

POLICY, ARRANGEMENTS AND PROCEDURES

(Updated 03/2011)

Sevenoaks District Council RISK ASSESSMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

General Statement

The Council accepts that some of its operations may, unless properly controlled, create risks to members of staff, and others, and will take all reasonably practicable measures to reduce these risks to an acceptable level.

The Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that risk assessments are carried out which will detail the range of hazards associated with working operations together with any necessary remedial actions.

The Councils policy is that a team approach to risk assessment would be the most effective. The Council, in conjunction with the employees' representatives, will decide on the number and constituent members of the assessment teams.

The assessment process will be part of normal working for purposes of all employee conditions.

Any employee who discovers a hazard during working operations must report the hazard to their management so that the necessary hazards and risks can be identified and remedial action can be taken.

SUMMARY OF DUTIES

Regulation 3 of the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999** (MHSWR) requires that a formalised risk assessment be carried out to determine the risks associated with working operations. The assessment will need to identify risks both to employees and to any other person who may be affected.

The purpose of the assessment is to enable the employer to determine remedial actions necessary to comply with the relevant statutory provisions. This phrase covers the general duties (ss.2–9) in the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974** (HSW Act) and more specific duties in the various Acts and Regulations associated with HSW Act.

Regulation 3(3) of MHSWR requires that risk assessments are kept up to date, which means any significant change which affects risk (e.g. a new employee, machine or work practice) should lead to a re-assessment of risk.

Additionally, assessments of possible exposures to specific hazards to all personnel at work, including vulnerable "at risk" employees, visitors and contractors, need to be made under the following:

- the **Control of Lead at Work Regulations 2002**
- the **Ionising Radiation Regulations 1999**
- the **Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**
- the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)**. (COSHH)
- the **Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005**
- the **Equality Act 2010**
- the **Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997**.

Under the **Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**, employers are required to assess the risks to the health and safety of pregnant workers, those who have recently

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given birth and those who are breastfeeding, ensuring that the health and safety of these employees is not put at risk.

The **Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended)** require that manual handling tasks are assessed. The **Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992** require risk assessment of musculo-skeletal injury, visual problems and mental stress from the use of display screen equipment. The **Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992 (as amended)** requires the assessment of personal protective equipment for its suitability, both for the hazard and the user. The **Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981** require an evaluation of first aid requirements. The ACOP (L74) sets out the duties of the employer to assess and provide necessary resources to meet first aid needs having taken account of the nature of the work, special working arrangements, size and nature of the workforce and off site work.

Note: Risk assessments are also an integral part of the **The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015** and the **Confined Spaces Regulations 1997**.

For more detail refer to the appropriate policy document.

RECORD KEEPING

Regulation 3(4) of MHSWR requires employers with five or more employees to keep records of all assessments, which will detail the significant findings, associated with the assessments. The record will need to include information regarding the following.

1. The significant sources of harm (hazards) to health and safety identified during the assessment.
2. The existing control measures currently in place and their level of effectiveness in controlling those risks (with reference and access to works manuals or other documentation if appropriate).
3. The people who may be affected by the risks identified in particular any personnel who may be especially at risk.
4. The decisions taken as a result of the assessment.
5. Training in risk assessment techniques provided to employees.

COMPLETING A RISK ASSESSMENT

When preparing for a risk assessment based on workplace activities. It should start as a list of activities carried out and to identify which activities involve, or may involve, potential hazards, e.g. fire, cuts to the hands, etc. Once the list has been considered and checked, both in respect of clarifying the uncertainties and agreeing on where potential hazards do and do not exist, the items identified with "yes" should be assessed. By keeping these records and reviewing them periodically, any errors in judgement can be corrected and an assessment made of activities originally but mistakenly identified with "no". Hazards can be categorised according to where they arise, then by their nature, and by the type of harm they can cause.

For example, hazards can arise from working with plant and equipment. These hazards will differ in nature, such as those that are mechanical, electrical, thermal, or may arise through vibration, instability, overload, and so on. Mechanical hazards can be divided by the types of harm they cause.

