

# **Local Code of Practice 15**

## **Risk Assessment**

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July 2013



**Waltham Forest**

## **LOCAL CODE OF PRACTICE (LCOP) 15 RISK ASSESSMENT**

<b><u>Section</u></b>	<b><u>Contents</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
1.	Introduction to this LCOP	2
2.	What is risk assessment?	2
3.	How do we assess risks?	2
4.	Definitions	3
5.	5 steps to risk assessment	3-6
6.	Guidance on completing the assessment proforma	6-8
Appendix A	Hazard prompt list Guidance on expectant/nursing mothers	9
Appendix B	Control measures	10
Appendix C	Simple risk evaluation	11
Appendix D	H&S risk assessment proforma	12-13
	Risk assessment summary sheet (For display purposes)	14

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is a legal requirement under The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires managers to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments. It is our policy that managers complete this task and involve the workforce and Union Safety Representatives. Headteachers, for example, may delegate the task, but they need to ensure that risk assessments are carried out.

Managers need to be competent to do this e.g. have sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to properly undertake the task.

Risk assessments should cover all employee work activities **including** risks that may affect others e.g. members of the public, client group, contractors etc. The purpose of this LCOP is to assist managers in this task.

Other health and safety legislation may require for risk assessment specific to the hazards and risks they cover e.g.

- Manual Handling Operations
- Display Screen Equipment
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

Where assessments have already been carried out they do not need to be repeated as long as they remain valid. Guidance on these topics can be found in the Health and Safety Manual and on the Schools intranet health and safety library.

Training for Risk Assessment is advertised in the Adult Education – Community Learning and Skills Service Brochure.  
See link below:

<http://forestnet.lbwf.gov.uk/index/training-and-learning/health-safety-courses.htm>

## **WHAT IS RISK ASSESSMENT?**

It is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so you can consider whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

## **HOW DO WE ASSESS RISKS?**

The five steps to risk assessment are:

STEP 1:	Look for the hazards
STEP 2:	Decide who might be harmed and how
STEP 3:	Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
STEP 4:	Record your findings on a Risk Assessment proforma
STEP 5:	Review your assessment and revise it if necessary

## **DEFINITIONS**

Hazard	Is anything that can cause harm e.g. electricity, chemicals, work with the public etc.
Risk	Is the chance/likelihood, high or low that somebody will be harmed by the hazard
Severity	Takes into account the number of people who might be exposed to a risk and the likely outcome e.g. fatal or major injury, serious injury/illness, or slight injury/illness

The important things you need to decide are whether a hazard is significant, and whether you have it covered by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small.

Risk assessment is a life skill. We all do it. Consider the activity of crossing a road. The hazards would include collision with a motor vehicle. Those at risk are pedestrians. The level of risk will depend on a number of factors e.g. the number and type of pedestrians, how often the road is crossed, the number and speed of vehicles etc. Severity could range from a 'near miss' (actually a 'near hit' if you think about it), to a fatality or number of fatalities. So before we cross the road, potentially putting ourselves (and others) at risk we take action (or control measures) to make it as safe as possible e.g. cross at a narrow section of road, use traffic lights and traffic island or wait for a safe pause in traffic movement. These basic principles underpin risk assessment.

## FIVE STEPS TO RISK ASSESSMENT

### STEP 1 – Look out for the hazards

By walking around the workplace, observing work activities and by talking to staff and Safety Representatives you can look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on **significant hazards**, which could result in serious harm or affect several people. Manufacturers' instructions or datasheets can also assist in spotting hazards and put risks in their true perspective. Reports on accidents and ill health can also assist.

See hazard prompt list (**Appendix A**)

### STEP 2 – Decide who may be harmed, and how

Think about people who may not be in the workplace all the time, e.g. cleaners, peripatetic workers, contractors, visitors etc. In addition the law requires that persons with disabilities and young persons (e.g. work experience pupils) should **always** be considered.

