

Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Guide

Individuals participating in any activity may face a potential risk of injury.

All volunteer project committee members have a duty of care towards their members and as such are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the project operates in the safest way possible.

If a person has been injured because of another person's negligence, and that negligence can be proved they may seek financial compensation under civil law. Therefore it is important that committee members carefully follow all health and safety guidelines.

Risk Assessments

- All volunteer projects are required to submit risk assessments. Failure to submit a completed risk assessment form will result in the suspension of project activities and rights to SU privileges.
- Training will be provided on completing risk assessment forms at your development meeting. Further assistance is always available from your Volunteer Centre or Activities Team.
- Risk assessment forms will be provided to every project to complete and return. These are also available via the SU website.
- Forms should be returned to your relevant campus Volunteer Coordinator.

What is a Risk Assessment?

Risk Assessments are a careful examination of what, in your activity, could cause harm to people, so that you can establish whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

Risk assessments deal with three basic areas;

Identifying the Hazards

This is the potential to cause harm to people, equipment, environment etc.

Assessing the Risk

This is the likelihood or possibility that harm to people, equipment or the environment will occur.

Safety control measure

What can be done to reduce or even eliminate the risk altogether.

Risk assessments should not be seen as a one off. They are a very important tool to ensure that your working environment is as safe as possible. They should highlight any necessary actions required that can be put in place to minimise risk. If the conditions of your activity change, then the Risk assessment will need to be reviewed and possibly modified. All risk assessments will automatically be due for renewal on an annual basis.

Why do I have to do risk assessments?

Risk Assessments are a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999. They are also a requirement of the University's and the Union's Health and Safety policy.

How to write a Risk Assessment

Please download a risk assessment template and use the guide below to complete your risk assessment.

Step 1

Enter the activity you are risk assessing, who is writing the risk assessment and the current date:

Subject of assessment (May be an activity, hazard or relate to an individual):		RA conducted by:	Date:	RA ref. no.
List the risk/s involved or describe the hazard:				
List the current control measures in place:				
Current risk level:		High / Medium / Low (See risk matrix)	(Delete as appropriate)	
List the actions required to reduce the risk (include reference to any written safety procedures):			Date actioned:	Actioned by:
Revised risk level:		High / Medium / Low (See risk matrix)	(Delete as appropriate)	
RA verified by:				Date:

Step 2

List the risks or hazards involved in your activity and list any current control measures you have in place to reduce these risks:

Subject of assessment (May be an activity, hazard or relate to an individual):		RA conducted by:	Date:	RA ref. no.
List the risk/s involved or describe the hazard:				
List the current control measures in place:				
Current risk level:		High / Medium / Low (See risk matrix)	(Delete as appropriate)	
List the actions required to reduce the risk (include reference to any written safety procedures):			Date actioned:	Actioned by:
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Step 3

You will now need to work out the risk of your activity by assessing the **likelihood** and **severity** of potential risks or hazards. Using your list of hazards and current control measures, measure the likelihood and severity of your activity:

LIKELIHOOD

The likelihood element is estimated on the basis of the effectiveness of any current control measures, the number of people exposed to a risk and the frequency at which any task involving the risk is undertaken. It is rated as follows:

- Improbable (1)
- Remote (2)
- Possible (3)
- Probable (4)
- Likely (5)

SEVERITY

The severity element considers the likely injuries or damage that could result from the accident, as follows:

- FATAL (4) – Probability of deaths or catastrophic damage or process interruption
- MAJOR (3) - Probability of major injury or major damage or process interruption
- SIGNIFICANT (2) - Probability of injury resulting in loss of three or more working days, or serious damage or process interruption
- MINOR (1) – Probability of minor injury that would cause no lost time, minor damage or minor process interruption.

PRIORITISATION

Use the matrix below to establish the priority rating of the risk. To do this multiply your likelihood rating with your severity rating:

LIKELIHOOD x SEVERITY

Likelihood ↓		Severity of outcome Minor 1	Severity of outcome Significant 2	Severity of outcome Major 3	Severity of outcome Fatal 4
Improbable	1	Low	Low	Low	Low
Remote	2	Low	Low	Med	Med
Possible	3	Low	Med	Med	High
Probable	4	Low	Med	High	High
Likely	5	Low	Med	High	High
PRIORITY	→	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH

The priority ratings have the following meanings:

HIGH PRIORITY (10+) - IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED

MEDIUM priority (6-9) - Risk is significant – action required within one month

LOW priority (1-5) - Risk is insignificant – action justified only if change is easy to implement and the cost is low.

Record your priority rating on your assessment form here:

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RA verified by:				Date:

Step 4

Is it possible to reduce the risk?

Now that you have assessed the risk of your activity, please list the actions required to reduce your risk. To do this, think about the following:

By **substitution** – e.g. using a less hazardous material or process

By **combating** – e.g. installing appropriate guards

By **minimising** –e.g. implementing new systems of work, training or, as a last resort, personal protective equipment

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Step 5

Repeat **Step 3** and reassess the risk of your activity using your new actions. Input the revised risk level here:

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List the current control measures in place:				
Current risk level:		High / Medium / Low (See risk matrix)	(Delete as appropriate)	
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Incidents and Accidents

Despite taking all precautions, accidents can still occur. The following procedures are designed to provide fast and safe assistance to all concerned, to supply the Students' Union with the specific information it needs, and to protect the individual(s) concerned.

- If an incident occurs on University/Union property, contact a member of staff or qualified first aid person immediately.
- If an incident occurs at another venue, follow the instructions from an official representative of the establishment.
- In the event of a serious accident please contact the emergency services on '999'.
 - Ensure comfort of casualty but do not move them.
 - Ensure safety of others present.

Recording incidents and accidents

If an incident or accident occurs during your activity this must be recorded. The reporting of any 'near miss' occurrence is also vital for the future safety of all individuals. This information helps others to plan and prepare in order to avoid possible dangers. Please note that ALL INJURIES MUST BE RECORDED BY LAW.

To record an incident or accident please:

- Complete an accident form (available from the SU website or Students' Union Office). These should be completed within 24 hours of the incident so it can be assessed as to whether it is reportable under Health and Safety Legislation.
- Failure to follow this procedure can result in the prosecution of the University/Union and the individual concerned by the Health and Safety Executive. Disciplinary action would also be taken against the offending individual/project.

First Aid

There is the potential in every activity for an accident to occur. It is therefore very important that first aid assistance is available for every project. To help protect you, the SU recommends and encourages you to nominate at least one member to attend the Appointed Person First Aid training course.

This is a one day course that occurs at certain times around the year. To confirm the dates of the next course, please speak with a member of the Volunteer Centre or Activities Team. Spaces are limited to 12 on a course, so book well in advance to secure a place.