



RISK **ASSESSMENT** employer's guide

Health and Safety at Work (**Jersey**) Law 1989

Introduction

This guide aims to help you, the employer, assess health and safety risks in your workplace.

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting your employees and your business, as well as complying with the Law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter in your workplace – the ones with the potential to cause real harm.

In many instances, straightforward precautions, known as ‘control measures’, can readily control the risk of harm. For most, that means simple, low-cost and effective measures to ensure your most valuable asset – your workforce – is protected.

Be aware that many of the costs incurred by accidents and ill-health as a result of your working activities are not covered by your insurance and will have to be met by your business.

The Health and Safety at Work (Jersey) Law 1989 does not expect you to eliminate all risk but, as far as is reasonably practicable, you are required to protect people; this even includes you if you run a business but have no employees. This guide explains how to achieve this using a simple **5-step** process.

This is not the only way to do a risk assessment, there are other methods that work well, particularly for more complex risks and circumstances. However, this method is considered the most straightforward for most organisations.

The risk assessment process

A **risk assessment** is a term used to describe the overall process you need to carry out in your workplace; simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to somebody in order to identify whether you have implemented enough control measures or should do more to prevent harm. Employees and others, such as customers or visitors, have the right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures.

Don't overcomplicate the process. In many organisations, the risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply. You probably already know who is at risk of harm and whether you have implemented reasonable measures to avoid injury or incidents of ill-health.

Whether a small or large business you can do the assessments yourself. You don't have to be a health and safety expert to do them if you are competent and confident you understand what's involved. You can ask a health and safety advisor or someone who is competent to help you.

In all cases, you should make sure that you involve your employees, or their representatives, in the process. They will have useful information about how the work is done that will make your assessment of the risk more thorough and effective.

When thinking about your risk assessment, consider:

- A **hazard** is anything that has the potential to cause somebody harm; examples include chemicals, electricity, working at height, operating machinery or hand tools, trailing cables, moving heavy or awkward loads, uneven or slippery surfaces, disproportionate work-related pressures, etc.
- The **risk** is the chance, high or low, that any hazard will actually cause somebody harm.

Be aware:

You, the employer, are legally required to assess the significant risks to people in your workplace.

You, the employer, are responsible for ensuring the assessment is carried out properly.

To ensure the risks created by your working activities are controlled, you, the employer, must make a plan of action, implementing any additional control measures identified as part of the risk assessment.

5 simple steps to risk assessment

1

Identify hazards and those at risk

2

Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions ('control measures')

3

Record your findings and make a plan of action

4

Implement any additional control measures identified

5

Review your risk assessment

Identify hazards and those at risk

First you need to work out what has the potential to cause injury or ill-health to people, including employees, members of the public, visitors, contractors, etc. When you work in a place every day it is easy to overlook some hazards so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

- **Walk around your workplace** and identify what could reasonably be expected to cause harm
- **Ask your employees** or their representatives what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you
- **Visit the HSI website:** www.gov.je/hsi
- **Visit the UK's HSE website:** www.hse.gov.uk The HSE publishes practical guidance on where hazards occur and how to control them. There is much information here on the hazards that might affect your business. Although the UK legislation is different to Jersey legislation, the intent of both is the same
- **Check your trade association** - if your industry has one it may produce helpful guidance
- **Check manufacturers' instructions** or data sheets for chemicals or equipment as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and putting them in their true perspective
- **Look back at your accident, ill-health or near-miss records** - these often help to identify the less obvious hazards
- **Remember to think about long-term hazards to health** (e.g. higher levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances) as well as safety hazards

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people and how they might be harmed (e.g. 'employees working at height may fall and injure themselves and others' or 'employees working with hazardous substances may develop dermatitis or respiratory ailments' or 'members of the public may be struck by falling materials').

Consider:

- Some employees have particular requirements, e.g. new and young employees, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities may be at particular risk
- Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers, etc., who may not be in the workplace all the time
- Members of the public, if they could be harmed by your activities
- If you share your workplace, you will need to think about how your work affects others present, as well as how their work affects your employees – talk to all parties; and
- Ask your employees if they can think of anyone you may have missed

Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions ('control measures')

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The Law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

There are many sources of good practice; for example, the UK's HSE website (www.hse.gov.uk), your industry trade association, manufacturer's guidance, etc.

First, look at what you are already doing, think about what control measures you already have in place. Are they adequate? Then compare your existing control measures with the good practice and see if there's more you should be doing to bring your business up to standard. You should consider:

- **Elimination** - Can you get rid of the hazard altogether?

