

# Risk Assessments



A risk assessment must be suitable and sufficient, i.e. it should show that:

- A proper check was made;
- You asked who might be affected;
- You dealt with all the obvious significant hazards; taking into account the number of people who could be involved;
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low;
- You involved your employees or their representative in the process.

## Regularly review your risk assessment

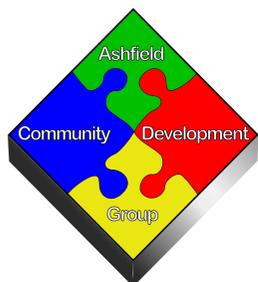
Few workplaces or places of activity stay the same. Sooner or later, you will bring in new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense therefore, to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

**This leaflet should be used alongside Health and Safety Executive's: Risk Assessments "A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace" (ref: INDG163 version 4)**

Free downloads of the guide and risk assessment forms are available from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>

## This leaflet can also be downloaded from:

<http://www.ashfield.gov.uk/media/1548/14-risk-assessments-rev-feb-2015.pdf>



This advice leaflet has been compiled by Ashfield Community Development Group (ACDG).

For details of ACDG members offering support, please refer to leaflet "i".

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting members of the public and your group members, as well as compliance with the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter – the ones with the potential to cause harm.

In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks, for example, ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip or cupboard drawers kept closed to ensure people do not trip. For most, that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure your most valuable assets – your group members and volunteers – are protected.

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Your group members and others have a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures.

The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as is 'reasonably practicable'.

The following is a shortened version of the Health and Safety Executive booklet Risk Assessments "A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace" (ref.INDG163 version 4)

## Identify the hazards

First you need to work out how people could be harmed by your activities. Here are some tips to help you identify the risks that matter:

- **Walk around** your place of activity or workplace and try to identify things that could be reasonably expected to cause harm.
- **Ask your group members and volunteers** what they think; they may have noticed something that you have missed.
- **Check manufacturers' instructions** or data sheets for chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and putting them in their true perspective.
- Have a look at your group's **accident records** – these often help to identify the less obvious hazards.
- **Remember to think about long-term hazards to health** (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances)
- Visit the **HSE website** [www.hse.gov.uk/risk](http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk) for practical guidance on where hazards occur and how to control them

## Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. This does not mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. 'members of your group or speakers / facilitators).

## Remember:

- Some people have particular requirements i.e. children and young people, older people or people with disabilities.
- Think about people who may not be part of your group or at a volunteering activity all the time; - cleaners, visitors, contractors;
- Take members of the public into account, can they be hurt by your activities;
- Talk to other groups or organisations that might be affected by your activities – i.e. if you are both delivering an activity from the same area on a park - make sure that you considered what each is doing
- Ask your volunteers/members if there is anyone you have missed

Identify, in each case, how they might be harmed. For example, 'a volunteer moving boxes or equipment may suffer a back injury if the items are too heavy.

## Evaluate the risks

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide how likely it is that harm will occur and what to do about it. Risk is part of everyday life and you are not expected to eliminate all risks. What you need to do is make sure that you know what the main risks are and the things you need to do to manage them responsibly.

Generally you need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know – **you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.**

Look at what you are already doing and the control measures you already have in place. Ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

## Record your significant finds findings

Make a record of your findings – the hazards, how people might be harmed by them and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record produced should be simple and focussed on controls.