

# A simple guide to risk assessments and method statements

Risk management is an essential element of creating and maintaining a safe working environment, whether it be in the office or on site.

The risk management processes are the steps the organisation takes to identify and control risk. Accidents can devastate lives and have a damaging effect on your business. This simple guide explains how to approach carrying out risk assessments and writing method statements.

## The risk assessment

The process of identifying hazards and characterising them, analysing the risks, reducing their impact as far as possible and establishing a means of controlling risks that remain.



### Hazard

A Hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm.



### Risk

A Risk is the likelihood that a hazard will cause a specified harm to someone or something.



### Legal requirement

Keep a record of the risk assessment, so that you can check to see if anything has changed when you come to review it.

When carrying out a risk assessment you must include all foreseeable risks arising from, or in conjunction with, the activity being assessed. The assessment should be carried out before any work is started and should be reviewed as needed.

A review should be carried out when starting on a new site or when introducing new machinery or procedures into a process, which may mean new hazards and/or a change in risk.

## The method statement

This should be the logical outcome of the risk assessment process. Residual risks identified through carrying out the risk assessment and the precautions necessary to control them will need to be incorporated. The method statement should contain sufficient detail to enable everyone involved in an operation to be clear about what has to be done, where and with what. Also hazards arising from the work and the precautions that have to be taken and by whom. For this reason the method statement is sometimes called a 'safe system of work'.

A comprehensive method statement will attempt to address the majority if not all of the following:

- ✓ The details of the job to be undertaken
- ✓ A formal risk assessment for the job
- ✓ Clear identification of the area in which the job will be undertaken
- ✓ Clear identification of the supervisory responsibilities for the job including contact details
- ✓ A list of plant and equipment that will be used detailing their power sources and authorised users
- ✓ Details of any permit to work system that will be implemented
- ✓ A clear statement of the identified hazards and the controls in place.

This should include:

- hazardous substances
- noise exposure
- electrical hazards
- interaction with other contractor's activities and protection of the public
- emergency plans

- first aid provision
- any other hazards created by the job or present on site.

No matter how well the risk assessment and method statement has been prepared, it will all be wasted time if the results are not communicated to the operatives who will carry it out. When briefed on a safe system of work operatives should be instructed to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment and questioned to check that they have understood what they have been told. They should also be encouraged to ask questions if unclear on any aspect of the information they have been given.

Finally, the person who prepares the method statement should have a monitoring role to ensure that the requirements of the method statement are being properly implemented.

## One-day course

For all personnel who carry out risk assessments and either draft or review method statements, NHBC are running a one-day course covering all the key aspects. The course runs nationwide throughout June and is workshop based.



For more information or to book your place please contact Leah O'Donnell on 0870 241 4323 or [lodonnell@nhbc.co.uk](mailto:lodonnell@nhbc.co.uk) quoting ref. SAFE 35.