



Notes to General Risk Assessment Form RA1

Introduction

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 place a general requirement on employers to assess all risks involved in their work activity. Where there is a significant risk this assessment must be recorded.

The notes below which accompany the University of Edinburgh model General Risk Assessment Form provide the essential information for a systematic approach to risk assessment.

Risk Assessment:

There are two main types of risk assessment, generic and specific. Generic risk assessments should be completed for hazards or activities that are common throughout the school. Specific assessments should be completed for particular tasks, procedures, equipment, locations, etc, which have specific significant risks. Some specific risk assessment forms are detailed below (see Hazard Identification).

The essential steps that are taken in order to comply with these Regulations are:

- Identify the hazards to health or safety arising from the activity or the workplace.
- Decide who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more needs to be done.
- Record your findings
- Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

Hazard and Risk:

- Hazard: A hazard is something with the potential to do harm
- Risk: The risk is the likelihood that actual harm will occur

Hazard Identification:

- Identify all the hazards relevant to the work activity.
- Specific hazards should be assessed on a separate risk assessment form and cross-referenced with this document. Specific assessments are available for hazardous substances, biological agents, display screen equipment, manual handling operations and fieldwork.



- Other hazards to consider include slipping/tripping hazards, electricity, noise, dust, temperature extremes, fire/explosion, portable tools, machinery, pressure systems, compressed gases, work at height, confined areas, vehicles, work with animals, lone-working, out-of-hours working, irregular or unusual activities, i.e. maintenance operations, serious/imminent danger, etc.

Who May Be Affected:

Consider students, trainees, young workers, new and expectant mothers and also those who may not be directly involved with the activity but who may still be affected by the process. This may include domestic or security staff, contractors or members of the public. What information should be made available and how will this be communicated to those at risk? What training or supervision will be required?

Risk Evaluation:

Evaluate the risks (low / medium / high) to which individuals might be exposed. This will be a subjective evaluation but should be used to give an indication of the priority with which the risk needs to be addressed. Where risks are already controlled, monitor the effectiveness of the control to decide whether they are sufficient. Where the risk to individuals is thought to be medium or high, additional control measures must be considered.

Risk Control:

Decide what controls are necessary to reduce the risk to individuals and to comply with any relevant statutory requirements (compliance with statutory requirements is a minimum level of control). Assistance should also be sought from relevant Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance or accepted industry guidance.

The steps to controlling the risks are as follows:

- Avoid the hazard - can the hazard be avoided or altered to reduce the likelihood or risk? Substitute or replace the hazard
- Procedural controls – can the procedure be altered to avoid or reduce the risk? Can the individual be removed / distanced from the risk? Can the activity be carried out at a time that would have a lesser impact on others?
- Engineering / mechanical controls - can engineering or mechanical aids be utilised to avoid or reduce the risk?
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – where the above measures do not fully remove the risk, PPE should be considered.
- Identify the specific type of PPE necessary.



- Emergency procedures – set procedures to follow in the event of things going wrong e.g., an accident or incident
- Health surveillance – where one cannot be 100% confident in the control measures put in place, should individual's health be monitored by the Occupational Health Unit?
- Where engineering controls are used e.g. local exhaust ventilation (LEV), guarding, interlocks, safety valves etc. ensure that they are adequately utilised and maintained. Many will require specific checks as described in legislation, HSE Guidance or British Standards publications.

Monitor the control measures you have instigated to ensure that they are effective and implemented correctly.

Record your Findings:

Record the significant hazards and conclusions.

Assessment Review:

The assessment must be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains relevant and effective. In addition, the assessment must be reviewed if there are any significant changes to the activity i.e. new procedures, substances, machinery, or if there are changes in legislation or any accidents or incidents related to this risk assessment.