Barrow Borough Council

CORPORATE PROCEDURE
RISK ASSESSMENT

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Introduction

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 states:

Every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.

Where the employer employs five or more employees, s/he shall record the significant findings of the assessment; and any group of his employees identified by it as being especially at risk.

Any assessment shall be reviewed by the employer or self-employed person who made it if there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid; or there has been a significant change in the matters to which it relates; and where as a result of any such review changes to an assessment are required, the employer or self-employed person concerned shall make them.

What is risk assessment?

As part of managing health and safety, managers must understand and control the risks resulting from the activities they are responsible for.

Risk assessments are pro-active, considering what might cause harm to people and deciding whether all reasonably practicable steps to prevent that harm are being taken before accidents happen. They are the basis for managing health & safety. The assessment process should be systematic and ensure all areas and activities are covered

Risk assessments produce two actions, things we do and things we manage. This put simply is what do we do to reduce risks and how do we manage it to ensure risks are being controlled – Control Measures.

It is important to appreciate that control measures may take different forms such as procedures, permits to work, competency, supervisory requirements, pre-work briefs, work instructions and inductions.

Once the control measures have been agreed they should be monitored for their effectiveness when the work is first carried out.

Risk assessments must be reviewed and updated periodically or when significant change occurs.

Responsibilities

Chief Executive and Directors

- Review the risk assessment process to ensure it remains effective
- Monitor progress in the completion of outstanding reviews and significant risks

Ensure that Managers meet their responsibilities by monitoring:

- The implementation of this procedure and reviewing risk assessments
- The implementation of appropriate measures to control risks

Heads of Service

- Ensure suitable risk assessments are carried out in all their areas of responsibility
- Ensure they are carried out by suitably trained and competent staff

- Ensure they are reviewed at suitable periods, when significant change or incidents occur i.e., to staff, a process or procedure, a chemical substance or equipment has changed
- Ensure the risk assessment process is effectively managed and any necessary remedial works are prioritized and carried out
- Ensure all staff involved in the activity have read and signed the risk assessment to demonstrate they understand the risks involved

Employees and others

- Are expected to cooperate with Managers and get involved when carrying out risk assessments
- Must read and sign the risk assessment to demonstrate and understanding of the risks involved and control measures required

Health & Safety Advisors

Health and safety advisors and practitioners provide support to all departments of Barrow Borough Council when undertaking risk assessments and assist in the provision of training services as required.

Carrying out a risk assessment

Approach

Risk assessments should be carried out with all reasonable care and diligence. The following pointers will help determine the correct approach when following the steps detailed below under “How to assess risks”.

- Be proportionate. The amount of time, money and trouble taken to address hazards should be proportionate to the perceived level of risk. Concentrate on significant, not trivial risks. All reasonably practicable steps must be taken to identify and control those hazards that can lead to serious harm but risk is a part of everyday life and all risks cannot be eliminated.

- Cover all areas and activities. Be systematic in approach. Consider all groups of people who could be affected by the department’s activities. Managers who are responsible for contractors, premises/land and events need to ensure that their assessments also cover these.

- Make sure risk assessors are confident and competent. Ensure they have been properly trained and instructed, and are supervised as necessary. The Manager remains responsible for the assessment.

- Engage with staff. Make sure all employees are involved in the process. They probably know best what activities are done, how they are carried out and what can be done to improve health and safety. Do not assess just from the desk, walk the area, observe the tasks, review the assessment to get it right.

5 step process to risk assessment

The HSE have a simple systematic approach to risk assessment based on 5 steps which will support you in creating risk assessments. Barrow council will follow the guidance to ensure it complies with legislation and ensure risks are controlled adequately.

Step 1. How to identify hazards

A hazard is anything that may cause harm such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, trailing cables across a floor surface etc.

