

TO BE USED AS AN EXAMPLE ONLY

Carrying out a

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 require that every employer makes a suitable and sufficient assessment of:

- a) the risks to the health and safety of his/her employees to which they are exposed at work; and
- b) the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his/her employment arising out of or in connection with his undertaking.

Self-employed persons have similar duties.

Employers with 5 or more employees must record the 'significant findings' of the assessment.

A risk assessment should involve identifying the hazards present and then evaluating the extent of the risks. In order to be able to do this 'hazard' and 'risk' needs to be defined.

A HAZARD is something with the potential to cause harm (e.g. chemicals, horses, ladders).

A RISK is the likelihood that the harm from a hazard will be realised (e.g. fall from ladder, kick from a horse).

The EXTENT OF THE RISK should also be taken into account e.g. who is affected (e.g. employee, client, visitor).

In order for the assessment to be suitable and sufficient the following criteria should be satisfied:

1. look at the work activity i.e. the job to be done,
2. identify the hazards and the risks,
3. ascertain who is likely to be affected,
4. evaluate the likelihood of an accident occurring and the severity of injury or damage,
5. evaluate existing controls i.e. look at what you already do to prevent accidents (e.g. have equipment serviced, train operators how to use it)
6. identify any short falls; decide what further action is needed to eliminate or reduce the risks.

Practical Stages in Carrying Out a Risk Assessment

There is no set format for recording your risk assessment, however to help you, you may use the form provided. Use one for each work activity. **Stage One - Identify work activities**

Make a list of all the jobs and activities that take place at or in connection with your establishment

e.g. stacking straw bales
 turning horses out
 loading horses into lorry
 filling water buckets
 handling delivery of feed
 cleaning tack; etc.

Some activities will be identified immediately as trivial risks and these can usually be ignored e.g. making cups of tea, and possibly cleaning tack, unless the work activity compounds those risks or there is significant relevance to the particular work activity.

Choose one activity and enter it on the form. **Stage**

Two - Identify the hazards in each activity.

e.g. horses
 chemicals
 lifting/carrying/pushing/pulling
 dusts
 hazardous areas; etc.

Stage Three - Evaluate level of risk.

It is difficult to try and assess the level of risk e.g. handling a delivery of feed. Is it a high, medium or low risk? Clearly a lot depends on the quantities and types of feed, storage site, persons involved, etc. The following method may help you to quantify the level of risk. Remember risk depends on the likelihood of injury occurring and the severity of injury, in other words likelihood x severity. So if a particular activity always resulted in someone being taken to casualty with a broken leg, you can immediately see that the particular activity must be high risk. Prioritising which activities should be dealt with first is also an essential part of risk assessment. By using the following criteria and figures your assessments can easily be prioritised.

Likelihood of injury occurring.

If it is unlikely to occur then give it a score of	1
If there is a remote chance injury will occur then give it a	2
If it is possible then give it a score of	3
If it is probable	4
And if it is certain to occur it has a score of	5

Severity of injury.

No injury, has a score of

- 1**
Minor injury (cuts, bruises) **2**
More than 3 days off work (see RJDDOR regulations) **3**
Major reportable injury (broken bones, admitted to hospital etc.) **4**
Fatality or serious disability **5**

So if you were to assess the risk of someone carrying a bale of hay you may assess it (depending on the circumstances) as follows

It is **possible** that someone could pull the muscles in their back and be off work for **more than 3 days**. Tick the appropriate column on the form. Therefore 3 multiplied by 3 gives a total risk rating of 9.

Scores 1-8 are a low risk. Scores 9-15 are a minimum risk. Scores 16-25 are high risk.

Low scores do not indicate that risks can be ignored, merely that in order of priority, high scoring risks should be dealt with first.

Stage Four - Identify who is at risk.

e.g. employee
trainee / young person
client
visitor
contractor.

Stage Five - Evaluate the existing controls. (That is what you already do to prevent accidents)

Existing controls should be taken into account when working out the risk scores in **Stage Four**.

e.g. use a wheelbarrow to move bales of hay rather than carry by hand
assess rider ability in order to provide suitable horse
ensure riders wear protective headgear and suitable footwear etc.
provide staff training

Stage Six - Identify any further action required.

What else needs to be done to eliminate or reduce the risks. It may be simple, such as inform staff. It may be more time consuming, e.g. eliminating a hazard such as a ladder into a hay loft by replacing with a proper staircase. When deciding to do major works there has to be a balance between the level of risk and costs involved. Obviously the greater the risk, the greater the amount of money may be warranted. On the other hand it is not worth spending vast amounts of money reducing low risks.

Risks can often be reduced further by altering the work method, e.g. grooming horses outside greatly reduces the amount of dust an employee is exposed to.

NB As we all accept horses are unpredictable and it may not be possible to produce risk assessments on every horse and every activity the horse is subjected to. In these situations it is reasonable to carry out a generic assessment, that is one which covers grooming and handling generally. However it is essential that persons handling horses are given full information on particular vices or idiosyncrasies, e.g. Dobbin bites, Smokey does not like being groomed, Flash barges out of his stable.

You are now ready to start carrying out your risk assessments. It often helpful to discuss them with your staff. (It is a legal requirement to bring them to their attention anyway). Remember to review your assessments if there has been a change in work methods or if new equipment or chemicals have been brought onto the premises. Once the further actions required have been introduced you can reassess the risks to check that the risks have in fact been reduced. It is important that all your control measures are monitored to ensure they are effective.

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