

Risk Assessment Procedure

SOP · UK · Updated 2026-07-11 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A risk assessment procedure is the written method your organisation uses to identify workplace hazards, work out who could be harmed and how, and decide the controls that reduce the risk to an acceptable level. It turns risk assessment from a one-off form-filling exercise into a repeatable process anyone competent can run.

Risk assessment is the engine of UK health and safety law — nearly every other duty, from fire arrangements to manual handling controls, flows from what your assessments find. A consistent procedure means two different managers assess the same task the same way, and the paperwork stands up when an inspector or insurer asks for it.

This template gives you the full procedure: when an assessment is triggered, who does it, the five-step method, the hierarchy of controls, and the records that prove your controls existed on the day it mattered.

Purpose and scope

This procedure sets out how [Your company] identifies, assesses and controls workplace risks. It applies to every activity, site and person working for us, including [contractors, agency staff, home workers], and supports the commitments in our health and safety policy.

When to carry out or revisit an assessment

- Before a new task, machine, substance or work area is introduced.
- When a process, layout, staffing level or shift pattern changes materially.
- After any accident, near miss or work-related ill-health report connected to the task.
- When an assessment's review date falls due.
- When someone who needs specific consideration joins the task: [young workers, new and expectant mothers, disabled staff, lone workers].

Roles and responsibilities

- Assessment owner ([name/role]): maintains the risk assessment register, sets review dates, and signs off assessments for higher-risk activities.
- Assessors ([names/roles]): competent people trained in this procedure who carry out and write up assessments.
- Managers and supervisors: implement the controls, brief their teams, and confirm the controls are being followed in practice.
- All staff: follow the controls, and report to [role] when a control fails, is unworkable, or a hazard has been missed.

Before you start

1. Gather what already exists: previous assessments, manufacturer instructions, safety data sheets, and accident or near-miss records for the task.
2. Walk the task where it actually happens — assess in the room, not from a desk.
3. Talk to the people who do the job; they know the shortcuts and failure points no manager sees.
4. Check whether anyone doing the task needs specific consideration: [young workers, new and expectant mothers, disabled staff, lone workers].

Step-by-step: carrying out the assessment

1. Identify the hazards — anything with the potential to cause harm: equipment, substances, the environment, and the way the work is organised.
2. Decide who could be harmed and how: staff doing the task, others nearby, contractors, visitors, and members of the public.
3. Evaluate the risk — how likely is the harm and how serious would it be, taking account of the controls already in place.
4. Decide what further controls are needed using the hierarchy in the next section, and give each one an owner and a deadline.
5. Record the significant findings on [form/system]: the hazards, who is at risk, existing and new controls, the owner, and the review date.
6. Brief everyone who does the task on the findings and controls before the assessment is filed.

Choosing controls

Work down this hierarchy and only settle for a lower level where the higher ones are not reasonably practicable:

- Eliminate the hazard entirely — change the process, buy pre-cut stock, stop doing the task.
- Substitute something less hazardous — a safer chemical, a lighter container.
- Engineer the risk away — guards, local ventilation, barriers, mechanical aids.
- Administrative controls — safe systems of work, training, signage, job rotation, supervision.
- Personal protective equipment — the last layer, never the first answer.

Records and proof of completion

Completed assessments are stored in [system/location] and indexed in a register showing owner and review date. Team briefings on new or changed assessments are recorded with names and dates in [system].

Superseded versions are kept for [period] so we can show exactly which controls applied on any given date — that history is what an investigation asks for.

If something goes wrong

If an accident or near miss happens on an assessed task, treat it as evidence the assessment failed somewhere: review the assessment as part of the investigation and update it before the task resumes.

If a control proves unworkable in practice, staff report it to [role] rather than quietly working around it. A control nobody follows is a paper control, and paper controls fail audits and people in the same week.

Review

Every assessment carries its own review date set by the assessor: [frequency, e.g. annually] is our default, shorter for higher-risk tasks. This procedure itself is reviewed [frequency] by [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Build your task list first — you can't assess what you haven't listed. Start with the activities most likely to cause serious harm.
2. Replace the [form/system] references with whatever you will genuinely use; a simple shared table beats sophisticated software nobody opens.
3. Name your competent assessors in section 3 and get them trained on this procedure before you publish it.
4. Set the default review frequency to match your risk profile — a quiet office can run longer between reviews than a kitchen or workshop.
5. Pilot the procedure end to end on one real task, fix what jarred, then roll it out.
6. Book the first batch of reviews into the diary on day one, or the review dates will silently pass.

Official guidance

- › [HSE — Managing risks and risk assessment at work](#)
- › [HSE — Managing health and safety: the basics for your business](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/risk-assessment-procedure> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.