

How to create a risk assessment

A risk assessment is designed to help make sure you've considered all the aspects of a volunteering role. It helps you identify potential risks; decide what actions you should take, with appropriate precautions, and which you should avoid altogether.

The risk assessment should show that:

- Proper checks were carried out
- You asked who might be affected
- You dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who may be involved
- The precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is low.

It is important when creating the risk assessment to decide/consider:

- Who will take action and when
- How to inform volunteers, etc.
- Effectiveness of control measures
- Review for new hazards.

A step-by-step guide to creating a risk assessment

Step 1 - Identify your risks

A Hazard is anything that can cause harm, a risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody will be harmed by the hazard. See example risk assessments attached for specific examples of possible hazards to consider. But common examples include.

Hazards to consider

- Display screen equipment - Level of use, comfort of staff, training.
- Electrical equipment - Visual checks, routine maintenance.
- Fire - Means of escape, fire alarm and firefighting, housekeeping, storage, smoking.
- Slips, trips, falls - Maintenance, housekeeping, training.
- Lone working - Checking in procedures, emergency contact numbers.
- Adverse weather conditions - Sun cream, warm clothing.
- Others - Toilets, welfare.
- Transport- What form of transport will the volunteer take

Step 2 - Identify who might be harmed and how

Think about groups of people. Bear in mind that the following groups are especially at risk:

- New/inexperienced volunteers
- Pregnant women
- Disabled
- Lone workers
- Children
- Members of the public

Step 3 - List the controls that you currently have in place to reduce and manage each risk.

Consider existing precautions in place:

- Do they meet the legal requirements?
- Do they reduce risk so far as is reasonably possible?
- Do controls work in practice?
- Are the procedures being followed?
- Do they meet good practice standards?
- Do you provide sufficient information/ training?

Step 4 - Analyse your risks by scoring the likelihood of them happening and the potential impact. E.g. Low, Medium, High.

Step 5 - List the additional actions needed to reduce the risk further.

Step 6 - Rescore the likelihood and potential impact of each risk with the controls in place.

If the risk is not adequately controlled, then include a list of further controls or precautions needed.

Step 7 - For ongoing assurance that risks are being controlled effectively, record who is responsible for each risk and when.

Step 8 - Circumstances may change. You should review your risk assessment if you think it may no longer be valid.

Review and consider:

- Does it work?
- Has it been effective?
- Is it up to date?