

# Risk Assessment

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## What is Risk Assessment?

You are walking down a busy street. The traffic is moving at a steady pace, occasionally slowing to accommodate delivery vehicles, cyclists and buses. On the other side of the street you see a friend you've been wanting to catch up with for a while. If you wait until you reach the pedestrian crossing you'll miss them so you quickly survey the scene and decide that given the speed of the traffic and the size of the gaps between vehicles you'll make it across safely.

Did you know you just carried out a risk assessment?

Risk assessment is a systematic and thorough evaluation of a situation to establish whether or not it is safe. If it is then you'll carry on if not you'll decide to do something to make it safer. You might decide the situation is so dangerous you won't attempt it. For example, if you were considering crossing 6 lanes of busy motorway traffic on foot you might, sensibly, decide not to. Usually you will put in place some measures to reduce the risk to a level you can live with. For example, if you didn't feel confident that you could cross the high street safely you might decide to use the pedestrian crossing after all and risk missing your friend.



## Why do you have to carry out risk assessments?

Health and safety law requires people who are responsible for the health and safety of others to know what risk they are exposing those people to; to take reasonable steps to protect people from those risks and to make sure that the people at risk understand how and why they are being protected. The specific legislation is contained in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

## How do I know what to risk assess?

SafetyToolbox makes it easy to work out what risk assessments you need to carry out. If you haven't already done so, log into your account and take the health and safety questionnaire. This will add specific risk assessments into your document list.

Some of the risk assessments in your list are labelled with a red badge indicating they are HIGH priority. You must make sure you do these first.

## How do I carry out a risk assessment?

Risk assessment can be broken into 5 simple steps:

### Identify



A hazard is anything that could cause harm e.g. a wet floor in a heavily trafficked area such as an entrance lobby.

### Analyse



Who might be at risk and how?

### Plan



What are you going to do to make it safer?

## Review



Do your safety measures work? Do you need to change what you do?

## Record



Keep a written record of your risk assessment

Have a look at the guides and templates in the Risk Assessment section of the SafetyToolbox Information Centre for more help with risk assessment.

## SafetyToolbox Risk Assessments

Some of the risk assessments on SafetyToolbox are questionnaire based to make it even easier for you to carry them out. Alternatively you can have a look on the Questionnaires tab on your Building Page and try one out to see just how easy it can be.

## What should I do with my risk assessment when I've done it?

### Upload to SafetyToolbox

Don't forget to upload your finished risk assessment to SafetyToolbox so that the system logs that you have completed it. Follow the instructions in the Help Centre under Submitting Documents if you're not sure.

Once the risk assessment has been logged you will see that the next due date will have changed and the colour code for the document will have changed to green.

## Communicate

People working at your premises or visiting need to be aware of the dangers that are present in order that they can take care of themselves. Some dangers require them to take specific action such as emergency action in the event of fire. Your risk assessment will help you to decide what to tell them and how.



## What if I already have a risk assessment?

If you already have a risk assessment then all you need to do is make sure that it is still relevant to what you do and that it is up to date. If you had work to do following the original risk assessment then check off what you have done. If there is still work outstanding decide how and when you're going to do it and make a note on the risk assessment. If you have decided not to carry out work you previously identified make a note on the risk assessment to explain why you have changed your mind.

Whenever you review a risk assessment make sure you put the date and details of the person reviewing it on the document.

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