



WHAT IS A RISK ASSESSMENT?

How to Identify and Assess Risk



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INTRODUCTION

A risk assessment identifies existing and potential hazards in the workplace and proceeds to analyze and evaluate risk to place suitable controls on the hazard.

Every part of the workplace should be assessed for risks. Employers have a legal obligation to protect their employees from harm and keep them healthy and safe, so a risk assessment is vital to making sure that everyone gets home healthy and safe to their families at the end of each day.

A risk assessment is typically made up of five steps:



Identifying hazards



Evaluating risks – such as severity and likelihood



Establishing precautions and implementing controls



Reporting and analyzing findings



Reviewing and possibly re-evaluating the assessment



Why are risk assessments important?

Risk assessments are vital to the well-being of your workplace. All employers are legally required to protect their employees and their workplace from hazards and hazardous situations, and risk assessments are one way to do this.



In the US, guidelines laid out by OSHA require businesses to conduct relevant mandatory risk assessments.

In the UK, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that businesses have a “legal duty to assess the risk to the health and safety of your employees.”

Not only can conducting a risk assessment potentially save lives, but risk assessments can also save organizations financial strain by avoiding worker re-training, new hire orientation, slower productivity, rising insurance premiums, time off work and legal fees.

If you don't want to spend significant amounts of money on legal fees, improve your risk assessments and show your dedication to safety.



When to conduct a risk assessment?

Common situations in which a risk assessment needs to be carried out include:



Before a new procedure or job activity is introduced:

A risk assessment will identify any potential hazards that may occur as a result of this new task. If the organization experiences high staff turnover, it's recommended that new staff are monitored to ensure they conduct their work safely – if not, training should be provided.



Before changes are made to existing procedures:

A risk assessment helps notify the EHS department of any specific changes that need to be implemented moving forward.



Before new equipment is brought into the workplace:

New equipment may bring new risks into the workplace and previous risk assessments will no longer be sufficient or relevant in this case.



When a hazard has been identified:

Once a hazard has been identified, a risk assessment should be carried out to analyze the severity of risk associated with the hazard. From there, appropriate measures can be implemented.

Risk assessment steps:

Best practice recommends that every company employing more than 5 people should record risk details. Therefore, risk assessments can vary widely across businesses and industries.

There are, however, a set of key steps that must be covered across all sectors.

These steps include:

01

Planning

A successful risk assessment relies heavily on extensive planning to ensure that every relevant detail is assessed and compliance to relevant guidelines is achieved. Planning should revolve around trying to answer these key questions:



What equipment is required?



Who needs to be involved?



What exactly needs to be identified?



What regulations need to be complied with?



02

Identify hazards

Once you have completed the planning stage, hazard identification will be a much clearer process, as you will have a better understanding of which workplace hazards to anticipate. While looking for hazards, however, it's important to keep an eye out for unique or rare hazards that you may not have been expecting. Hazards will vary depending on the industry.

There are vendors that provide specialized software specific to industries such as transportation and manufacturing that can help your EHS department when it comes to identifying, reporting and controlling risks.

When it comes to identifying hazards, the EHS department should:



Request feedback from employees



Observe workers carrying out tasks



Check previous risk assessment records



Consult guidelines and available information on the work activity



Consider possible scenarios



03

Gather findings

Once hazard identification is carried out, the EHS department should gather and organize all the information obtained. This procedure should be carried out to ensure that all areas of the assessment have been covered to gain a comprehensive overview of the data.

If this step is conducted correctly, it'll be easier to evaluate and decide which actions would be appropriate to undertake next.

04

Evaluate risk factors

When evaluating risk, certain key factors must be analyzed closely. These include:



How workers are exposed to hazards



Where workers are exposed to hazards



To what extent are workers exposed to hazards



What duration of time workers are exposed to hazards



How dangerous hazards are to workers



At this stage, it can be useful to assign a risk rating to each of the potential hazards to gain a better understanding of next steps. These steps could include:

05

Decide actions required to prevent hazards:

This step should focus on creating a plan to prevent identified hazards from occurring. This process should be prioritized by the hazards' perceived risks, in accordance with the risk rating.

06

Document findings and actions taken:

Keeping a formal record of the risk assessment findings is vital for the success of your EHS department. Not only does this step ensure total transparency within your organization, but it can also be useful during audits or when demonstrating compliance to legal authorities.

