

Health and Safety Department Health and Safety Guidance Note

HSGN-01 CARRYING OUT A GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

This Health and Safety Guidance Note is designed to help designated staff undertake a general risk assessment to comply with the requirements of the Humber NHS Foundation Trust Health and Safety Policy.

2. Competence

Risk assessments should only be undertaken by people who have completed Managing Safely training.

3. Definitions

A **hazard** is the potential of a substance, activity or process to cause harm (e.g. chemicals, infectious materials, machinery, lone working, violence and aggression).

A **risk** is the likelihood that harm from a hazard will be realised (e.g. contact with chemical and infectious materials).

4. Carrying out a risk assessment

4.1 Preparation

Prepare an inventory of all Unit/Team work activities.

For example:

- Handling soiled laundry.
- Assisting a patient from bed to chair.
- Visiting service users' homes.
- Carrying/moving heavy equipment.
- Staff using vehicles to undertake site visits.
- Using plant and equipment.
- Use of sharps.

Some activities will be identified immediately as trivial risks and these can usually be ignored e.g. making cups of tea, unless the work activity compounds those risks or there is significant relevance to the particular work activity e.g. service users who need to learn new living skills.

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4.2 Carry out an assessment

Use the Trust's general risk assessment form, a copy of which is available in the Health and Safety section of the Trust intranet.

Follow the steps below for carrying out a general risk assessment using the Trust standard assessment form:

Step 1 Table A of the assessment form

Assessor: Enter the name of person carrying out the assessment.

Signature: Signature of the above.

Assessment date: Enter the date the assessment was carried out.

Activity Assessed: Describe the activity that is being assessed. This could be a specific task e.g. floor cleaning, operation of a machine, maintenance activities, administering medications etc.

Location: Enter details of where the activity will take place.

Review Date: Enter the date that the assessment will be reviewed (usually on an annual basis).

Step 2 Table C of the assessment form

Hazards: Review the hazards listed to determine whether the work activity may involve the hazard. Identify hazards for the work activity being assessed by putting a cross in the appropriate box against the hazard. The list provided is not comprehensive. Should there be hazards that are not on the list, then enter additional hazards in the spare boxes provided.

Those Affected: Enter the identification letters of those affected, from Table B, against the hazards identified for the work activity.

Example:

Table B

THOSE AFFECTED					
A. Employees	B. Service Users	C. Adjacent Workers	D. Children/Young Persons	E. Contractors	F. Visitors
G. New or Expectant Mothers	Others (state)				

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Table C

HAZARDS		Those Affected	HAZARDS		Those Affected	HAZARDS		Those Affected
Falling from height	X	A / F	Fire + explosion	X	A / F	Violence/Lone working	X	A
Falling objects			Substances	X	A	Radiation		
Slips/trips	X	A / F	Biological hazard			DSE	X	A
Noise			Needle stick			Vehicles		
Electricity	X	A	Ejection of fluid			Severing or Cutting		
Dust/fume			Manual handling	X	A	Ejection of objects		

Step 3 Table D of the assessment form

Hazards column: List the hazards identified in Table C.

Aspects of activity column: Identify the particular part of the work activity where people come into contact with the hazard.

Existing control measures column: Outline the existing measures which will reduce the risk arising from each of the hazards listed.

Typical control measures include: preventing access to the hazard e.g. guarding, written procedures and instructions, training, provision of personal protective equipment, etc.

Risk: Assess the risks arising from the hazards identified, using the criteria set out below. When carrying this out, consideration must be given to what is reasonably foreseeable in relation to the identified hazards and recognition of the existing control measures that reduce the risk.

The assessment should be based on the information recorded in the previous tables. Enter the appropriate score and risk rating; L for low, M for moderate, H for high, and E for extreme.

If the overall risk category is low or moderate, then the assessment is complete and the information contained within the assessment should be disseminated to those affected. If the overall risk category is above moderate, then additional control measures are required.

Risk Grading Tool

The same grading tool is used by the Trust for all risk processes (risk assessment, risk register, and incident reporting assessment). Risks are measured according to the following formula:

$$\text{Likelihood} \times \text{Impact} = \text{Risk Level}$$

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Likelihood

Risks are first judged on the likelihood of the risk being realised. The following categories are available for grading:

Level	Descriptor	Likelihood Definition
5	Almost certain	Expected to occur daily. This type of event is more likely to occur than not.
4	Likely	Expected to occur at least weekly. This type of event will occur in most circumstances.
3	Possible	Expected to occur at least monthly. This type of event has a reasonable chance of occurring.
2	Unlikely	Expected to occur at least annually. Unlikely that this type of event will occur.
1	Rare/very unlikely	Not expected to occur for years. Cannot believe that an event of this type will occur in the foreseeable future.

Consequences/Impact

Situations are then judged to evaluate, if the risk were to be realised, what the outcome is most likely to be. The following categories are available for grading:

Level	Descriptor	Consequences/Impact Definition
5	Catastrophic	Fatality.
4	Major	Major injury/long term disability. E.g. fractures, amputations, occupational asthma.
3	Moderate	Minor injury or illness resulting in absence from work.
2	Minor	Minor injury requiring first aid treatment.
1	Insignificant	Minor injury not requiring first aid.

Risk Rating Table

Likelihood of occurrence	Most likely consequences/impact (if in doubt grade up, not down)				
	Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
Rare/Very unlikely 1	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely 2	2	4	6	8	10
Possible 3	3	6	9	12	15
Likely 4	4	8	12	16	20
Almost certain 5	5	10	15	20	25

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Risk Ratings Acceptance of Risk Table

Risk	Acceptance of Risk	By Whom
Low 1 – 3	Acceptable risk: no further action required.	Team Leaders
Moderate 4 - 6	Risk to be controlled as far as is reasonably practicable by completion of risk assessment and safe method of work.	Team Leaders/ Service Manager
High 8 – 12	Significant risk which requires action to remove, transfer or minimise this risk.	Senior Service Managers/Assistant Directors
Extreme 15 - 25	<p>Significant risk which requires immediate action to remove, transfer or minimise this risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible stop the work activity. • Report the issue ASAP to the Trust's Health and Safety Manager providing details of actions that are being taken to reduce the risk level. 	Director Responsible for Unit/Team Chief Executive

Authority to accept and manage risks

It is impossible and not always desirable to treat and/or eliminate all risks and therefore some risks will have to be accepted. The decision to accept a risk will be based on the principle of cost versus benefit. When a risk assessment is **complete and no further cost effective action is identified and the risk cannot be** transferred or avoided then a decision to accept a risk must be made as set out in the above table.

Step 4 Table E of the assessment form

Safe method of work: Instructions on carrying out the work activity in a safe manner should be included in this section, e.g. safety instructions for handling soiled laundry. Specific procedures should be referenced e.g. procedure to follow when visiting service users' homes.

Step 5 Table F of the assessment form

Risk Assessment remedial actions: Where the general risk assessment has identified additional control measures or other actions require to be implemented, the actions need to be recorded in this section of the document.

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Step 6 Table G of the assessment form

Briefing: Pass on the content and the findings of the general risk assessment to all relevant staff. Record this in Table G, or ensure there is another means of recording that staff have been made aware of the risk assessment.

Step 7 Risk assessment review period

Review period: Risk assessments are to be reviewed on the following basis:

- Annually.
- Following an incident or case of ill-health arising from the work activity.
- Following a change in work procedures.

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