difficulties.</p>  <p>Picture: <a href="http://Worldartsme.com">Worldartsme.com</a></p>
Evaluate risks and decide on precautions	<p>Using a risk matrix can help identify high risk issues and to determine priorities for actions and control measures.</p> <p>When deciding on control measures you should consider the “hierarchy of control”.</p> <p>Document any existing controls in place and then create an action plan for anything else that can and should be done to reduce the risk.</p>  <p>Picture: <a href="http://normanpeires.com">normanpeires.com</a></p>
Record your findings	<p>There are a variety of risk assessment forms available, the format you choose is up to you but the “significant findings” of the risk assessment need to be recorded.</p> <p>If you have 5 or more employees, it is a legal requirement to document a risk assessment.</p> <p>However, it is good practice to document any risk assessment carried out as this is then a good communication and training tool.</p> <p>Any actions required should be signed off on the risk assessment once completed.</p>  <p>Picture: <a href="http://www.fotosearch.com">www.fotosearch.com</a></p>
Review the risk assessment	 <p>Generally a planned review after 12 months (but you get to decide the frequency) but sooner review to check risk assessment is still “suitable and sufficient” if legislation or best practice changes, there are significant changes to activities covered by the risk assessment or if an accident or incident occurs which questions the effectiveness of existing control measures.</p> <p>Picture: <a href="http://www.garychristian.com">www.garychristian.com</a></p>



### Unique Challenges

When considering how to risk assessment effectively, there are some specific considerations needed based on typical charity settings, including:

- Some unusual activities take place, especially for fundraising including outdoor events, barbeques, donated food items such as cakes, “risky” activities such as sky diving and fire walking to name a few!!!