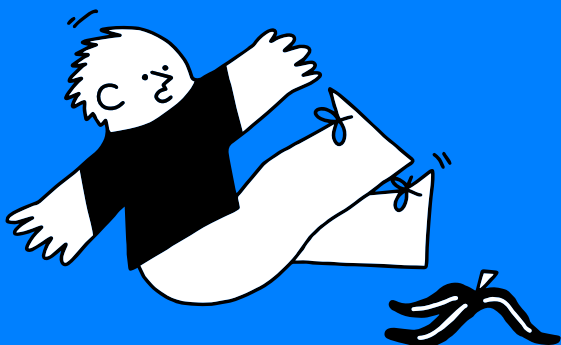
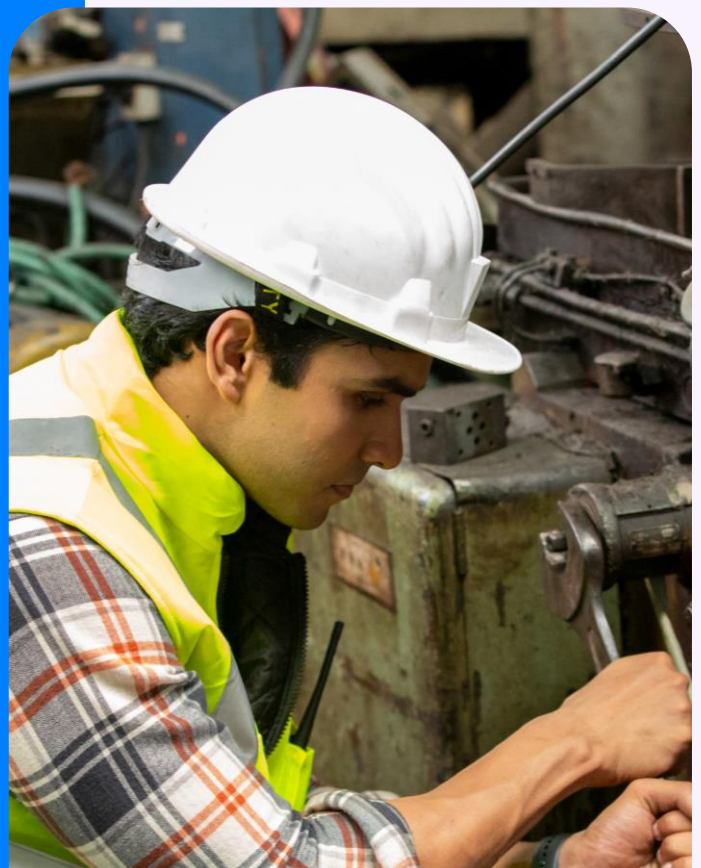
Documenting actions can eliminate doubt regarding processes. It can also prove useful to managers when assessing the impact of actions taken. The use of EHS software can help cut down time and streamline this regulatory compliance with easy recordkeeping tools.

07

Review risk assessment:

The final step should involve reviewing the entire risk assessment. This step should include following up to ensure that recommended actions have been taken to eliminate, or minimize the hazards to acceptable levels. The review should also measure the success of implemented actions and identify whether any actions were unable to be identified throughout this process. Any improvements that could be made to future assessments should also be noted.

This is also an opportunity to assess whether any new working practices, machinery or demands have been implemented that may bring about new hazards.





HOW TO USE THE MATRIX

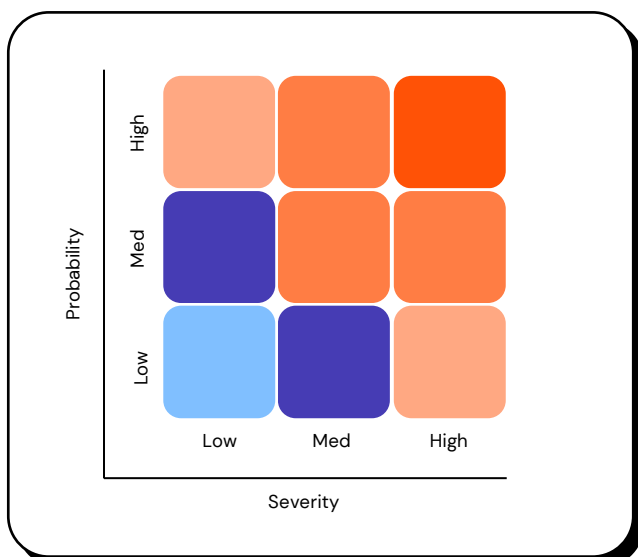
So what is a risk matrix?

