



Risk Assessment

Module 5



Health & Safety
Essentials

Registered charity number 207890

Record your findings and implement them

The significant findings of risk assessments must be recorded and a copy, ideally signed, kept in the laboratory safety file, so that it is readily accessible and retrievable.

If more than five people are employed by an organisation then the significant findings of the risk assessment must be recorded. It is good practice, however, to keep appropriate records in all circumstances but there is no requirement for risk assessments to be large or complex publications!

All existing control measures should be recorded as part of the assessment process and this should prompt questions on their adequacy in order to identify whether improvements are required. Arising from the assessment, an action plan should be established where it is decided that further risk reduction is desirable. When the additional control measures have been implemented, the risk assessment should be updated accordingly. Risk assessments (RA) may vary in their complexity, so one is free to create and use a RA record that is appropriate to ones needs.

Your record should show that you have identified:

- The hazards, the risks, who might be harmed and how
- Existing controls, if they are being used and are effective
- The significant findings and the need for further control measures
- Whether the remaining risk is as low as is reasonably practical
- References to other documents as appropriate
- That you have involved others as is appropriate

The RA should be used to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Protocols or Rules, which must then be followed.

It is important that risk assessments come to conclusions about how well the risks are controlled and that the requirements of the legislation have been met.

When recording your findings keep them simple so that people can easily understand them

Example

Hazard	Risk	Primary	Secondary	Further measures
Vapour/gas from chemical process	Inhalation of hazardous substance	Fume hood	Ventilation checks & maintenance	Training/awareness
Flammable solvent spillage	Inhalation or fire from vapours	Containment (drip tray) around handling area	Absorbent materials available	Spill & disposal procedures/training

An example of a risk assessment template, as given by the Health and Safety Executive in '5 Steps to Risk Assessment'¹⁵ is given attached in Module 6, Component 12: Risk Assessment Template

Proportionate risk management clearly doesn't direct you to try and do everything at once, but put an action plan together that tackles the most important things first.

A good plan of action may include the following types of activities:

- Some quick and easy (cost effective) improvements, perhaps as a temporary solution until a long term control is in place
- Long term solutions to risks most likely to cause harm and with the worst potential consequences
- The training plan that covers the main risks and how they are controlled
- Checks made on a regular basis to ensure that controls are working properly
- It is clear in the action plan what is required to be done, by whom and when

Review these actions on a regular basis and ensure that you sign them and close them off.