One of the most important aspects of risk assessment is accurately identifying the potential hazards in the workplace:

- Take time to walk around the workplace and any other sites/areas under your responsibility and accompany employees on site visits, taking time to assess how people work and how the plant and equipment are used
- Ask employees and their representatives what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious
- Identify safe or unsafe practices that exist
- Identify what chemicals and substances are being used and check with the manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for chemicals and equipment (provide a COSHH risk assessment)
- Look back at the accident and ill-health records. These often help to identify the less obvious hazards
- Take account of non-routine operations (e.g. maintenance, cleaning operations or emergencies)
- Remember to consider long-term hazards to health (e.g. high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances)
- Visit the HSE website (hse.gov.uk), for practical guidance on hazards and how to control them

Ask the question: "Can I eliminate the hazard?"

See Appendix 1 for further information on identifying hazards.

Step 2. Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed. This will help identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. 'people working in the storeroom' or 'pedestrians'):

- Consider people who might not be in the workplace all the time, such as visitors, contractors and maintenance workers
- Take members of the public into account if they could be affected by your activities
- If you share your workplace with another business, consider how your work affects others and how their work affects you and your workers. Communicate with each other and make sure controls are in place that both parties are aware of.
- Consider 'vulnerable persons' i.e. young or inexperienced workers, new or expectant mothers, people with disabilities, lone workers, temporary workers, contractors, children and the general public, where these persons may be affected, a separate assessment should be made.

See Appendix 2 for further information on people who may be harmed.

Step 3. Review existing control measures and evaluate the risk

Identify and list all the measures in place to control the hazards you have already identified. Look at what you're already doing and the control measures you already have in place, ask;

Can I eliminate the hazard altogether? If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is reduced to as low as reasonably practicable?

If further controls are required, consider:

- redesigning the job
- replacing the materials, machinery or process
- substitute products or substances for less hazardous ones
- isolate the activity from others
- organising your work to reduce exposure to the materials, machinery or process
- identifying and implementing practical measures needed to work safely
- providing personal protective equipment and making sure workers wear it

You need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble

This list of controls also provides a useful checklist for any future monitoring.

Evaluate the risk

The term ‘risk’ is used as to describe the likelihood that harm from a particular hazard will occur, taking into account the possible severity of such an occurrence.
This simple calculation may be used to calculate risk:

Risk = Likelihood x Severity

The Council uses a simple matrix (see below) to give risk a numerical value or a ‘risk rating’. This is a subjective rather than scientific process, but it helps prioritise any necessary actions to eliminate or reduce the risk.

When working out the risk rating, consider the hazard with the existing controls in place.

Risk rating table

Likelihood of injury						
Almost always	**5**	5	10	15	20	25
Most Likely	**4**	4	8	12	16	20
Likely	**3**	3	6	9	12	15
Unlikely	**2**	2	4	6	8	10
Almost never	**1**	1	2	3	4	5
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic /Fatal

Severity of injury

Risk rating score	Action
1 - 7 = LOW	**Broadly acceptable - reduce risks further if reasonable**
8 - 14 = MEDIUM	**Priority action to be undertaken**
15 - 25 = HIGH	**Unacceptable -action must be taken IMMEDIATELY**

When considering controls that are already in place and judging whether or not they are adequate, consider whether they meet legal requirements, best practice, and use up–to-date technology.

See Appendix 3 for further information on factors affecting likelihood and severity.

Decide on additional controls and put them into practice

Everything that is 'reasonably practicable' must be done to protect people from harm.

When considering control measures, involve and consult employees to ensure that controls are practical, effective and accepted. Persons assigned to the activity can often have knowledge on the best and most appropriate control measures.

Hierarchy of Control

The hierarchy of control is a structure for selecting the most effective control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of hazards. It should be followed in this order:

Eliminate – e.g., can we eliminate working at height by bringing the activity to ground level.

Substitution – e.g., can we substitute a substance for one less hazardous.

Isolate – e.g., can we isolate welding activities to an area of the workshop where nobody is exposed to the fumes or the arc.

Engineering and administrative Controls – Can barriers be installed to segregate vehicles and pedestrians or implement administrative arrangements where vehicles can only access certain areas at certain times when pedestrian footfall is lower.

PPE – e.g., respirators to be worn where there is a risk of inhalation of a hazardous substance or dust is likely, hard hats to be worn during all working at height activities.