If not, how can you control the risk so that harm is unlikely?

When controlling risks, apply the principles below in the following order:

- **Substitution** - Replace the material or process with a less hazardous one
- **Isolation** - Separate people from the hazard
- **Engineer** - Use work equipment or other physical means to control the risk
- **Procedures** - Identify and implement procedures needed to work safely
- **PPE** - Personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing should only be used to control any remaining risks

It is vitally important to involve your employees, so that you can be sure that any control measures you propose will work in practice and won't introduce any new hazards.

If further control measures are required, consider who will implement these and by when.

Record your findings and make a plan of action

If you have five or more employees you are required by the Law to write down the risk assessment. If you have fewer than five employees, it is useful to do this anyway. The assessment can be reviewed at a later date, in particular when something changes, and easily demonstrates how you control the risks in your workplace.

Writing down the results of your risk assessment and sharing them with your employees will make a positive difference to them and your business.

Make a record of your significant findings:

- What are the hazards
- Who might be harmed and how
- What you already have in place to control the risks
- What further precautions ('control measures') you need to implement

If, like many businesses, there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, big and small, you do not have to try to do everything at once. Prioritise and make a plan of action. Deal with the most important things first and record, as part of your findings:

- Who will implement each action and when must it be done by

Any record produced should be simple and focussed on the control measures enabling you to communicate and manage the risks in your business. This need not be an onerous task.

When recording your risk assessment, make a date for the review and note it down.

A simple template at the end of this booklet can be used as a guide when recording your own risk assessments; it can also be downloaded from www.gov.je/hsi

Generic risk assessments can be used as a tool to assist you if you have control of a number of similar workplaces or environments containing similar activities.

It is probably most useful to use generic risk assessments as the starting point for site or task-specific assessments. When using a generic risk assessment it is essential that you ensure it is adapted to reflect the significant hazards and how you control the risks relating to the activities at each workplace.

Likewise, if you use a **worked ‘example’ risk assessment** as an aid, you must satisfy yourself that it reflects your specific work situations.

Implement any additional control measures identified

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after your employees, other people and your business.

Once you have identified what further control measures or improvements are needed to control the risks, by when and by whom, you must satisfy yourself that those actions have been implemented. You may find it helpful to add an additional column to the risk assessment to record when this is done. Have a look at the example template further on in this booklet.

Remember, the greater the risk of an injury or ill-health occurring, the more robust and reliable your control measures should be.

Review your risk assessment

Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later there will be a significant change; you will bring in new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards. Equally the environment you work in may change, whether it's a new office building, a new construction site or your work is mobile.

It makes sense to review what you are doing on an on-going basis. Look at your risk assessment regularly and ask yourself:

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are your precautions ('control measures') still working effectively?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Have your employees spotted a problem?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near-misses, or records of incidents of ill-health?

You should formally review your risk assessment at least annually. If there is a significant change during the year, don't wait. Check your risk assessment and, where necessary, amend it.

Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

Finally

Remember that the risk assessment is a 'means' and not an 'end'. If your assessment shows that you have to do more to control the risk, then do it!

Record your findings (Step 3)

Risk assessment

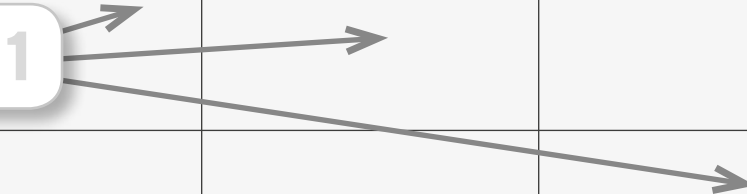
Relevant details for task or area of work

Assessment carried out by:

Date assessment was carried out:

Activity or area	What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?

Identified in Step: **1**



Evaluated in Step: **2**



Reviewed by this date and amended as necessary in Step: **5**

Date of next review:

What further action do you need to take?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done

Implemented in Step: **4**

Planned in Step: **3**

Further advice and guidance

Information on the local requirements for health and safety is available by contacting:

Health and Safety Inspectorate

Telephone: 01534 447300

Email: hsi@gov.je

Website: gov.je/hsi

The legislation 'Health and Safety at Work (Jersey) Law 1989' is available on the official website of the Jersey Legal Information Board: www.jerseylaw.je

Health and Safety Executive guidance documents, and literature on all subjects dealing with health and safety issues, can be viewed on line at www.hse.gov.je

Information in relation to risk assessment is available at www.hse.gov.uk/risk

HSE Books provides priced and free copies of publications, and free downloadable versions: www.books.hse.gov.uk

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