



Fire Protection Association

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Fire Risk Assessment Course

Health & Safety at Work Inspectorate, Isle of Man

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Fire Risk Assessment

Principles of Risk Assessment

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your workplace, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm

Why is it needed?

To reduce the possibility of injury and damage from unplanned events.

What it involves

The purpose of a risk assessment is not necessarily to quantify the risks that are present in the workplace but to identify them and then to:

- Eliminate
- Control
- Avoid
- Transfer or
- Accept the risks.

The Risk Assessment Process

The risk assessment process involves five simple steps, these are as follows:

1. Look for hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how



3. Evaluate risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done.
4. Record your findings
5. Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

Planning a Risk Assessment

When you plan your risk assessment you need to decide if you can cover the whole of your work place in one session or if you need to do it in sections. The ideal team for carrying out a risk assessment is two people, one person who works in the area being assessed and one who doesn't. This will enable both to assess the risks from different angles.

Hazard identification

A **hazard** is defined as anything that can cause harm and **risk** is the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard. Walk around your workplace and look afresh at what could cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on the significant hazards, which could result in serious harm or affect several people. Ask your employees or their representatives what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious.

Putting in into Context - Evaluation

When you have identified the hazards you need to evaluate this risks involved. Decide who might be harmed and how. Don't forget:

- Young workers, trainees, new and expectant mothers, etc who may be at particular risk.
- Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers, etc who may not be in the workplace all the time.
- Members of the public, or people you share your workplace with, if there is a chance they could be hurt by your activities.



Risk Controls

Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. This will determine whether or not you need to do more to reduce the risk. Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. What you have to decide for each significant hazard is whether this remaining risk is high medium or low. First ask yourself whether you have done all the things that the law says you have got to do. Then ask yourself whether generally acceptable industry standards are in place. But don't stop there - think for yourself, because the law also says that you must do what is reasonably practicable to keep your workplace safe. In controlling risks apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:

1. Try a less risky option
2. Prevent access to the hazard
3. Organise work to reduce exposure
4. Issue personal protective equipment

Improving fire safety need not cost a lot. Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if a fire occurs.

Monitoring and Recording

When you have carried out your risk assessment you need to record the findings. The risk assessment must be suitable and sufficient. You need to show that:

- A proper check was made
- You asked who might be affected
- You dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who might be involved
- The precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is low.



Keep a written record for future reference or use; it can help you if an inspector asks what precautions you have taken, or you become involved in any action for civil liability.

Practical Risk Assessment

Now it's your turn:

RISK ASSESSMENT (B)

Ref. No.

Hazard	Level of Risk	H <input type="checkbox"/>	N <input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Evaluation Rating (from form A)					
Risks									
Existing Prevention/Control Measures			Additional Prevention/Control Measures/Remedial Works/Actions						
Health & Safety Code of Practice ref. No.			Yes No						
Amendments Required to Existing Prevention/Control Measures			Prevention Measures Introduced						
			Control Measures Introduced						
			Training Carried Out						
			Monitoring shows Satisfactory Revised Level of Risk		H	N	L		
					<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
			Written Safe Working Practices Completed (Health & Safety Code of Practice ref. no.)						
			Next Review Date						
			Assessor						
			Date						

A Simple Fire Risk Assessment

Stage 1: Identifying the fire hazards

1.	Is there a system for controlling the amounts of combustible materials and flammable liquids and gases that are kept in the work place?	Yes/no/not applicable
2.	Is the system operating effectively?	Yes/no/not applicable
3.	Are all combustible materials and flammable liquids and gases stored safely?	Yes/no/not applicable
4.	Are all heaters fitted with suitable guards and fixed in position away from combustible materials?	Yes/no/not applicable
5.	Are all items of portable electrical equipment inspected regularly and fitted with the correctly rated fuses?	Yes/no/not applicable
6.	Is the wiring of the electrical installation inspected periodically by a competent person?	Yes/no/not applicable
7.	Is the use of extension leads and multi-point adapters kept to a minimum?	Yes/no/not applicable
8.	Are flexes run in safe places where they will not be damaged?	Yes/no/not applicable
9.	Is the upholstery of furniture in good condition?	Yes/no/not applicable
10.	Is the workplace free from rubbish and combustible materials?	Yes/no/not applicable
11.	Is there a designated smoking area provided with adequate ashtrays?	Yes/no/not applicable
12.	Have suitable measures been taken to protect against the threat of arson?	Yes/no/not applicable
13.	Have measures been taken to ensure that smoke and flames cannot spread from one compartment within the building to another?	Yes/no/not applicable

