

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazards

A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm.

For each process it is important that all **significant** hazards are identified. If it's trivial, don't include it.

You need to think carefully about the hazards. They should be described properly to ensure that they are easily understood and communicated. See the Risk Assessment training course notes for guidance on how hazards should be described.

Who could be harmed?

For each hazard think about and record who could be harmed. This may be an individual but it could also be a generic group (e.g. technical staff, engineering students, contractors, etc.).

It may be that the people who may be harmed are the same ones for all of the hazards but do not assume that this will always be the case.

Consider people who are not directly involved in the process but may be harmed (e.g. maintenance staff, cleaners, visitors, etc. - in some cases it may be appropriate to develop separate risk assessment for these people).

You may also need to consider individuals or groups of people who may be particularly vulnerable (e.g. disabled persons, children, new starters, etc.).

Existing safety precautions

For each hazard think about and record the existing safety precautions.

For each of the safety precautions consider if and how it could fail (e.g. someone not wearing the PPE that they have been given). This will help you to determine the risk.

Risk level

Taking into account the existing safety precautions, assess the risk level for each hazard.

Each assessment of risk should consider factors that affect the likelihood of an incident occurring and the severity of the outcome.

Assessment of the likelihood should consider:

- Number of people usually exposed to the hazard
- How frequently people are exposed to the risk
- Number of previous incidents associated with the activity/hazard

Assessment of the probable severity of the outcome should consider:

- Likely physical injury (e.g. minor cut, lost time injury, permanent disability, death)
- Likely health impact (e.g. minor irritation, short-term illness, life-threatening disease)
- Number of people likely to be affected

Based on the above, the overall risk level for the hazard should be described as **Low**, **Medium** or **High**.

Alternatively, the **Risk Rating Matrix** (overleaf) may be used to determine a numerical value for the risk level.

Risk level (Cont.)

Risk Rating Matrix

Probable Severity	Likelihood		
	1 (Low)	2 (Medium)	3 (High)
3 (High)	3	6	9
2 (Medium)	2	4	6
1 (Low)	1	2	3

Note: A 5 x 5 risk rating system may be used, if preferred.

