

Tool 4: Risk Assessment Templates

What is risk assessment?

The risk assessment process is something that we all do every day in all aspects of our lives. In the workplace environment, risk assessment is at the heart of managing safety, health and welfare successfully.

It is a three step process:

Step 1. Identify the hazard.

Step 2. Assess the risk in proportion to the hazard.

Step 3. Put in place appropriate control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk.

How the risk assessment tool works

Under safety, health and welfare legislation, employers must complete (in writing) a risk assessment of their workplace. Risk assessment is a key component of the Safety Statement and essentially involves the three steps identified above.

This tool provides a series of risk assessment templates for many of the routine and non-routine activities in schools.

The risk assessment templates list some of the most common hazards identified in the school environment and their associated risks. The templates also list a range of control measures that could be in place to eliminate such hazards or reduce their risks.

- These templates can be used directly by all staff in the school.
- Staff will select the risk assessment templates for the activities they are involved in. Two or more staff members may work together to complete risk assessment templates where they share the use of a classroom or share a similar job.
- The board of management will designate appropriate timescales for the completion of the risk assessment.

Note: the following risk assessment tool is a non-exhaustive list of all the hazards and risks present in your school. It may therefore be necessary to use the blank template provided at the back of this tool for those hazards not specifically dealt with. These templates should form a good foundation for identifying hazards, assessing risks and implementing controls. However, you must also pay close attention to your own school environment and identify and write down other hazards and controls that you have in place or are required to be put in place. It is recommended that every year each teacher would carry out a risk assessment on their own classroom taking into account the age and other relevant characteristics of the students using that classroom during that year.

The steps involved in working with the risk assessment tool:

Getting started.

Using the “Contents of Risk Assessment Templates” on pages 15 & 16, the person carrying out the risk assessment identifies the templates relevant to their particular activities.

For example, each teacher should conduct a risk assessment in their own classroom.

Classroom

General school risk assessments - Fire

General school risk assessments - Manual handling

General school risk assessments - Slips, trips and falls

General school risk assessments - First-aid

Step 1.

A walk-through of the area to be assessed should be completed, e.g. classroom, office, canteen, playground etc. to identify the hazards contained therein. The relevant risk assessment templates should be used to assist with the identification of hazards.

Step 2.

Work through the relevant template, left to right, looking at each column heading to complete the risk assessment.

- The risk assessment should be signed off and dated by the person who carried out the risk assessment and should include all outstanding actions that require attention.
- The risk assessments should then be passed to the principal / designated person / safety committee to be collated so that a school wide plan can be developed for all hazards that are not controlled.

See Diagram 1. on next page for column headings and how to interpret them.

Hazards: A common hazard is listed for this environment

Is the hazard present? Indicate Yes or No on the form

What is the risk? This tells you what could happen as a result of the hazard

Risk rating - high, medium or low: This gives a general indication of the severity of the risk if the control is not in place and assists you in establishing priorities in applying control measures. This is a suggested rating system for the hazard. However, you need to take account of the situation in relation to your own school. For example, does this hazard pose a greater risk if it is combined with other hazards you have identified in a particular work area/classroom?

If the control measure is not in place, a risk rating is applied to help you assess the risk and create a priority action list.

The risk rating is HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW

A High Risk Rating = High priority action

If there are a number of control measures not in place and they have been given a risk rating of, for example, 'High' then the Priority action required is also 'High'.

Hazards	Is the hazard present Y / N	What is the risk?	Risk rating H = High M = Medium L = Low	Controls (When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls *Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column	Person responsible	Signature and date action completed

Risk Assessment carried out by:

Date:

Diagram 1.

Controls: These tell you the types of measures that must be implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk.

Is this control in place? Indicate Yes or No on the form as appropriate.

Action/to do list/outstanding controls: If you answered Yes to the previous question then no further action is required. If you answered No to the previous question, then you must write in what action is proposed.

Person responsible: Write in the names of the persons responsible for taking the actions. (If you have already indicated that controls are in place that are on-going throughout the school year, you may still wish to write the name of the person responsible here. For example, the teacher may be the person responsible for bringing a specific safety, health and welfare policy to the attention of the students on a regular basis as part of class.)

Signature & Date Action Completed: Completion dates must be inserted and signed by the person carrying out the risk assessment once the action is taken and the control measure is in place.

Step 3.

- Where a risk assessment template does not deal with a hazard/risk that you have identified, this should be entered into the Blank Risk Assessment Template No. 55.
- Where there are students with special needs, students where English is not their first language or students with challenging behaviour, an additional risk assessment template may be completed.
- Where it is found that a control is not in place, the “Action/to do list” column must be completed indicating the necessary actions which are required to control the hazard. When the control measure has been put in place, the risk rating applied to the hazard remains the same. In the “Person Responsible” column a person is assigned responsibility for ensuring the control is in place.
- When actions (controls) have been completed, then the “Signature and date completed” column should be completed by the person carrying out the risk assessment or a designated other.
- All actions that can not be closed off by the person carrying out the risk assessment must be brought to the attention of the appropriate person/s, e.g. principal, caretaker, board of management etc. and a plan should be put in place to close out such actions.
- Some actions may be ongoing and this can be indicated also in the “Signature and date when action completed” column (see examples of completed risk assessments on pages 15 - 17).
- If the board of management has designated the principal or the safety committee to act on its behalf, the principal/safety committee must review and assign necessary action and completion dates. Finally the board of management sign off on all the risk assessments.
- It is good practice that the action plan arising out of the risk assessment process be presented to the board of management for their information, approval and action, where required.