Also, where women of childbearing age are employed, the risk assessment **must** include risk specific to new and expectant mothers.

The sort of hazards that should be considered are **physical** (e.g. manual handling), **biological** (e.g. Hepatitis B, HIV) and **chemical** (e.g. hazardous substances), work processes and working conditions. Some of these hazards may already have been assessed for specific health and safety regulations, for example the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH). Further guidance is included in Appendix A and is available from the Occupational Health Unit.

### STEP 3 – Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done

You need to evaluate the risks from the identified hazards. Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. This will determine whether or not you need to do more to reduce the risk. Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. What you have to decide for each significant hazard is whether this remaining risk is high medium or low – Reference should be made to control measures you have in place to reduce the risk e.g. use of LCoPs, systems of work, training etc. See **Appendix B**

When deciding what control measures to take you should apply the following principles of prevention.

- ◆ If possible avoid a risk altogether e.g. do the work in a different way.
- ◆ Evaluate risks that cannot be avoided by carrying out a risk assessment. Further guidance on evaluation of risks is contained in **Appendix C**

- ◆ Combat risks at source e.g. treat or replace slippery steps rather than display a warning sign.
- ◆ Adapt work to the requirements of the individual.
- ◆ Take advantage of technological progress.
- ◆ Give priority to those measures which protect the whole workforce i.e. give collective protective measures priority over individual measures.
- ◆ Ensure staff understand what they must do.

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous corner to help prevent vehicle accidents, or putting non slip materials on slippery steps, are inexpensive precautions considering the risks.

If something needs to be done, ask yourself

- a) Can I get rid of the hazard altogether
- b) if not how can I control the risks so that harm is reduced/unlikely

**Only use personal protective clothing/equipment when there is nothing else that you can reasonably do.**

If the work activity tends to vary a lot, or if you or your staff move from one site to another, select those hazards which you can reasonably foresee and assess the risks from them. After that, if you spot any unusual hazard when you get on site, take the necessary action.

If you share a workplace e.g. during building works, tell the other employers there about any risks your work could cause them, and what precautions you are taking and vice-versa. Also, think about the risks to your workforce from those who share your workplace.

When an employer has been told in writing that a worker is pregnant, has given birth within the previous six months or is breast feeding then certain actions must be taken. The employer should first consider removing any hazard to her that has been identified or prevent any exposure to it. Where this is not feasible the risk should be controlled. The law requires that, if significant risk remains, the employer should:

- temporarily adjust working conditions and/or work hours or, if this is not reasonable;
- offer her suitable alternative work if any is available or, if this is not reasonable;
- suspend her from work (give her leave on full pay) for as long as is necessary

Special consideration needs to be given to new or expectant mothers who work late or at night.

## **STEP 4 – Record your findings**

The significant findings of your risk assessment should be recorded and a proforma (appendix D) is included in this LCOP. You should show that:

- ◆ a proper check was made;
- ◆ staff and unions (where appropriate) were involved in the process;
- ◆ significant hazards are dealt with;
- ◆ precautions are reasonable and remaining risk is low where practicable;

Assessments need to be suitable and sufficient, not perfect.

Keep the written documents for future reference or use; it can help you if an HSE inspector questions your precautions, or if you become involved in any action for civil liability. It can also remind you to keep an eye on particular matters. It helps to show that you have done what the law requires.

To make things simpler, you can refer to other documents, such as manuals, the arrangements in your health and safety policy statement, local codes of practice, manufacturers' instructions, and health and safety procedures. These may already list hazards and precautions. You do not need to repeat this and it is up to you whether you combine all of the documents or keep them separately. (Keep it simple!)

## **STEP 5 – Review your assessment and revise it if necessary**

Sooner or later you will bring in new machines, substances and procedures or work with new staff, which may introduce new hazards. If there is any significant change, you should add to the assessment to take account of the new hazard. In any case, it is good practice to review your assessment from time to time. Do not amend your assessment for every trivial change or for each new job, but if a new job introduces significant new hazards of its own, you will want to consider them in their own right and do whatever you need to keep the risks down.