Measures to control risks should be fully integrated into procedures, equipment and design of work – to make health and safety a part of normal work practice.

Consider the emergency arrangements

Have your control measures affected any existing arrangements for raising an alarm, getting assistance or affecting a means of escape?
Do any additional arrangements need to be put in place?

Inform those who need to know

All findings of the risk assessment should be passed on to employees and others who may be affected by the activity. They should be informed of the associated risks and control measures. Once understood, they should be signed by all persons involved.

Step 4. Recording the risk assessment

All risk assessments should be documented and stored with the Head of Services and be available for review by a director, senior manager, health and safety advisor or local enforcing authority.

Step 5. Review the risk assessment

Risk assessments are not a once-and-for-all activity. To ensure they stay up to date the Council policy requires them to be reviewed at least once every 12 months.
Reviews may need to be carried out at other times, for example if:

- They many no longer be effective
- There have been significant changes; i.e. to staff, a process or procedure, a chemical substance or equipment has changed
- Changes to the working environment
- Updates in legislation, codes of practice or guidance
- There are outstanding improvements that still need to be made
- A problem has been spotted
- Accidents or near misses have revealed deficiencies in the assessment
- Vulnerable worker

Update the risk assessment

The assessment should also be updated as any additional controls are put in place and the changes recorded. These should have the effect of reducing the risk rating.

The further controls should be removed from the ‘further actions’ section and added as ‘existing controls’. This ensures they continue to be implemented.

All persons affected by the changes must be informed and trained if the changes require it.

Monitor compliance

Managers should monitor all new risk assessments to ensure the control measures are effective. This can be done by observing the activity, discussing with persons involved and analysing the performance of the job. Managers should look for opportunities for continual improvement in all activities and minimise risk where possible.

Appendix 1 Hazard checklist

Example of hazard	Type of harm
Unguarded moving parts Sudden release of pressure or ejection of material Crushing by or entrapment in moving parts Hot, cold, sharp or abrasive surfaces Stored energy in springs or cables under tension Sustained use of power tools – vibration Non-ionising radiation Defected tools and equipment	Contact with machinery, equipment or material
Damaged floors, loose coverings Poor housekeeping Trailing cables Liquid/debris spills Wet grass Sloping surface Uneven steps Changes in floor level Obstructions and stored materials Exposed to weather – rain, ice, moss growth	Trips, slips and falls on the same level
Work on roof – especially fragile roof Work on steps/ ladder/tower scaffold or scaffolding Work from MEWPS unprotected edges Window cleaning Falls from open windows Excavations and pits	Falls from a height
Low headroom Projections Awkward access Large glazing panels that are difficult to see Doors without vision panels	Collision
High and/or insecure stacks Inadequate racking Unloading vehicles Items falling from work carried out at height Collapse of building, scaffolding or equipment Automatic and revolving doors	Hit by a moving, flying or falling object
Driving to sites Longer distance driving to meetings and training Use of vehicles on road/pavement, off road, soft ground, slopes	Accident whilst driving
Reversing vehicles Poor vision Poor access/congestion Poor separation of pedestrians and vehicles Work next to a highway	Contact with a moving vehicle
Repetitive movements Poor posture Work above head height or at floor level	Injury whilst handling lifting or carrying

