

Risk Assessment Guidelines

Risk Assessment Guidelines

Under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations (NI) 2000, every employer must assess the risk to Health and Safety of their employees, whilst they are at work and to the risk of others who may be affected by their undertakings.

Risk assessments are carried out in order to identify the extent of hazards in the workplace, so that control measures to reduce or eliminate the hazard can be put into place.

It is important that assessments are completed on all tasks carried out within the Department, and that the assessments are tailored to suit the job being assessed so that it covers real risks. Once the assessment has taken place it has to be reviewed to ensure the control measures are working effectively.

A written record of the risk assessment has to be kept within the office concerned and a copy placed in section 6 of the H & S manual

The guidance within this booklet gives basis for the risk assessments, it does not cover all aspects of the assessment for that particular job. Assessing the risk for a particular job/task could include portions from all the sample sheets, but there will also be specific hazards associated with the different locations, these will also have to be included.

Terminology

Hazard The ability of something or some situation to cause harm, loss, or damage.
A hazard has the ability to interrupt or interfere with a process or a person.

Risk Is the chance, likelihood, or probability of the hazard actually causing harm.

Assessing the risks

In order to assess risks the following should be considered:-

Who may be affected by the work being carried out (e.g. staff, contractors, members of the public, other tenants etc.)?

To what extent could the process affect the person(s)?

What measures are currently being taken to reduce the risk?

Are the controls adequate for the task?

Can the risk be eliminated?

Procedures

The list below gives guidance through the basic principles of risk assessment.

Procedure	Action	Procedure	Action
Hazard identification in the office	Walk around the office and look at the area and ask what could reasonably be expected to cause harm?	Who could be harmed?	Consider all activities undertaken by staff routine and non routine
	List the main areas in which the task takes place.		Consider staff, contractors, members of the public outside normal office hours e.g. cleaners.
	Draw up a list of hazards		Think about others who may be affected by the task e.g. staff, visitors, contractors, members of the public, other tenants etc.
	Concentrate on significant hazards		
	Ask the question" What if?" What if that lead was lying across the floor?		

Procedure	Action
Evaluate the risk	What control measures are in place and are they good enough?
	Decide if the risk is High , Medium or low
	Can the risk be removed completely? Can the task be completed in a safer way?
Control the risk	Can the risk be eliminated? Can a safer substitute be used? Is there a safe system of work, e.g. written procedures etc.? Is there adequate supervision? Have training needs of staff been addressed? Is there adequate signage? Has there been consultation with staff?

Procedure	Action
Record your findings	Write down your findings giving the risks, and control measures.
	Ensure the assessment is recorded and kept
	Assessments of risk are to be suitable and adequate for the task.
	Ensure staff are informed of the results of the assessment.
Monitor	Review the assessment to ensure that the control measures are working effectively. Review the assessment if there have been any significant changes, i.e. Change of staff, Change of equipment, New processes or procedures.

Risks and control measures

A typical job or office does not exist as different management styles alter and change the environment. However the type of work carried out in offices is roughly the same.

Data processing, typing, photocopying, interviewing etc. with this type of process being carried out its normally slips, trips and falls which are the main portion of accidents.

The list below gives guidance through the basic principles of control measures it is a guide and not a definitive list.

Risk	Control Measures
Slips Trips and Falls	Ensure standards of housekeeping are maintained.
	Ensure all trailing leads are protected and not lying across passageways.
	Ensure floor coverings are in good condition.
	Ensure adequate lighting is available at all times.
Electrical Shock	Ensure all electrical appliances are checked regularly.
	Ensure user inspections are carried out.
	Ensure all faulty items are taken out of service.
Violence / Verbal Abuse	Ensure staff are trained in dealing with disruptive people.
	Ensure door controls and entry security systems are in place and used correctly.

Risk	Control Measures
Falls from Heights and Falling Objects	Ensure that suitable steps, step stools are made available to staff where access is required to high-level storage units.
	Ensure a high standard of storage is maintained.
	Ensure items are not stored on top of shelving or tambour units.
	Do not overload storage units.
Manual Handling	Lifting and carrying should only be attempted when the person is trained and is confident in doing so without risk of injury.
	Ensure the task is assessed before lifting.
	Full use is made of lifting and trolley devices.
Violence / Verbal Abuse	Ensure safe system of work is in place and that staff know how it works.
	Installation of panic buttons and written procedures for their use (if required).

- The sample risk assessments in this guideline are not completed on a specific task they are a generic assessment and should be treated as such.
- Risk assessments are to be focused on a particular task and as such will overlap most of the generic assessments.
- The sample assessments include supplementary questions that should be asked as you are completing an assessment, they also include some control methods.
- Each and every task will be different, as each of the offices have their own local procedures and the person completing the task will be different.
- The risk assessment should be suitable and sufficient for the task, in other words it should be assessed with the person completing the task, it doesn't have to be perfect.