Stage 2: Identifying the people who could be at risk

14.	Is there sufficient number of exits of suitable width for the people present?	Yes/no/not applicable
15.	Do the exits lead to a place of safety?	Yes/no/not applicable
16.	Are gangways and escape routes free from obstruction?	Yes/no/not applicable
17.	Are the escape routes free from tripping and slipping hazards?	Yes/no/not applicable
18.	Are steps and stairs in a good state of repair?	Yes/no/not applicable
19.	Are final exits always unlocked when the premises are in use?	Yes/no/not applicable
20.	Are the devices securing final exits capable of being opened immediately and easily without the use of a key?	Yes/no/not applicable
21.	Are internal fire doors labeled as such and normally kept closed?	Yes/no/not applicable
22.	Are the self-closers on fire doors operating correctly?	Yes/no/not applicable
23.	Do the doors on escape routes open in the direction of travel?	Yes/no/not applicable
24.	Are escape routes clearly signed?	Yes/no/not applicable
25.	Are escape routes adequately lit?	Yes/no/not applicable
26.	Have plans been made and rehearsed regarding assisting disabled staff and visitors to evacuate the premises?	Yes/no/not applicable

Stage 3: Eliminate, control or avoid the fire hazards

27.	Do procedures and practices avoid the use of combustible materials or processes that use heat?	Yes/no/not applicable
28.	Has consideration been given to all cost-effective measures that could be taken to prevent the occurrence of arson?	Yes/no/not applicable
29.	Have staff been trained in how to call the fire brigade, the use of the fire extinguishers and basic fire prevention?	Yes/no/not applicable
30.	Have you asked your insurers for advice regarding the fire protection of the premises?	Yes/no/not applicable

Stage 4: Consider whether the existing fire safety provisions are adequate or need improvement

31.	Where escape lighting is installed is it in working order and maintained regularly?	Yes/no/not applicable
32.	Is the fire alarm system in working order?	Yes/no/not applicable
33.	Is the fire alarm tested weekly?	Yes/no/not applicable
34.	Can the fire alarm be raised without placing anyone in danger?	Yes/no/not applicable
35.	Are the fire alarm call points clearly visible and unobstructed?	Yes/no/not applicable
36.	Are an adequate number of suitable fire extinguishers provided?	Yes/no/not applicable
37.	Are fire extinguishers and fire blankets located suitably and ready for use?	Yes/no/not applicable
38.	Are the fire extinguishers serviced annually by a competent company or person?	Yes/no/not applicable
39.	Is any fixed fire fighting installation or automatic fire detection system in working order?	Yes/no/not applicable

Stage 5: Record the findings

40.	If you employ five or more people have you recorded the findings of the fire risk assessment?	Yes/no/not applicable
41.	Have you told your staff or their representatives about your findings?	Yes/no/not applicable
42.	If you have prepared a formal report has this been shown to your staff or their representatives?	Yes/no/not applicable
43.	If you share your workplace with others do they know about the risks that you have identified?	Yes/no/not applicable
44.	If you do not have direct control over the workplace have you made your findings known to the owner or landlord?	Yes/no/not applicable

Stage 6: Prepare an emergency plan

45.	Are fire action notices displayed prominently throughout the workplace?	Yes/no/not applicable
46.	Has an emergency plan been drawn up in case of a major fire?	Yes/no/not applicable
47.	Is a copy of the emergency plan kept in other than the workplace?	Yes/no/not applicable

Stage 7: Carry out a periodic review of the assessment

48.	Has a procedure been established to review the fire risk assessment periodically?	Yes/no/not applicable
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RISK VALUE MATRIX