Hazards obviously arise from many activities at work, not just those involving the use of equipment. These include hazards from the working environment (e.g. confined spaces, temperature, ventilation), the methods of work (e.g. manual handling, repetitive movements, posture), work organisation (e.g. stress, working in public areas) and the workplace itself (e.g.

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working at heights, obstructions, stacking/storage, pedestrian access involving harm from slips and trips).

A guide to carrying out a risk assessment can be found on HSE's webpage

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/fivesteps.htm>

Safe system of work

A risk assessment must identify all hazards within the Council's operations.

Do potential hazards exist? If the assessor is unsure of the answer, information should be obtained from the many sources available, which include manufacturers, suppliers, HSE guidance, British Standards, industry guidance or the Health and Safety Advisor.

These hazards will occur in the following areas:

- (a) both direct and non-direct employees (contractors, agency and part-time operators),
- (b) the current equipment and any equipment that is planned to be hired or purchased in the future,
- (c) the materials used within the working environment (COSHH will only have covered the use of chemical aspects),
- (d) the working environment for personnel and others,
- (e) current operations (i.e. whether they create a problem which could affect the quality of products and services),
- (f) loss of process and any risks that could affect the process operations.

Once a hazard has been identified, its risk is assessed to determine how and whether it should be controlled. Systems and management standards will need to be produced and implemented, having included input from all levels of management. Co-operation is vital in this area if these standards are to be accepted.

Whilst trivial risks may require no action, the assessment will need to indicate the criteria used to determine this.

Have we a risk assessment? If the assessor knows that an existing risk assessment has been carried out this should be reviewed to ensure it reflects the current hazards identified. If no Risk Assessment is in place then one needs to be completed.

General Risk Assessment Form

This form must be used to carry out a general risk assessment and identify those risk factors which will require elimination or further control. This sort of form is useful for recording every hazard associated with the work activities in a particular location: some of these hazards might then be individual subjects of more detailed risk assessments, for example, if a hazard is the lifting of heavy boxes, and this is an activity which could be carried out by hand, then this will be the subject of a more detailed manual handling assessment. The form can also be used to produce "generic assessments" which are applicable to several similar work activities, although any differences, must be identified and evaluated in each case.

Once all hazards have been identified, the risks associated with them must be evaluated. Taking into account the likelihood of harm occurring and the severity of outcome if it did, it should be possible to rate the risk in some way. The outcome of the risk assessment is a decision about the level of risk. Decisions should then be made about control measures to eliminate or control risk.

Workplace: Self-explanatory

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Task/Operation. The task under assessment should be a specific operation rather than a very broad task. For example, it is easier to do a series of assessments for individual tasks that a secretary might do rather than assess his/her whole job as one risk assessment exercise.

Risk Assessment No. A unique reference is assigned to each assessment to identify each operation. This unique number must be obtained from the local SDC safety advisor.

Assessed by: Competent Person with experience in the task and risk assessment processes i.e. Supervisor or Manager with assistance from employees, together with the date of initial assessment.

Approved by. Each assessment must be approved by the relevant line manager (not supervisor) and should include the date of approval.

Management Authorisation. After completion of the assessment the work cannot be undertaken until the risk assessment showing any residual risks are accepted and signed off by the appropriate manager according to the hierarchy of resultant risk (see table RT4).

Review date. The assessment should be reviewed at least every 12 months to ensure that the hazards and risks identified are still applicable, or whenever the work or hazards change. The risk assessment should be overhauled at least every 5 years and a new form produced.

Hazard. List all the possible hazards identified with the particular activity, item of plant, or substance, etc in the previous column. As suggested above, if all hazards are listed for one task element, each hazard may have sub hazards identified.

Persons at risk. Identify those who may be at risk (e.g. those actually carrying out work or those in the vicinity, whether other employees or visitors to the work area). Enter details of persons at risk against the listed hazards. In many cases a single entry such as "Operator, Supervisor, Member of the Public" will cover all the hazards listed for an activity. However, if a person or group is identified as being at special high risk from a particular hazard, then the hazard may need to be listed again with this person" or group" name next to it, as the risk assessment and possible control measures may vary.

Existing Control Measures. All existing controls, such as using PPE, should be identified in this column and should include any limitations found. This column should include any references to Codes of Practice, Procedures or Legal documentation followed in order to make the task safer.

