

Managing Safety and Health

Introduction

Managing safety and health is essential to protect your workers and your business. These information sheets will provide you with practical advice on how to manage the most common hazards in your workplace, and

prevent them causing harm. Throughout these information sheets you will find references to carrying out risk assessments. But what is a risk assessment and how do you carry out one?

Risk Assessment

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a written document that records a three-step process:

- > identifying the hazards in the workplace(s) under your control,
- > assessing the risks presented by these hazards, and
- > putting control measures in place to reduce the risk of these hazards causing harm.

Step 1 : Look at the hazards

The first step is to identify all the hazards in the workplace. A hazard is anything with the potential to cause injury or ill health. Some hazards are obvious, such as unguarded moving parts of machinery, dangerous fumes, electricity, working at heights, moving vehicles or moving heavy loads. Less obvious, but at the root of many accidents, are hazards presented by untidy workplaces and poor maintenance.

Step 2: Assess the risks

Risk means the likelihood that someone will be harmed by a hazard, together with the severity of the harm suffered. Risk also depends on the number of people who might be exposed to the hazard.

In assessing the risk, you should estimate:

- > how likely it is that a hazard will cause harm,
- > how serious that harm is likely to be, and
- > how often and how many workers are exposed.

Step 3: Decide on the control measures

Your first approach should be to eliminate the hazard from your workplace. Clearly if you get rid of a hazard, then you are making it safer for you and your employees. If you cannot eliminate a hazard then the next step is to try a safer approach by changing the way the job is done so as to make it safer. If that's still not enough then decide what control measures are necessary to reduce the risk to as low a level as possible and put them in place.

Record the findings of your risk assessments and talk to employees

Make sure your employees know what control measures are in place to protect their safety and health and what is expected of them in working safely.

You can prepare your risk assessments at:

BeSMART.ie

