



3.1 RISK ASSESSMENT

Guidance and Procedures

Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 imposes a general duty on employers to ensure that by the manner in which it conducts its activities, there is an absence of risks to the health and safety of its employees and others affected by their actions so far as is reasonably practicable.

"So far as is reasonably practicable" means that the degree of risk in a particular activity, circumstance or environment must be balanced against the time, trouble, cost and physical difficulty of taking measures to avoid the risk.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, specifically require employers to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of its employees and others who are exposed to risks arising out of its activities.

The Council will meet its obligations under the above Act and Regulations by ensuring that Corporate Groups have in place arrangements to assess the risks associated with their operations and that adequate controls are in place to reduce those risks to an acceptable level.

Corporate Groups must therefore ensure that they have sufficient numbers of competent persons to carry out those risk assessments

The medium for recording risk assessments can be found at (Appendix C1 and Appendix C2).

Risk Assessment in Principle

It is important to distinguish between hazard and risk:

- A **hazard** is a source of, or situation for, potential harm e.g. a spillage of water on a floor.
- A **risk** is the extent to which something harmful may happen - i.e. the combination of the likelihood and consequences of a specified hazardous event, e.g. the potential for slipping on the spillage

Risk assessment is fundamental to all modern safety legislation and some Regulations prescribe the assessment of a specific risk e.g. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH).

An assessment made for the purposes of complying with a specific Regulation will not need to be repeated for the purposes of the Management Regulations. However, if the duties in the Management Regulations go beyond that required by the specific regulations then additional

measures will be needed, e.g. COSHH Regulations exclude the risk from the explosive or flammable properties of a substance.

A risk assessment must not be regarded as an end in itself. It is a means to judge what action (control measures or preventative and protective measures) should be taken to comply with the law - either the general duties of the Health & Safety at Work Act or the more specific requirements of various Regulations.

Preventative and protective measures identified by the risk assessment and safe working procedures must be implemented and arrangements made for the monitoring and review of their effectiveness. A risk assessment is therefore incomplete if a risk control plan is not established in each case.

An effective risk assessment would normally comprise these stages:

Step 1: Look for the hazards.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks using the matrix in appendix C and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done.

Step 4: Record your findings **a pro forma for recording risk assessments can be found in the Appendix C1 and C2 to the Corporate Policy**

Step 5: Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

Notes

- a) A risk assessment is not a once-and-for-all exercise. If work changes, the appreciation of hazards and risks may change. A risk assessment and any safe working procedures must be reviewed and if necessary modified whenever there are significant changes or otherwise periodically.
- b) The risk assessment has to be recorded to demonstrate that it has been conducted and to serve as a basis for action and subsequent reviews.

The record must include: -

- Detail of risk under assessment.
- Significant findings, i.e. the hazard and risk, those affected, the existing control measures.
- Judgment of the degree of residual risk.
- Safe working procedures.