Sample 1. Completed Risk Assessment Template General School. No. 9 Students Considerations

Yes or No	If yes, what additional actions may be required	Person responsible	Signature and date when action completed
Y	The suitability of the task is risk assessed Ensure students understand teacher's instruction Ensure access/egress is not restricted	Jenny Jones (Teacher)	<i>Jenny Jones (05/09/13)</i> <i>(ongoing)</i>
Y	Ensure students understand teacher's instruction Place signage in appropriate locations as directed by teacher	Jenny Jones (Teacher) Bob Burke (Caretaker) Jenny Jones (Teacher)	<i>Jenny Jones (05/09/13)</i> <i>(ongoing)</i> <i>Bob Burke (05/09/13)</i> <i>Jenny Jones (04/09/13)</i>
Y	Develop a school policy for handling challenging behaviour and communicate policy to all employees.	Tom Tuohy (Principal)	<i>Tom Tuohy (05/09/13)</i>

Risk Assessment carried out by: *Jenny Jones*

Date: *05 / 09 / 13*

Sample 2: Completed risk assessment for the General School - No. 28 Manual Handling

Hazards	Is the hazard present? Y/N	What is the risk? Back or upper limb injury Over-frequent or over-prolonged physical effort involving in particular the spine	Risk rating H = High M = Medium L = Low	Controls (When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls *Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column	Person responsible	Signature and date when action completed
Transporting heavy loads, e.g. caretaker transporting heavy load to stores	Y	Back or upper limb injury	H	When purchasing stock such as clay, ingredients the guideline weights are taken into account and smaller weight items purchased where possible, e.g. 5kg bag of clay instead of 12.5 kg bag	✓	No action required	Tom Tuohy (Principal) All relevant staff	
For example ask: Is the weight too heavy?			H	An appropriate trolley is used to transfer heavy loads	✓	No action required	Tom Tuohy (Principal) All relevant staff	
Is the load too big? Is the shape unwieldy or difficult to grasp?			H	Appropriate instruction is provided to staff on how to lift loads safely on to and off the trolley	✓	No action required	Tom Tuohy (Principal)	
Lifting a heavy load above shoulder height, e.g. lifting presentation equipment	N	Back or upper limb injury	H	Storage of regularly accessed equipment is arranged so that heavier items are stored on middle shelves not on floor or above shoulder height	✓	No action required	All relevant staff	
Injury sustained due to lack of knowledge, instruction or training to complete manual handling tasks appropriately	N	Back or upper limb injury	H	Carry out risk assessment of tasks prior to manual handling and ensure staff receive training from a competent instructor where necessary	✓	No action required	Tom Tuohy (Principal)	

Sample 2: Completed risk assessment for the General School cont'd. No. 28 Manual Handling

Hazards	Is the hazard present? Y/N	What is the risk?	Risk rating H = High M = Medium L = Low	Controls (When all controls are in place risk will be reduced)	Is this control in place?	Action/to do list/outstanding controls <small>*Risk rating applies to outstanding controls outlined in this column</small>	Person responsible	Signature and date when action completed
Poor housekeeping, e.g. cleaner using floor cleaning equipment	Y	Awkward and repetitive bending postures leading to injury	H	The vacuum hose is extended to the appropriate length to eliminate the need for unnecessary awkward bending posture	✓	No action required	All relevant staff	
		Poor suction in the vacuum leading to over frequent physical effort	H	Cleaning equipment is in good working order and repaired or replaced when necessary	✓	No action required	Tom Tuohy (Principal) Contract Cleaning Company	
Carrying loads over distances, e.g. storage of classroom supplies such as Art room materials	Y	Back strain, slipped disc, hernia	H	Re-organise work area to ensure materials are stored close to point of use or source a handling aid	✓	No action required	All staff	
		Pushing/pulling heavy or awkward items	Back strain, slipped disc, hernia	H	Appropriate trolley provided for moving items	✓	No action required	Tom Tuohy (Principal)
	H		Items are made lighter or less bulky where possible	✓	No action required	All staff		
	H		Individuals ask for help when moving heavy items	✓	No action required	All staff		
	H		All potential obstructions are removed	✓	No action required	All staff		
			H	Choose safest route for moving items, particularly where there may be variations in the level of the floor, requiring the load to be manipulated on different levels, e.g. use of ramp	✓	No action required	All staff	

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If there is one or more **High Risk (H)** actions needed, then the risk of injury could be high and immediate action should be taken. **Medium Risk (M)** actions should be dealt with as soon as possible. **Low Risk (L)** actions should be dealt with as soon as practicable.

Risk Assessment carried out by: *Jenny Jones*

Date: *05/09/13*

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