

Toolbox Talk

Writing a Risk Assessment



What is a Risk assessment

A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace.

Think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on real risks – those that are most likely and which will cause the most harm.

Definitions:

- **Risk Assessment;** A systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.
- **Hazard;** Anything that may cause harm.
- **Risk;** The chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be

Key points:

A risk assessment should be:

- Suitable and sufficient.
- Site specific.
- Communicated to, and understood by, everyone.
- Reviewed and revised when required.

Steps to writing a Risk Assessment:

For any task or activity to be undertaken;

- Identify the hazards. Think about the activities, processes or substances that could injure your volunteers or harm their health.
- Decide who might be harmed and how. For each hazard you need to be clear who might be harmed, volunteers and others not carrying out the task.
- Evaluate the risks and decide on controls to reduce the risk. How likely is the hazard to cause harm and what would the severity be. What can be done to reduce the risk, you do not need to eliminate the hazard.
- Record your significant findings. Make a record of the hazards, how people may be harmed and what you have in place to control the risks. Any record should be simple and focused and communicated to everyone involved in the task.
- Review your assessment and update if necessary. If there have been any significant changes or if improvements need to be made. Consult your volunteers. Learn from any accidents or near misses.