## **GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE RISK ASSESMENT PROFORMA**

Assessment forms should be completed by a competent person who has some in depth knowledge of the individual and the task/job, which is to be assessed e.g. a line manager.

Reading from left to right the box headed **hazard** should list hazards identified by the activity being assessed e.g. working alone, violence, fire, electrical equipment, working at height etc. which you could reasonably expect to cause significant harm under the conditions in your workplace/s (see worked example for the task of visiting clients, overleaf for a worked example).

Next, consider **who** may be harmed. As well as your employees think about people who may not be in the workplace all the time, e.g. visitors, contractors or cleaners. Consider any staff you have that work off site and the

hazards/risks they may be exposed to. Think about people you provide services to e.g. clients, public, children, residents etc. and those you share the building with who could be harmed.

**For example.** 'Using electrical equipment'. The main hazards associated with this are

- Contact with 'live' parts causing shocks and burns
- Faults which could cause fires
- Fire/explosion where electricity could be a source of ignition in flammable/explosive atmospheres.

The **control** measures required and action to be taken could include:

- (a) Purchase of equipment from a reputable supplier, ensuring it is suitable for the job.
- (b) Ensure equipment is properly maintained, e.g. tested by a competent person once per year (portable appliance testing).
- (c) Provide information and training in the safe use of electrical equipment, e.g. Visual inspection of equipment etc.
- (d) Check that the above happens, and works!

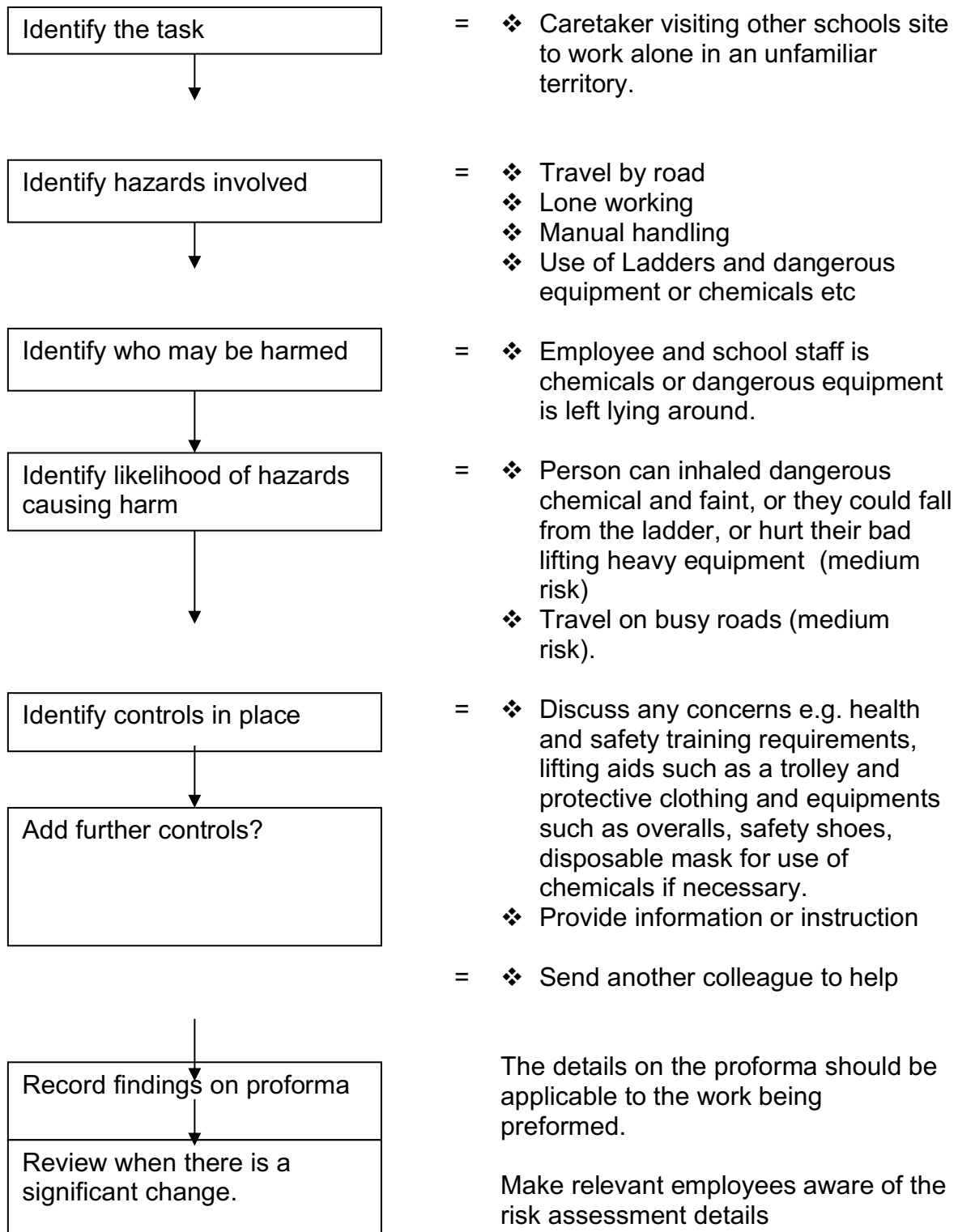
The **risk** factor, i.e. Low, Medium, High (see matrix in appendix C) should indicate the risk at the time of the assessment with existing control measures in place.

