



GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

Version Number	Issue 5
Date Revision Complete	March 2019
Procedure Owner	Health & Safety Advisor
Author	Health & Safety Advisor
Reason for Revision	3 yearly review of SMS and inclusion of Home Visit Initial H&S Checklist
Proof Read	Temporary Health & Safety Advisor
Date Approved	May 2019
Approved by	Senior Management Team
Next Review Due	May 2022

Audience – Training and Awareness Method	To be issued as part of SMS update issue
Effective Date	May 2019

Internal References	N/A
---------------------	-----

External References	N/A
---------------------	-----

<p>Comments</p> <p>Complete rewrite</p> <p>Three Appendices contained as part of this document.</p> <p>General Risk Assessment Form</p> <p>Generic Pregnancy Risk Assessment Form</p> <p>Home Visit Initial H&S Checklist</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1. We all face and deal with risks every day, and most of the time we assess and manage risks without making any kind of formal written risk assessment. However, there are some risks, which may be beyond our ability to fully understand or control, and it is these risks that need a formal risk assessment.
- 1.2. Risk assessments are an important tool in protecting not only our employees, but also our customers, contractors and others who may be affected by our activities. It is the foundation upon which Health and Safety Management is built. However, risk assessments do not have to be complicated; they merely need to be 'suitable and sufficient'. The level of detail contained in them should be proportional to the level of risk involved with the task/activity.
- 1.3. Risk assessments are not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in the workplace. The sensible application of the risk assessment process will help us to focus on the risks that really matter in the workplace – the ones with the potential to cause real harm, not trivial risks associated with everyday life in general.
- 1.4. This General Risk Assessment Procedure deals with day to day risks at an individual or service level. In Blackwood we also monitor and mitigate high level risks to our business, often relating to finances or reputation. The organisation's Board Assurance Policy sets out separate guidance on this area.

2 The Purpose of this Procedure

- 2.1 The purpose of this procedure is to ensure a consistent approach to carrying out risk assessments throughout the organisation and enable those responsible for undertaking risk assessments to have an understanding of how to carry out such assessments, in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees and others who may be affected by our activities.
- 2.2 This procedure applies to all Blackwood staff that have a responsibility for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, and for those staff that actually carry out formal risk assessments at or on premises under our control.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 Full details of the roles, responsibilities and authorities of key posts within Blackwood can be found in our [Safety Management System](#), which may include additional responsibilities over and above those detailed below.

3.2 Line managers are responsible for ensuring that:

- 3.2.1 All hazards within their areas of responsibility have been identified and all significant risks are assessed and recorded. Hazard identification and risk assessment, although a line management responsibility can be conducted by a third person providing they are competent to do so;

3.2.2 All those who might be exposed to a hazard are made aware of the risk assessment and the identified control measures. Line managers are also responsible for ensuring that the control measures identified by the risk assessment are effectively implemented and complied with.

3.3 Employees are responsible for:

3.3.1 Complying with the findings of the risk assessment and any subsequent procedures/safe system of work implemented as a result;

3.3.2 The wearing and looking after of any Personal Protective Equipment issued as a result of the risk assessment;

3.3.3 Informing their line manager of any changes to the task/activity that may invalidate the risk assessment.

3.4 New and Expectant mothers are responsible for:

3.4.1 Notifying the organisation, in writing, when they are pregnant. Women who are pregnant, have given birth in the last six months or are breastfeeding, are not legally required to inform their employer. However, it is important for the women and the child's health and safety protection, and for maternity leave purposes, that the employer is provided with written notification as early as possible. This would allow a suitable risk assessment to be undertaken. Further guidance can be found in the HSE Guide – [hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg373.pdf)

4 Training

4.1 You do not have to be a safety expert in order to undertake a risk assessment. Simple tasks can be assessed by personnel who have not had any formal training but the assessor must have the correct level of experience, of the task being assessed (i.e. competence), in order to be able to determine the hazards. However, they must be able to recognise their own limitations and request assistance when they are not confident the assessment is suitable and sufficient.

4.2 More complex tasks must be assessed by trained personnel only. This training will involve (as a minimum) a half day in-house risk assessment course.

5 Definitions

The following definitions are used in the risk assessment process:

- **Risk Assessment** - The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition of a risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.
- **Hazard** - Something that has the potential to cause harm, such as the use of chemicals, electricity, working from stepladders.
- **Risk** - Is the likelihood, (e.g. very unlikely, unlikely, likely, highly likely) that somebody could be harmed by the hazard, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be (e.g. negligible, low severity, moderate severity, high severity). The risk rating is calculated by multiplying the likelihood and the severity (Risk = Likelihood x Severity) using the tables 1

and 2 on page 7. This will prioritise your risk into a High, Moderate, Low or negligible category. See table 2 on page 7.