Risk Rating. The judgement of severity of the harm from the hazard, i.e. the degree of injury and the number of people affected can be entered in the Severity column. The likelihood of harm depends on factors such as how often the task is carried out the existence and effectiveness of risk control measures. For example, a task carried out frequently with no risk control measures is more likely to cause harm than one carried out infrequently with very effective control measures in place. Once this has been decided, the judgement of likelihood can be entered in the Likelihood column. The numbers of letters used to represent likelihood and severity will depend on the scale used. The Council's system is based upon the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) model. Example: - 1,2,3,4,5 (where 1 is Negligible severity and Negligible likelihood and 5 is Very High severity and Very High likelihood). See calculating the risk rating for details.

The column should be filled in in the following format;
'2 x 1 = 2 Negligible risk'

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Additional Control Measures. Record the measures already in place or which will be implemented in order to eliminate or control the risk.

Result According to the key given on the form, record the result of assessing each risk, e.g. A = adequately controlled. This will depend on the risk rating. The assessor needs to decide what risk rating corresponds to trivial (T) 1 – 5 adequately controlled (A) 6 – 10 or not adequately controlled (N) 11 – 25.

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Calculating the risk rating

All risk assessments have a form of scoring system, normally based around the **Probability/likelihood** of an accident occurring, balanced against the **Potential Severity** of the accident were something to go wrong. The factors of **severity** and **likelihood** of harm from a hazard can each be placed on a scale against numbers or words. In other words, the assessor decides how **likely** and how **severe** the harm resulting from a hazard could be and assigns two numbers to it. The two factors of **severity** and **likelihood** are then multiplied together to give a risk rating which may be useful in prioritising action to control risk.

The rating system will include details of hazards classified according to the following criteria.

RT1 - What is the **likelihood** of occurrence of harm from the hazard?

1	Highly unlikely	Negligible
2	Unlikely	Low
3	Possible	Medium
4	Likely	High
5	Regular occurrence	Very High

RT2 - What is the potential **severity** of harm from the hazard?

1	Property damage	Negligible
2	Shaken but otherwise unharmed	Low
3	First aid on site	Medium
4	Trip to hospital	High
5	Death	Very High

RT3 - The **Risk Rating** is then calculated as **Probable Likelihood x Potential Severity**.

Likelihood	Severity.				
	Death	Trip to hospital	First aid on site	Shaken but otherwise unharmed	Property damage.
Regular Occurrence	25	20	15	10	5
Likely	20	16	12	8	4
Possible	15	12	9	6	3
Unlikely	10	8	6	4	2
Highly unlikely	5	4	3	2	1

RT4 – **Risk Rating** and **Management Authorisation Level**.

1	1 – 5	Negligible	Trivial	Line Manager
2	6 – 10	Low	Tolerable	Department Manager
3	11 – 15	Medium	Moderate	Head of Service
4	16 – 20	High	Substantial	Head of Service
5	21 - 25	Very High	Intolerable	Chief Executive

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RT5 – Risk Level and Resultant Actions

Risk Level	ACTION AND TIMESCALE.
Negligible	No additional controls are required although documentary records need to be kept.
Low	No additional controls are required. Consideration may be given to a more cost-effective solution or improvement that imposes no additional cost burden. Monitoring is required to ensure that the controls are maintained.
Medium	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk, but the costs of prevention should be carefully measured and limited. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period. Where the moderate risk is associated with extremely harmful consequences, further assessment may be necessary to establish more precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures.
High	Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the risk involves work in progress, urgent action should be taken.
Very High	Work should not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with unlimited resources, work has to remain prohibited.

Note: Low/Tolerable here means that risk has been reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.

Control and Monitoring

The purpose of the risk assessment will be to formulate a system of control for hazards associated with daily working environment and working practices.

To achieve this a proper system for the formulation of remedial actions to cater for the hazards identified has been developed.

The Health and Safety Advisor or Health and Safety Advisory Group will discuss all items of concern arising from the completed risk assessment procedure.

Any hazards arising from the assessments given the priority of urgent or high priority action will be discussed by both senior management and the employee representatives within 24 hours with work stopping if necessary.