There will be occasions where assessments need to be **reviewed**. This may be due to changes in systems of work or the introduction of new equipment etc. Assessment must never be seen as a once and for all exercise, but as an aid in making work safer.



## Worked example for a mobile Caretaker

Staff involved:



**HAZARD PROMPT LIST**

Whilst no list is exhaustive, the following topics may assist you and your staff to brainstorm what areas you may need to address. The Health and Safety Manual Local Codes of Practice and your Union Safety Representative may also provide assistance.

- Animals (use of)
- Asbestos management
- Biological agents (e.g. HIV)
- Boilers/pressure systems
- Building issues/ maintenance
- Contractors activities
- Chemical Usage
- Display screen equipment
- Educational visits
- Electrical hazards
- Falling/moving objects
- Falls from height
- Fire and explosion
- First aid provision
- Harmful energies (gas, radiation, noise, vibration)
- Hazardous substances
- Heating sources (LPG, electrical)
- Home working
- Inexperienced/young workers
- Lighting levels/glare
- Lifts
- Local exhaust ventilation
- Machinery, plant and equipment (use and maintenance) including hand tools
- Manual Handling/lifting operations
- Personal protective clothing and equipment
- Repetitive tasks
- Seating
- Security
- Space and room dimensions
- Slippery/uneven floors and surfaces
- Staff with medical conditions
- Stress
- Thermal environment (hot/cold), extreme weather conditions
- Traffic routes
- Trip hazards
- Vehicle movement and maintenance
- Violence/behavioural issues
- Window cleaning/glazing
- Working alone
- Working at height
- Workstations

**Factors to consider for nursing/expectant mothers:**

- Exposure to biological agents (e.g. Hepatitis B, HIV, Herpes, Tuberculosis, Chicken Pox, Typhoid, Rubella, etc)
- Exposure to chemical agents (e.g. Hazardous substances)
- Exposure to physical agents (e.g. shock/vibration, manual handling, noise, ionising/non-ionising radiation, posture)
- Working with VDU's
- Other aspects of pregnancy e.g. backache, increasing size, frequent visits to toilet, morning sickness, etc.