- **Harm** - Is the actual injury or ill-health suffered by those exposed to the hazard.
- **Control Measures** - Are measures which are put in place to manage and/or reduce the risk? In assessing the practicability of control measures it is usual to refer to a hierarchy of control measures. This is a list of approaches to reducing risk, starting with the most effective (see 6.7.2).
- **So Far As Is Reasonably Practicable (SFAIRP)** This is the level of liability laid down in the Health and Safety at Work Act. The term "reasonably practicable" implies a balance between the cost of introducing safety measures in terms of money, time and effort and the risk reduction benefits to be expected from their introduction. Where the cost is greatly disproportionate to the risk the employer can claim in their defence that they have done all that is reasonably practicable, or conversely that they have discharged their duties by doing all that is reasonably practicable.
- **Competent person** - is someone who has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable them to assist in undertaking preventative and protective risk control measures; they must understand the work activity being assessed and what hazards may occur; they will know their own limitations.
- **Suitable and Sufficient** - risk assessments relate to identifying risks arising from or in connection with work; the level of detail in a risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk. Once risks are assessed and taken into account, insignificant risks will not usually need to be recorded; e.g. risks associated with life in general. The level of risk arising from the work activity should determine the size and detail required in the risk assessment;
- **Young Persons** – is anyone under the age of 18;
- **Child** – is anyone who has not yet reached the official minimum school leaving age (MSLA). Pupils will reach the MSLA in the school year in which they turn 16;
- **New or Expectant Mother** - is a woman who is pregnant, has given birth within the last six months or is breastfeeding.

5 The Risk Assessment Process

6.1 In most organisations, the risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply. A simple flowchart of the risk assessment process is contained in Annex A.

6.2 To ensure consistency across the whole organisation, there are four templates that can be used to carry out and record risk assessments. One is for general use - [General Risk Assessment Form](#), and the second specifically for a pregnancy risk assessment - [Generic Pregnancy Risk Assessment Form](#). These forms have built in guidance when completed electronically (if you hover your mouse arrow over a heading, a description of what is required in that field will appear). The third template is for risk assessments carried out for customers with care plans, a separate module is available in CareSys to record them. The fourth template is a - [Home Visit Initial H&S Checklist](#) which can be used

to assess new and/or existing customers homes in order to identify any immediate hazards/risks and if a more detailed risk assessment is required. The general principles of the risk assessment process (as detailed in this procedure) are still applicable, regardless of which form is used'

- 6.3 The risk assessment process does not eliminate the need to undertake specific risk assessments required by different legislation but can be used to identify when a separate risk assessment may be required i.e. the hazard identified is the use of Display Screen Equipment (DSE), which may require a DSE assessment.
- 6.4 There are no fixed rules about how a risk assessment should be carried out, however the HSE has identified five steps in the risk assessment process and these are detailed below:
- 6.5 **Step 1 – Identify the Hazards** – You must look at the whole process/activity and identify how people could be harmed. This can be done by breaking the process/activity down to its individual components and then determining the hazards within each step.
- 6.6 **Step 2 – Decide Who Might be Harmed and How** – For each hazard identified you need to be clear about who could be harmed; this will help identify the best way of managing the risks (don't list people by name but by groups). Special consideration should be given to:
- New and young workers, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities;
 - People who may not be in the workplace all the time e.g. cleaners, visitors, contractors etc.;
 - Members of the public/tenants/residents, etc.
- In each case, identify how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur.
- 6.7 **Step 3 - Evaluate the Risks** – Having identified the hazards and who might be harmed and how, you now need to decide if you have done enough to prevent harm or should do more. Firstly look at how the job is done at present and identify the controls currently in place. For many areas of health and safety, best practice guidance documents are available which identify the relevant controls necessary. Compare what you are currently doing against best practice, to see if you are doing enough. Using tables 1 & 2 on the next page, you should then be able to determine the level of risk, weighing up the likelihood of something going wrong against the likely severity should it go wrong.

LIKELIHOOD	Highly Likely	4	4	8	12	16
	Likely	3	3	6	9	12
	Unlikely	2	2	4	6	8
	Very Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4
			1	2	3	4
			Negligible	Low Severity	Moderate Severity	High Severity
			SEVERITY			

Table1. Risk Scoring

Risk Rating		Rating Action Bands	
To establish Residual Risk Rating multiply "Likelihood" by the "Severity"			
Likelihood	Severity	Band	Action Required
1 Very Unlikely	1 Negligible (no or little measurable outcome)	1 & 2 Minimal/Negligible Risk	No further action. Monitor situation
2 Unlikely	2 Low Severity (minor injury/loss)	3 & 4 Low Risk	Monitor control measures for continued effectiveness
3 Likely	3 Moderate Severity (serious injury/loss)	6 & 8 Moderate Risk	Improve or increase control measures
4 Highly Likely	4 High Severity (major injury/loss)	9, 12 & 16 High Risk	Stop the work. Improve or increase controls immediately

