



Workers with Disabilities

Module 3



Health & Safety
Essentials

Registered charity number 207890

Risk assessment

Risk assessment in general has been covered in some detail in *Health & Safety Essentials - Risk Assessment* but this module examines aspects that are specifically relevant to working with a disability.

The risk assessment process must include both routine work and foreseeable emergencies (such as fire, equipment failure and spillage of hazardous waste) that may impose additional physical and/or mental burdens on an individual.

Assessing the work, the workplace and person

The key to assessing the risk associated with a particular activity is considerate and frequent communication to find out what is needed and options for the removal of barriers and impediments. Efforts should be made to avoid disproportionate work restrictions and behaviour which may result from an 'over-enthusiastic' approach to managing risk. In assessing the capability of the person, consideration should be made of any reasons why the individual might be at a greater risk than others based upon the declared disability or long-term health condition.

Where the 'barrier' to the work arises because of the workplace, then one or more reasonable adjustments to the laboratory may be required. Where issues arise from the work activity, opportunities to modify work equipment procedures could be examined.

It is a legal duty for an employer to ensure appropriate means of emergency escape for any person in the building. In the case of workers with disabilities, this might require the identification of suitable means of escape and the manager of a building should work with any employee with a disability to plan this route accordingly. This should be done by the implementation of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), which should be rehearsed at appropriate intervals.