Sample Risk Assessments

Index

- 8. Reception Desk
- 9 Front Line / New Deal
- 10 Visiting Staff
- 11 Manual Handling
- 12 Material Storage
- 13 General Office
- 14 Doors / Passageways
- 15 Fire Exits / Equipment
- 16 Blank Risk Assessment Sheet
- 17. Risk scale - Hazard / Likelihood

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
Personal injury and health damage	Staff / Visitors	3	2	<p>All visitors to sign into the visitors book and have a security pass issued.</p> <p>Visitors to be accompanied by a member of staff at all times.</p> <p>Visitors to be briefed on evacuation procedures and shown details on the security pass.</p> <p>Staff to be briefed on their responsibilities and actions to be taken in the event of an emergency situation.</p> <p>Written procedures in place detailing the emergency contact numbers, premises address including the postcode to be used in an emergency situation.</p>
Supplementary Questions				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have all staff been trained in the emergency procedures? 2. Have reception staff been trained in how to manage difficult situations? 3. Do reception staff know who to contact in an emergency? 4. Are procedures checked on a regular basis? 5. Are sign in procedures for visitors maintained and safety information given to visitors? 6. Have staff seen a copy of the DEL Violence towards Staff guidelines? 				
Risk Assessment				
<p>What is the task? Greeting visitors, public. Is the building a jobcentre or JBO? Is there a risk of violence? Do staff know what action to take if there is an incident?</p> <p>What are the hazards? Is there any hazards in the area eg. heaters, cables, pipes etc? Who is at risk? The risk isn't just targeting adults, small children attend the office with their parents. Children will get burnt on a heater where an adult wouldn't. A child can hit their head on a stand, i.e look out for sharp edges on stands, display boards etc.</p>				

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**Area of Assessment
Front Line / New Deal**

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
Personal injury and health damage Aggression Violence	Staff / Visitors	3	2	<p>Staff to be briefed on actions to be taken in the event of an emergency situation.</p> <p>Staff trained in the handling of difficult situations.</p> <p>Two members of staff in the area at all times.</p> <p>Staff made aware of the Violence towards Staff procedures held on the DEL Intranet.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have all staff been trained in the emergency procedures? 2. Do staff know who to contact in an emergency? 3. Have staff been trained in how to avoid or manage difficult situations? 4. Are procedures checked on regular basis? 5. Have staff seen a copy of the DEL Violence towards Staff guidelines? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task? Interviewing the public.</p> <p>Is the desk clear and free from objects that could be used as a weapon or missile?</p> <p>Is the area around the desk free from hazards?</p> <p>Is there a clear exit route from the desk?</p>				

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**Area of Assessment
Visiting Staff**

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
Personal injury and health damage Assault / Abuse	Staff	3	2	<p>Staff to be briefed on actions to be taken in the event of an emergency situation.</p> <p>Details of emergency contact numbers, to be kept in the office.</p> <p>Staff trained in the handling of difficult situations.</p> <p>Staff made aware of the Violence towards Staff procedures held on the DEL Intranet see (Appendices 3 and 4).</p> <p>Whereabouts board with contact numbers and time of contact (see Appendix 3 Violence towards Staff).</p> <p>Two members of staff to attend home visits.</p> <p>Staff to provide detailed itinerary of visits.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have all staff been trained in the emergency procedures? 2. Do staff know who to contact in an emergency? 3. Are procedures checked on a regular basis? 4. Have staff seen a copy of the DEL Violence towards Staff Guidelines? 5. Are there any written procedures in place within the office? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task? School Visits, Home Visits, Workplace Visits.</p> <p>Interviewing members of the public away from the office.</p> <p>Problems: Car Breakdown, Traffic Hold-up, Accidents.</p>				

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
<p>Personal injury and health damage</p> <p>Trips Slips and Falls</p>	Staff	3	2	<p>Staff engaged in manual handling duties to be trained to do so in a safe and practical way.</p> <p>Training to include demonstration and practical exercises.</p> <p>Staff should ensure they ask for help when lifting heavy or awkward loads.</p> <p>When lifting and transporting loads staff must ensure their path is clear and the load can be set down safely.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have staff been trained in manual handling? 2. Is the staff member medically and physical fit to perform the task? 3. Has a risk assessment been carried out on the task? 4. Has any lifting / trolley equipment been provided? 5. Have staff been trained in its use? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task? Lifting boxes of stationery, water bottles, chairs, waste bins etc With any manual-handling task an assessment should be made on the Weight of the load? Where has it to go? Is the passage way clear? Any trip hazards?</p> <p>.</p>				