Table 2. Risk Rating and Action Bands

- 6.7.1 If any deficiencies have been identified in the risk assessment that requires additional control measures, then this must be recorded on the template and a plan of action agreed. The risk assessment template can be used to identify, monitor and record the action plan.
- 6.7.2 Obviously, the best means of controlling a risk is to eliminate of the hazard altogether, so that there is no more risk. However, this is impossible in many situations, so some other form of controlling the risk is required. This then gives rise to a hierarchy of control measures which should be considered as detailed below;
- **Eliminate if possible** – do not carry out the task, e.g. requesting a delivery service to an office instead of reception to prevent staff from manual handling;
 - **Reduce the risk** – e.g. use a water based adhesive or paint (rather than toxic or flammable products), purchasing small lighter packages, use a safety blade rather than traditional knife for cutting open cardboard boxes and strappings, reduce voltage by using battery operated tools or reduce the number of employees at risk or reduce the extent of exposure;
 - **Isolate the staff from the hazard** – combat risks at the source and prevent access to the hazard e.g. enclose the process to avoid human contact, fixed guarding, isolation or locking off of electrical systems;
 - **Control the risk** – by engineered devices and instruction (e.g. use of lifting aids, trolleys, dust/fume extraction, reduce exposure times, written procedures, training, safe systems of work, etc.);
 - **Personal protective equipment** – use as a last resort, correct use and timely replacement e.g. goggles, gloves, aprons, hard hats, safety shoes etc.;
 - **Discipline** – e.g. adhering to procedures, method statements, safe systems of work etc. and the application of discipline when ignored.
- 6.7.3 When selecting control measures you should start at the top of the hierarchy and only move down a level when you have decided that it is not reasonably practicable to use a control measure from that level. For example you should first consider whether it is reasonable to eliminate the task altogether, if not then you should look at reducing the risk.
- 6.8 **Step 4 – Record Your Findings** – You must record the significant findings of a risk assessment and to communicate the findings of this assessment to all concerned.
- 6.8.1 The risk assessment template - [General Risk Assessment Form](#) be used to record the findings of a general risk assessment.
- 6.8.2 The pregnancy risk assessment template - [Generic Pregnancy Risk Assessment Form](#) can be used to record the findings of a pregnancy risk assessment.
- 6.8.3 The risk assessment module on CareSys can be used to record the findings of risk assessments associated with customer care plans.
- 6.8.4 A record of all risk assessments will be retained at the premises, signed and dated by the Assessor and the Line Manager in an easily retrievable paper or electronic format.

- 6.9 **Step 5 – Review the Assessment** – Risk assessments are a living dynamic process. Constant monitoring and review should be undertaken by all responsible for the risk assessments to ensure that they remain valid (particularly pregnancy risk assessments which looks at the pregnant mothers` associated works risks, how they may affect her condition and how those risks may change as the pregnancy develops).
- 6.9.1 The assessment should be reviewed if, for any reason, the original assessment is thought to be no longer valid. Assessments may cease to be valid, for example due to; accidents, safety complaints, ill-health trends, new legislation, new technology, staff changes or changes to equipment or processes.
- 6.9.2 In the absence of any other review, all risk assessments should be reviewed annually. If the findings of the review show that no change has taken place and the assessment is still valid, the assessor should sign and date the review section on the assessment template.

7 Employing Young Persons/Children

- 7.1 Whenever employing a young person (including work placement students), the risk assessment in place for the task/activity they are to be working on should be reviewed. This review should take into consideration the inexperience of the young person and their attitude towards risk. It is important to ensure that any young person is not employed to undertake work which is beyond their physical or psychological capacity. If no assessment is in place, or the risk assessment is deemed to be inadequate then a new assessment should be carried out.
- 7.2 Prior to a child taking up a school placement, the parent/guardian should be provided with (or offered) comprehensive information on the task/activities the child will be carrying out, along with details of any identified risks to their health and safety (i.e. a copy of the risk assessment).

8 New or Expectant Mothers

- 8.1 When notified that an employee is pregnant, line managers should carry out a new pregnancy risk assessment. This assessment must take into account any existing risk assessment for the task/activities they undertake in order to determine whether or not the hazards detailed within that risk assessment have either increased or changed in any way. The pregnancy risk assessment should pay particular attention to:
- Any tasks involving lifting/carrying heavier loads;
 - Any physical, biological, chemical agents.
 - Work related stress;
 - Workstation posture;
 - Threat of violence in the workplace;
 - Long working hours.
- 8.2 As part of the assessment, the assessor should check with the employee as to whether their doctor has advised them to avoid any specific conditions.

- 8.3 The risk assessment should be monitored and reviewed as circumstances change, particularly at different stages of the pregnancy.

ANNEX A Risk Assessment Flowchart

