Risk Assessment Procedure
Guidance for Commercial Premises

Background

Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety At Work Regulations 1999 places an absolute duty on employers to carry out a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment on the health and safety risks to his employees and others that may be affected by his undertaking (i.e. members of the public, residents, contractors, cleaners, maintenance workers etc).

Requirements for a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment

To comply with the Regulations the risk assessment must be "suitable and sufficient", i.e. must:

1. Identify all the hazards associated with the work activity and evaluate the risk arising from those hazards, taking into account current legal requirements
2. Record the significant findings that are reasonably foreseeable. Trivial risks can be ignored.
3. Identify any employee/group of employees especially at risk (e.g. young persons, new & expectant mothers, disabled persons etc).
4. Identify others who may be at risk (e.g. visitors, contractors, members of the public etc).
5. Evaluate existing controls, decide whether they are satisfactory. If not, what action should be taken?
6. Evaluate the need for information, instruction, training and supervision.
7. Estimate the probability/likelihood of the occurrence of an accident, incident or ill-health as a result of inadequately controlled risk, and record this.
8. Respond immediately to any circumstances arising from the assessment where serious and imminent risk could arise.
9. Provide an action plan, giving information and implementation of additional controls, in order of priority and with a realistic timescale.
10. Monitor the action plan to ensure it is being implemented.
11. Review risk assessments when there have been significant changes (i.e. changes to equipment, personnel, work activities, etc). It is considered good practice to review annually as a matter of routine.

Risk Assessment Procedure

This may appear to be a complicated process. This procedure is designed as an easy to follow step-by-step approach using standard documentation.

RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE

The procedure for carrying out risk assessments is as follows:-

1. Identify the hazards.
("hazard" is something which could cause harm and may not just be the obvious physical hazards that you can see – i.e. lone working, occupational stress, legionella etc). Think about the 4 P's – Premises, Processes, People and Plant.

2. List the individuals or groups of people who might be harmed.

3.(i) Evaluate the risk by use of the risk rating system.
("Risk" is the chance that somebody will be harmed by the hazard)

The risk rating is determined by giving a numerical value to –

- the likely occurrence, and
- the potential severity of the consequences.

The risk rating = likely occurrence x potential severity

Table 1 - shows numerical values for likely occurrence and potential severity with examples of each numerical value.

Numerical Value	Likely Occurrence	Example	Numerical Value	Potential Severity of Consequences	Example
1	Most unlikely	No record of occurrence	1	Low	No injury expected or injury unlikely to need medical attention. Able to carry out normal duties
2	Possible occurrence	Foreseeable Hasn't occurred in last year.	2	Minor	May need first aid. Short break from duties. Treated on spot.
3	Occasional	Has/could occur approx. once a year	3	Significant	Injury results in inability to do normal duties. Off work more than 3 days, but less than 3 weeks
4	Frequent	Occurs more than once a year; not as often as weekly	4	Major	Needs qualified medical attention. Unable to do normal duties for more than 3 weeks. Intermittent incapacity.
5	Common	Occurs weekly or more often; inevitable.	5	Permanent disability or fatality.	Unable to do normal job, replacement, retirement

3.(ii) Multiply the numerical value for likely occurrence by potential severity, to give a numerical value for risk rating and the priority for action.
(See Table 2)

Table 2 - Risk Rating

Potential Severity (PS)	**Likely Occurrence (LO)**				
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
	RISK RATING = (LO) x (PS)				
1	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2	**2**	**4**	**6**	**8**	**10**
3	**3**	**6**	**9**	**12**	**15**
4	**4**	**8**	**12**	**16**	**20**
5	**5**	**10**	**15**	**20**	**25**

Risk Ratings with values greater than 4 are considered as significant and need further action to reduce the risk. Resolve highest risk ratings first.

Low, medium and high risk are **not** used in this procedure, to reduce variation in individuals' interpretation.

4. In controlling risks apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:

- **Elimination** – do the work in a different way, repair the damaged floor, replace the defective equipment etc.
- **Substitution** – use a less hazardous chemical, organise the work in a different way
- **Engineering controls:**
  design changes (alter your workstation, change the height of the computer monitor etc)
  Segregation/isolation (barriers, sound screens, enclosures etc)
- **Administrative/management controls** – changing/improving work procedures, training, instruction, supervision etc
- **Personal Protective Equipment** (safety glasses, hard hats etc) – should only be used as a last resort when a hazard cannot be sufficiently controlled by other controls.

5. The risk assessment should be reviewed at least annually or before if there are any significant changes in work practices, equipment, etc or in the event of an accident, near miss etc.

The 'Risk Assessment Summary' form can be used to list the hazards, people at risk, the risk ratings, controls and risks not adequately controlled, further controls needed and the action timescale.

Additional Sources of information:

- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 Approved Code of Practice (L21) ISBN 0-7176-2488-9 Price £8.00 HSE Books - 01787 881165
- 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment' INDG163 downloadable free of charge at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/index