

BRIEF CASE

Risk Assessments

Risk assessments are an important tool in managing your organisation's risk and protecting your staff, volunteers and service-users. The following risk assessment BriefCaSE is based on Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance.

As part of managing the health and safety of your employees, volunteers and service-users, you must control the risks related to your organisation's activities and operations. This means you must think about what may cause harm and take steps to prevent that harm.

1. Identify the risks

The key to a successful risk assessment is accurately identifying the potential risks related to the activity that you are assessing. It will be beneficial at this stage to collaborate with the leaders or organisers of the activity that you're assessing. Approach this as a brainstorm and map out all the potential risks you may face.

2. Identify those at-risk

When assessing the risks relating to an event or activity, you need to identify the individuals who are at risk. These may include staff, volunteers, service-users or the public, or a combination. For each risk you have identified, you should be clear about who is at risk.

Different people may have different requirements. For example, allergies, disabilities, pregnancy, lone workers or home workers. Service-users may be particularly vulnerable or have uncommon needs that should be accounted for.

3. Evaluate the risks

Having identified the potential risks and those at-risk, you must determine the level of risk and how you will address those risks. You must ensure that you do whatever you can to control or mitigate risks; you cannot be expected to completely remove all risk. You are also not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

When evaluating these risks, you should consider:

- Is it possible to negate the risk?
- Can you do a less risky version?
- Can you prevent access to the risk?
- Can you protect individuals from the risk?
- Can you provide welfare facilities (such as first aid)?
- Can you educate individuals to reduce the risk?

4. Create your risk assessment

Make a record of your findings in the form of a risk assessment. Though you aren't required to write anything down if you have fewer than five employees, it is recommended that you do.

Your risk assessment should demonstrate that a proper check was made; you spoke to the affected individuals; you dealt with the significant hazards; the precautions you made are reasonable and the remaining risk is low and you involved your employees in the process.

You should rank the potential identified risks in order of importance and address the most serious first. The more serious the risk, the more robust and reliable the measures to control the risk will need to be.

5. Regularly review your risk assessment

The activities and events that you review will regularly change, as will the risks that you may face. You should review your risk assessment on an ongoing basis.

Links

There are various other resources available on-line. You could start by looking at ...

[Health and Safety Executive Risk Management Guidance](#)

[NCVO: Managing Risk](#)