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
<p>Personal injury and health damage</p> <p>Trips Slips and Falls</p>	Staff	3	2	<p>Staff engaged in manual handling duties to be trained to do so in a safe and practical way.</p> <p>Training to include demonstration and practical exercises.</p> <p>Boxes, Paper and other materials should not be stored on top of tambour units cabinets or filing cabinets.</p> <p>Heavy or awkward items to be stored at low level.</p> <p>No objects to be stored on window ledges or beside a radiator / heaters.</p> <p>Passageways, aisles should not be used for storage even temporary.</p> <p>Equipment should be stored away from the edge of shelves, desks etc.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have staff been trained in manual handling? 2. Is the staff member medically and physical fit to perform the task? 3. Has a risk assessment been carried out on the task? 4. Are staff aware of the storage areas and of the house keeping standards? 5. Is there a need to store the item? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task? Lifting and storing boxes of stationery, water bottles etc. With any manual-handling task an assessment should be made on the storage area? Where has it to go? Is the passage way clear? Any trip hazards?</p>				

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**Area of Assessment
General Office**

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
<p>Personal injury and health damage</p> <p>Assault / Abuse</p>	<p>Staff</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Desks filing cabinets to be arranged so that they don't open onto a passageway or cause an obstruction.</p> <p>File drawers to be closed after use and only one drawer to be open at a time.</p> <p>Free standing cabinets, bookcases, shelving, and tambour units to be secure and free from movement.</p> <p>Floor area to be kept clear and checked on a regular basis.</p> <p>Faulty equipment / furniture to be removed from service immediately.</p> <p>Equipment / materials / furniture to be stored correctly and not under desks and in passageways.</p> <p>No trailing leads / cables across any passageway, access or egress routes.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the furniture, equipment in good condition? 2. Are regular checks made on the condition of the furniture? 3. Are regular checks made on the floor area to ensure no trip hazard? 4. Is a regular check kept on the housekeeping standard? 5. Are all faults reported? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task?</p> <p>General office tasks Filing, telephone, photocopying . Condition of office, fittings, floor area, trip hazards, lighting checks?</p>				

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
Personal injury and health damage	Staff	3	2	<p>All doors maintained to ensure safe operation, free movement, no sharp edges on door or door frame.</p> <p>Glass doors have a motif, etching, or transfer to reduce the possibility of someone walking into them.</p> <p>Revolving doors to have rubber edge strips to reduce the possibility of fingers becoming trapped between the door and frame.</p> <p>All passageways to be kept clear and free from obstacles.</p> <p>Floors and isles to be checked regularly for trip hazards.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are all doors in good condition? 2. Are locks and seals in good order? 3. Are regular checks made on the doors and passageways area to ensure no hazard? 4. Are passageways clear and in good order? 5. Are all faults reported? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task?</p> <p>Are the doors in good order, any doors wedged open, do all the doors close properly. Are the passageways clear? Is the floor in good condition? Trip hazards e.g. torn carpet. Is the emergency route clear both inside and outside to the assembly point?</p> <p>Any hazards?</p>				

Hazard Identified	Person at risk	Hazard Rating	Likelihood	Control / Preventive Measures Required
<p>Personal injury and health damage</p> <p>Burns / Fire Spread</p>	<p>Staff</p> <p>Visitors</p> <p>Property</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Non-essential electrical equipment turned off and unplugged.</p> <p>Any electrical faults reported.</p> <p>Regular housekeeping e.g. bins emptied.</p> <p>No storage beside any heat source.</p> <p>Fire doors to be kept closed.</p> <p>Door closures checked on a regular basis.</p> <p>Correct fire signage to be displayed e.g. (exit, action).</p> <p>Fire extinguishers checked on a monthly basis.</p> <p>All fire extinguisher points to remain free from obstruction.</p> <p>Fire alarm checked on a weekly basis.</p> <p>2 emergency evacuations carried out annually.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Supplementary Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are staff aware of the general fire safety rules? 2. Are regular checks made on the condition of Fire doors and extinguishers? 3. Have all staff received the fire safety awareness training? 4. Are new staff members given copies of the local procedures? 5. Do staff know what to do in an emergency? 				
<p style="text-align: center;">Risk Assessment</p> <p>What is the task?</p> <p>Are the passageways clear? Are the escape routes to the assembly points free from hazards? Are the emergency lights working? If there are gates barring the escape route. where are the keys kept?</p>				

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Area of Assessment

Date of assessment:

Date of last assessment:

Hazard Identified	Person at Risk	Hazard rating	Likelihood	Risk acceptable Yes/no	Existing controls adequate	Control / Preventative Measures	Date Action Taken	Initial

Assessment carried out by: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Hazard Rating

- 6 Multiple fatality (or major explosion)
- 5 Death of 1 person
- 4 Serious injury (or disablement) of several persons
- 3 Major injury (or disablement) of one person
- 2 Minor injury (or illness)
- 1 Trivial injury (or damage only)

Likelihood

		Likelihood						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Hazard Rating	6	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	Priority
	5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.6	
	4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	High
	3	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	
	2	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.6	
	1	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	
		Low			Medium			

Likelihood

- 6 Certainty (likely to happen at any moment)
- 5 Highly probable (could occur 2-3 times per month)
- 4 Probable (could occur 2-3 times per year)
- 3 Likely (not expected to happen once per year)
- 2 Improbable (not expected to happen in 2-3 years)
- 1 Unlikely (not expected to happen in 5 years)