Insufficient space Awkward or heavy loads Sustained heavy work – insufficient recovery periods	
Example of hazard	**Type of harm**
Work near/on water Work in any unventilated or confined area Work in area where fumes or gases may be present e.g. tank/sump etc. Poorly maintained gas appliances – carbon monoxide	Drowning or asphyxiation
Uncontrolled sources of ignition Locked or obstructed exits Long exit route Inadequate firefighting equipment Inadequate evacuation procedures Defective alarms/emergency lighting/signs Storage of flammable substances Hot work by contractors	Exposed to fire
Toxic, harmful, corrosive and irritant substances Contaminated land sites Asbestos Legionella Sewage or water-borne diseases Human infectious disease Bird droppings Dust and fibres Substances at extreme temperatures – steam, hot water, dry ice Infectious Diseases – COVID, biological hazards Needles, broken glass	Exposed to, or in contact with, a harmful substance Acute and chronic illness and disease
Dust generation Gas pipes and appliances Compressed gasses Lead/acid batteries Control and storage of substances	Explosion
Poorly maintained equipment or installation Excavations/digging underground cables Outdoor use Drilling through walls Not isolating equipment	Contact with electricity Electric shock Electrocution
Assault Angry customer Drunk or drug abuser Lone working	Violence Minor, major injuries Death
Dogs Pest control target: wasps, rats, fleas Farm/zoo/abattoir visit	Injured by an animal Minor, major injuries
Extremes of temperature – outdoor work Ventilation Poor lighting Work station and seating	Workstation/environment/welfare facilities

Computer use Access to sanitary/rest/drinking water facilities	
Increased workload Work relationships Non-work relationships Lone working	Stress related illnesses
Work in a noisy environment Accessing plant/pump rooms Work on or with noisy equipment	Noise Acute and chronic hearing deficiency

Appendix 2 Persons who may be affected by the Council's activities

Examples of people at risk	
Employees	Members of the public
Temporary workers	Visitors
Contactors	Volunteers
Children	Customers
Tenants	Cleaners

Vulnerable person checklist

Vulnerable group	Issues
New and expectant mothers	Susceptible to extremes of temperature, heavy weights, night or shift work, hazardous substances, general fatigue, cramped working conditions. Posture and workstation issues including sitting or standing for long periods Work related stress Hazardous substances such as: lead, radioactive, toxic materials, carbo monoxide and infectious diseases
Visitors, contractors, members of the public and temporary employees	Normally unaware of the dangers associated with the workplace and its layout. May disregard safety instructions. Possible vandalism.
Young persons	When employing a young person under the age of 18. Immaturity can lead to carelessness. No previous work experience means that they are often unaware of dangers.
Lone workers	May be unable to summon help in an emergency. Susceptible to violence and other injuries.
Disabled persons	Visual or hearing impairment may result in hazards not being noticed. Physical impairment may make the operation of equipment difficult, and access and egress from workstations and workplace may be a problem.
People with learning difficulties	May not understand or react to verbal or written information or warnings. May not notice hazards.
Non-English speakers Migrant workers	May not understand or react to verbal or written information or warnings. Vocational qualifications are not compatible with those in GB

Employees with certain illnesses	Certain illnesses such as epilepsy may put the sufferer and others at increased risk from activities such as operating equipment & vehicles, work at height and lone working.
Peripatetic workers	No supervision or monitoring. Varying work locations may contain varying hazards.
Maintenance workers	Often work alone, sometimes with dangerous machinery. Possibility of machines being inadvertently switched on.

Appendix 3 Factors affecting likelihood and severity

The likelihood of harm may depend on a range of factors including:

- Number of times the situation occurs
- Duration of the exposure
- Environmental conditions
- Competence of the people involved
- Any individual's disability, medical conditions, inexperience etc.
- The condition of equipment

Just because something can happen does not automatically mean that it will happen. Care should be taken to select the likelihood that reflects reality bearing in mind all the existing controls and practices in place.

Hazard likelihood	Definition	Points rating
Almost always	An accident or incident will always occur unless further controls are implemented. You would definitely expect this to happen.	**5**
Most likely	An accident or incident is most likely to happen unless further controls are considered. You would expect this accident to happen.	**4**
Likely	An accident or incident is likely to happen with the existing control measures in place. You would not be surprised if this accident occurred.	**3**
Unlikely	The accident may occur if additional factors precipitate it, but it is unlikely to happen without them. You would be surprised if this accident occurred.	**2**
Almost never	This incident or illness might occur but the probability is very low. You would not expect this accident to happen at all.	**1**

Hazard severity	Definition	Points rating
Catastrophic Fatal	Death, amputations, ill health or other major injuries with serious lifelong effects. Major destruction/collapse of building/structure rendering it totally or long term unusable. Long term interruption to/stoppage of work flow.	**5**