**RISK ASSESSMENT BASICS**

This document is to guide you with the basic information that you need to know to complete any risk assessment.

All risk assessments will be reviewed by a member of the SU Student Activities Team

**WHAT IS A RISK ASSESSMENT?**

At its most basic level, a risk assessment demonstrates that an organiser has considered the risks associated with their event or activity or a space owner has considered all the risks that may befall anyone entering their space. It should identify hazards, hazardous events and consequences.

* **hazards**: things with the potential to cause harm
* **hazardous event**: takes place when someone or something interacts with the hazard, allowing it to cause harm.
* **consequence**: the likely nature of the most probable harm that could arise

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Consequence** | Catastrophic | Medium | High | Very High | Very high | Very High |
| Major | Low | Medium | High | High | Very High |
| Moderate | Very low | Low | Medium | Medium | High |
| Minor | Very low | Low | Low | Medium | Medium |
| Insignificant | Very low | Very low | Low | Low | Low |
| **R = LxC** | Very unlikely | Unlikely | Fairly likely | Likely | Very likely |
| **Likelihood of hazardous event** | | | | |

**Risk = Consequence x Likelihood.**

**WHY DO WE RISK ASSESS?**

Once we know what all the risks are, we can put in **mitigations** to limit either the likelihood of something happening and/or the consequence if something does happen.

**Risks** levels can change for countless reasons and so you consider the **reasonable** changes that may happen and put in **additional mitigations in place.**

Knowing what the risks are allows us to make decisions on whether something is too dangerous to happen. The most likely outcome the majority of the time, is that by risk assessing, we consider how we can make something happen but if a safe way.

Risk estimation and evaluation guide

You can estimate the risk from your hazards using table 1. Guidance on the likely harm consequence of the hazardous event is given in table 2. Find out what you need to do to control the risk using table 3.

**Table 1: Risk estimation.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Likely Consequence** | Catastrophic | Medium | High | Very High | Very high | Very High |
| Major | Low | Medium | High | High | Very High |
| Moderate | Very low | Low | Medium | Medium | High |
| Minor | Very low | Low | Low | Medium | Medium |
| Insignificant | Very low | Very low | Low | Low | Low |
|  | Very unlikely | Unlikely | Fairly likely | Likely | Very likely |
| **Likelihood of identified event / hazardous event occurring** | | | | |

**Table 2: Consequences guidance (examples).**

| **Impact category** | **Insignificant** | **Minor** | **Moderate** | **Major** | **Catastrophic** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Harm to health** | * No significant harm to health | * Nuisance and irritation; temporary ill-heath leading to discomfort * Stress / distress | * dermatitis; asthma; work-related upper limb disorders * Short term sickness absence * Diagnosable mental health condition (e.g. post-traumatic stress) | * Ill- health leading to permanent minor disability. Partial hearing lost. * Long term sickness absence (7 days +) * Diagnosable mental health condition significantly affecting day to day life * Self harm or harm to others due to mental health condition | * Acute fatal diseases; severe life shortening diseases; permanent substantial disability. * Ill health retirement * Suicide or serious harm to others due to mental ill health |
| **Injury** | * Minor injuries not requiring first aid | * Minor injuries requiring first aid. * Superficial injuries, minor cuts and bruises; eye irritation from dust. | * Incapacitated or absent from work for less than 7 days. * Lacerations; minor burns; sprains | * Worker incapacitated or absent from work for 7+ days. * Lacerations; burns; concussion; serious sprains; minor fractures. | * Fatal injuries. Permanent substantial disability (life changing). Amputations. * Multiple serious injuries; serious burns; loss of sight; Major fractures. * Loss of consciousness caused by head injury, inhalation of substance or asphyxia. |

**Table 3: Risk-based control plan (risk evaluation).**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Risk level** | **Guidance on necessary action and time scale** |
| **Very low** | No further action. These risks are considered acceptable. Ensure controls are maintained and reviewed regularly. |
| **Low** | No additional controls required unless they can implemented at very low cost, time and effort. Actions to reduce risks are low priority. Ensure controls are maintained and reviewed regularly or if there is a significant change. |
| **Medium** | Consider whether risks can be lowered, but the costs of additional risk reduction should be taken into account.  Where additional risk reduction measures need to be implemented, specify a defined time period for action and keep under review.  If risk cannot be lowered below medium (e.g. because consequence is catastrophic), ensure rigorous controls are maintained and reviewed regularly, or where there is a significant change. |
| **High** | Substantial efforts to reduce the risk.  Risk reduction measures to be implemented urgently within a defined time period. It may be necessary to suspend or restrict the activity or put into place short term mitigations.  Considerable resources might have to be allocated to additional controls. Maintain existing controls rigorously and keep under regular review until risk reduced. |
| **Very high** | Stop activity and take immediate action. Unacceptable risk and substantial risk control improvements are necessary to reduce the risk.  Work should be halted until risk controls are implemented that reduce the risk so it is no longer very high.  If it is not possible to reduce the risk, work should remain prohibited. |

**AN EXAMPLE**

A picture containing application

Description automatically generated

You go to a coffee shop, you walk through the door, order your drink, collect it and go find somewhere to sit down.

In theory this seems like a pretty standard thing to do and you would never really think about the risks involved with completing this task but the coffee shop owner would definitely have completely a comprehensive risk assessment.

Risk assessment

# \*You complete the yellow sections

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Description of activity / area being assessed** | **Serving drinks in my coffee shop** | | **Location** | **Coffee shop** |
| **Manager responsible** |  | **Signature & date** |  | |
| **Assessed by (name & role)** | **Annie Smith** | **Signature & assessment date** | 01.09.2021 | |

| **Hazard (H)**  **hazardous event (HE)**  **consequence (C)** | **Who might be harmed** | **Current controls** | **Current risk**  **LxC=R** | **Additional controls needed to reduce risk** | **Residual**  **risk**  **LxC=R** | **Target Date** | **Date achieved** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hot Drink (H)**  **Person trips and spills Hot Drink spilling over someone (HE)**  **The person is burnt (C)** | Customers, Employees, Contractors, Members of the Public | Location – We have spaced out our tables and chairs so that there are clear walkways to prevent tripping. | Fairly Likely x Moderate = Medium | Staff protocol to clear up any spillages from the floor immediately. | Unlikely x moderate = Low | 01.09.21 | 01.09.21 |
| Hot Drink (H)  Person leaves the coffee shop and spills hot drink over someone  The person is burnt | Customer, Members of the Public | All takeaway hot drinks are serves with a lid to minimise tripping |  | All cups have ‘warning, contents hot’ written on them. |  | 01.09.21 | 01.09.21 |

Add more rows if needed

In this example, a parent may choose to minimise the risk to their child burning themselves by getting them a cold drink instead of a hot drink so the consequence becomes insignificant and therefore the risk remains very low.

This example is not a comprehensive risk assessment. There would be other risks associated with opening a coffee shop and so you need to think through all the different types of risks and have a new line for each of them.