## CONTROL MEASURES

Step 3 in undertaking risk assessments says you need to evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done. It is these control measures, to either **eliminate** or **reduce** the likelihood of harm occurring, that we concentrate on here. Control measures could consist of (in no particular order)

- Changing the way work is carried out to eliminate or reduce the hazard
- Adapt work to the individual
- Provide information/training/instruction/supervision
- Written safe systems of work
- Implementing Local Codes of Practice from the Health and Safety Manual
- Selecting appropriate equipment/plant for the task
- Substituting hazardous substances with safer alternatives
- Screening of staff
- Health Surveillance
- Using manufacturers guidance/instructions
- Using safety data sheets
- Testing/examining/inspecting as necessary
- Routine maintenance/servicing
- Fitting and using safety devices
- Enclosing the process to prevent release of hazardous substances
- Protecting dangerous parts of a machine by guarding
- Reporting and repairing defects
- Replacing obsolete/hazardous equipment
- Restricting access
- Good housekeeping
- Regular cleaning
- Safe labelling storage and disposal
- Reducing repetitive tasks
- Monitoring method statements/systems of work
- Atmosphere/environment testing
- Using safety signs/notices
- Emergency Procedures and equipment e.g. Fire/First aid
- Using Personal Protective Clothing/Equipment\*

\*In the hierarchy of control measures PPE is regarded as the 'last resort'. PPE should only be used wherever there is a risk that cannot be adequately controlled by other means.

**SIMPLE RISK EVALUATION**

Hazard – the potential to cause harm, will vary in severity. The likely effect of a hazard can be rated and/or assigned a numerical value:

**Major (3)**

Death or major injury or illness causing long term disability

**Serious (2)**

Injuries or illness causing short term disability

**Slight (1)**

All other injuries or illness

**Similarly, the likelihood of harm may be rated**

**High (3)**

Where it is certain/near certain that harm will occur

**Medium (2)**

Where harm will often occur

**Low (1)**

Where harm will seldom occur

RISK = severity of harm x likelihood of occurrence

**LIKELIHOOD OF HARM**

(Certain)	<b>High</b>	3	6	9	<b>RISK RANKING</b> 6 – 9 = High 3 – 4 = Medium 1 – 2 = Low	
(Often)	<b>Medium</b>	2	4	6		
(Seldom)	<b>Low</b>	1	2	3		
			<b>Slight</b>	<b>Serious</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>SEVERITY</b>





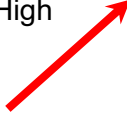

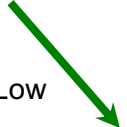

This simple computation enables you to compare risks and prioritise your actions. If hazards can affect more than one person you can assign a relative weighting to reflect this. You do not have to use numbers but they can assist in ranking risks and prioritising action to be taken.



## WORK SAFER – PROTECT YOUR HEALTH HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT PRO FORMA (RAF 1)

Refer to Local Code of Practice 15: Risk Assessment



Work Activity or environment	Hazard	Who might be Harmed?	Written Control Measures	Level of Remaining Risk	Further Action Required
<p><b>NOTES:</b></p> <p>List the work activity or area being assessed</p> 	 <p>Look only for hazards which you could reasonably expect to result in significant harm under the conditions in your workplace</p>	<p>There is no need to list individuals by name – just think about groups of people doing similar work or who may be affected.</p> 	 <p>Refer to relevant procedures, codes of practise, information, training, guidance notes, safe systems of work etc in place to reduce any local control measures for your individual site/activity. Also note where information may be found.</p>	<p>Is the likelihood of harm:</p> <p>High </p> <p>Medium </p> <p>Low </p>	 <p>List any relevant measures required to reduce the level of risk further.</p>
<h3 style="margin: 0;">Record your significant findings On risk assessment proforma RAF1</h3>					



**WORK SAFER – PROTECT YOUR HEALTH  
HEALTH & SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT PRO FORMA (RA 1)**



**Establishment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Assessment Undertaken:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Review Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Work Activity or environment</b>	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Who might be Harmed?</b>	<b>Written Control Measures</b>	<b>Level of Remaining Risk</b>	<b>Further Action Required</b>

**Name of Assessor/Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature of Assessor:** \_\_\_\_\_