The Health and Safety Advisor will be charged with the responsibility for implementing any necessary changes that the Safety Advisory Group considers appropriate.

The Health and Safety Advisor will detail members of the team to be responsible for monitoring implementation of the recommended controls, assessing the efficiency of the controls and making any additional recommendations. This team leader will consider the controls already in place to eliminate or reduce a risk.

RT6 - The **residual risk** may need to be improved by further control measures in accordance with the following: -

1	Elimination	Eliminate the hazard completely
2	Substitution	Replace the hazard with a less harmful alternative
3	Isolation	People to be isolated from the hazard
4	Engineering Controls	Use machine guards / extractors / mechanical lifts
5	Administrative Controls	Reduce exposure time to hazard.

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6	Personal Protective Equipment.	Final option in risk control.
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Information and Training

Members of the team will, where necessary, be given:

- (a) training to improve their knowledge and understanding of the risk assessments and procedures.
- (b) any additional detailed knowledge about how to assess risks within the working environment that they will be assessing.

Liaison with Non-employees

The **Health and Safety Advisor** has been charged with the responsibility for ensuring that all personnel who would require information on the range of hazards identified are appraised of the necessary detail prior to the commencement of work with the Council.

This will include:

- (a) all direct and non-direct contractors
- (b) personnel from the relevant statutory authorities who require access to the company's working environment
- (c) any other person who may lawfully enter on to company premises.

Liaison will also be maintained with our neighbours to ensure that co-operation can be achieved in the event of the need for a co-operative response to any hazard.

Index of Risk Assessments

This provides an opportunity to list all the risk assessments carried out in the organisation, not just those required by the **MHSWR**. Although there is no specific legal requirement to record a list of all the risk assessments, this is an important part of the management system and is designed to ensure that risk assessments are routinely reviewed, otherwise assessments will be completed as a one-off operation and will then become progressively out of date. These lists should be held by the Health and Safety Advisors for their area, and must be made readily available to the Health and Safety Advisory Group, any member of staff or any person having reasonable cause to see them. There is obvious merit in setting a review date for every risk assessment, as it represents good health and safety practice, and should be set initially and at each review.

A five-year retention period is appropriate for all risk assessments, whereas a retention period of 40 years may be set for assessments that relate to identifiable employees. (No guidelines on retention periods are given in the **MHSWR**; the figures given here are derived from the respective retention periods for engineering control and health surveillance records set out in the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)**).

SUMMARY POLICY STATEMENT

The most important considerations for risk assessment are that:

- (a) all hazards are identified
- (b) appropriate control measures are defined
- (c) the risk assessment process is well documented to enable managerial control.
- (d) risk assessments are reviewed regularly to ensure risks are adequately controlled.

**SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL'S
Health & Safety Policy.**

Workplace:	TASK/ OPERATION:	Risk Assessment Number
Operating Procedure Developed by:	Approved By:	Date:
Review Completed by:	Approved By:	Date:
MANAGEMENT AUTHORISATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I authorise the above process to commence/continue on the basis that the hazards have been thoroughly considered and the associated risks assessed and controlled to an acceptable level. • The appropriate supervisor is to ensure that this and related risk assessments are brought to the attention of all persons involved in this activity (who are to complete the signature sheet at the end of this form) and that a copy is held on files for at least 5 years after the activity is completed. • Where necessary, additional controls will be implemented within the timescales identified. 		
Name (Block Capitals):	Signature:	Position:
Date:		
<input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am not satisfied that the risks associated with this process/activity have been controlled to an acceptable level and the process/activity must cease immediately / not commence. 		
Name (Block Capitals):	Signature:	Position:
Date:		
ASSESSMENT REVIEW (maximum 12 months)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I confirm that the assessment remains valid, controls remain effective and there has been no increase in risk. 		
1st Review Date: _____	Name (Block Capitals): _____	Signature: _____
Position: _____		
2nd Review Date: _____	Name (Block Capitals): _____	Signature: _____
Position: _____		
3rd Review Date: _____	Name (Block Capitals): _____	Signature: _____
Position: _____		