A risk matrix is a tool that helps organizations prioritize and understand the severity and frequency of risks.

Analyzing and staying on top of possible risks improves the chances of safely completing your project. A risk assessment matrix is typically used in the project planning stage of a project. The two key elements of a risk matrix are the likeliness of a hazard occurring and the severity or impact of the hazard if it occurs.



These categories range from "low", "medium" or "high". Risk matrix formats may differ and your EHS department should decide on a risk matrix format that works best for your specific organization. A risk matrix is commonly presented in either a 3x3, 4x4 or 5x5 format.



Risk assessment examples:

Looking for a little guidance on next steps? Here is a list of risk assessment examples that you might consider executing (if applicable to your industry and organization):



Health and safety risk assessment:

This is a general risk assessment, which carefully examines and identifies potential hazards and risks existing in your organization that could potentially harm your organization, employees and members of the public.



Heat illness prevention risk assessment:

This risk assessment looks to improve awareness and management of risk when it comes to heat illness. A risk assessment should consider risks such as acclimatization, clothing, materials, work rate, environment, training, medical plans and individual risks.

These risks are the minimum that should be considered when carrying out a heat illness prevention risk assessment.



Food preparation and service assessment:

This risk assessment looks to improve awareness and management of risk when it comes to heat illness. A risk assessment should consider risks such as acclimatization, clothing, materials, work rate, environment, training, medical plans and individual risks.

These risks are the minimum that should be considered when carrying out a heat illness prevention risk assessment.



Fall risk assessment:

This risk assessment identifies and reviews the severity of hazards and risks in a working environment that could lead to falls. Falls are the most commonly reported incidents.

Outlined actions are then put in place to ensure prevention. Find an easy-to-use tool to help organizations' stay on top of assessments, reviews and communication when it comes to risk management



Risk assessment training

Don't forget that staff too can help keep hazards and risks under control. Specific skills, training and access to resources are invaluable to ensuring that employees perform their duties correctly and safely, in line with regulatory compliance.

If you are serious about making sure everyone gets home healthy and safe, a strong culture and engaged employees will help you get there.

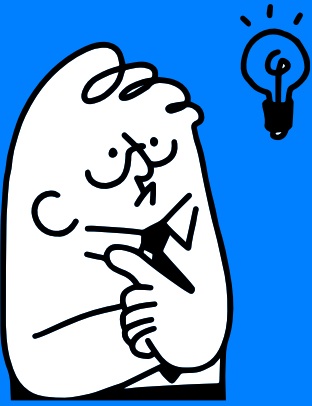


Construction risk assessment:

This risk assessment focuses on identifying hazards and risks that could occur in construction projects – most of which are usually confined to the site on which a project occurs. A construction risk assessment should include an onsite inspection to identify any hazards or risks, with an implementation of controls following where possible.

They should be carried out during the planning phase, when new processes or equipment are introduced and after a risk, incident or hazard is identified.





HOW CAN EVOTIX HELP?

Using risk assessment software can massively help streamline this process and allow your organization to confidently manage risks.

Evotix's Assure can help empower your employees, identify, assess and control risks and track completion. Our software minimizes the need for lengthy physical forms, and instead offers you an accessible and easy-to-use digital alternative.

If you are looking for a more human approach to risk assessments, reach out to Evotix today.



Risk assessments are a major component of health and safety at your organization. Preventing and reducing risk at your place of work systematically is legally obligatory.



To learn more about automating your EHS compliance, check out this eBook that looks at the reasons necessary to invest in health and safety software.

[5 Requirements for Exceptional Health and Safety Leadership | Evotix](#)





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By providing an intuitive, simple and engaging software solution for humans – we transform your workplace and empower your people.

Evotix is committed to creating an EHS journey that's more than just a checkbox. We proactively solve your organization's EHS challenges to create a safer and smarter future.

We know that behind every accident, there is a name and a family – which is why we're passionate about making them a thing of the past.

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