



RISK ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT

This Factsheet provides an overview of Risk Assessment and Management and the responsibilities of OOSH services in relation to this topic. It is not however, intended to be exhaustive, restrictive or absolute.

■ WHAT IS RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT?

Risk management is covered in detail in Chapter 2 of the OHS Regulation 2001. Other chapters also refer to obligations of risk management as they apply to specific hazards, activities or places of work.

If, as an employer, you have identified a hazard you must assess how dangerous it is. Ask yourself: how likely is it that an injury or illness will occur and how seriously could someone be affected? This is risk assessment.

Risk assessment is a key part of OHS risk management. Employers are legally responsible for the safety of their employees and others in the workplace. Therefore employers must undertake risk management for all foreseeable hazards in their workplace that may arise from work activities and that have the potential to harm employees and any other person at that workplace.

OHS risk management involves:

- ★ Risk identification - identifying hazards and problems and working out what could happen and how
- ★ Risk assessment - evaluating the probability and consequences of injury or illness arising from exposure to a hazard
- ★ Risk control - implementing procedures, training and physical changes to eliminate or minimise risks
- ★ Monitoring and reviewing your systems and the actions taken to control risks

■ WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN RISK MANAGEMENT?

The employer must consult with employees about any OHS matter that affects them - this includes the risk management process. Involving employees in risk management can be done through the consultative arrangements that have been agreed to at the workplace (e.g. health and safety committee, health and safety representative or through other agreed arrangements).

Consulting with employees about the hazards and how to eliminate or control them will help:

- ★ to comply with the law
- ★ to get the whole team involved in the process
- ★ to give you many different points of view
- ★ to encourage safe thinking.

■ WHAT IS RISK?

Risk is the significance of the hazard in terms of likelihood and severity of any possible injury or illness.

■ WHAT IS A HAZARD?

A hazard is anything (including work practices or procedures) that has the potential to harm the health or safety of a person.

Hazards can arise from:

- ★ the workplace environment
- ★ the use of plant and substances
- ★ poor work design or practices
- ★ inappropriate management systems and procedures
- ★ human behaviour.



■ WHAT ARE SOME WAYS TO IDENTIFY HAZARDS?

A number of procedures can be implemented in your organisation to enable workplace hazards to be identified:

- ★ observation
- ★ consultation
- ★ workplace inspections (using a checklist)
- ★ health and environment monitoring
- ★ safety audits
- ★ monitoring complaints
- ★ monitoring injury and illness records

The employer must review a risk assessment, including any measures adopted to control the risk, whenever:

- ★ there is evidence that the risk assessment is no longer valid; or
- ★ injury or illness results from exposure to the particular hazard; or
- ★ a significant change is proposed in the place of work or in work practices or procedures to which the assessment relates.

■ HOW DO I DETERMINE HOW DANGEROUS A HAZARD IS?

There are many types of hazards and methods for assessing them will differ. However, for each hazard the employer should:

1) Judge the severity of any harm. Consider if it could cause:

- ★ permanent disability, ill health or death;
- ★ long term illness or serious injury;
- ★ require medical attention with someone off work for several days; or
- ★ someone to require first aid

2) Judge the likelihood of the harm occurring:

- ★ very likely - (could happen any time)
- ★ likely - (could happen sometime)
- ★ unlikely - (could happen but very rarely)
- ★ very unlikely - (could happen but probably never will)

■ RESOURCES:

- ★ *Hazpak – Making Your Workplace Safer* - is a practical guide to risk management designed for small and medium businesses. This publication is available to download free from the WorkCover website: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Documents/safebusiness/pdf/Hazpak_228.pdf
- ★ Copies of the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 can be obtained from the WorkCover website: www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/Publications/Pages/default.aspx

■ OTHER RELEVANT OOSH DEVELOPMENT FACTSHEETS:

- ★ *Occupational Health and Safety – Overview* (#9A)
- ★ *Occupational Health and Safety “Hot Spots” in OOSH* (#9C)

THIS FACTSHEET LINKS TO

QA 6 ‘HEALTH, NUTRITION AND WELL-BEING, QA 7 “PROTECTIVE CARE AND SAFETY” AND QA 8 ‘MANAGING TO SUPPORT QUALITY’.

NOTE: Network conducts Occupational Health and Safety training for OOSH services.

Contact the Network office for dates.



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