

General Risk Assessment Form

Date: (1)	Assessed by: (2)	Checked / Validated* by: (3)	Location: (4)	Assessment ref no (5)	Review date: (6)
Task / premises: (7)					

Activity (8)	Hazard (9)	Who might be harmed and how (10)	Existing measures to control risk (11)	Risk rating (12)	Result (13)

Result: T = trivial, A = adequately controlled, N = not adequately controlled, action required, U = unknown risk

Notes to accompany General Risk Assessment Form

This form is the one recommended by Health & Safety Services.

(1) **Date** : Insert date that assessment form is completed. The assessment must be valid on that day, and subsequent days, unless circumstances change and amendments are necessary.

(2) **Assessed by** : Insert the name and signature of the assessor.

(3) **Checked / Validated* by** :

Checked by : Insert the name and signature of someone in a position to check that the assessment has been carried out by a competent person who can identify hazards and assess risk, and that the control measures are reasonable and in place. The checker will normally be a line manager, supervisor, principal investigator, etc. Checking will be appropriate for most risk assessments.

Validated by : Use this for higher risk scenarios, eg where complex calculations have to be validated by another "independent" person who is competent to do so, or where the control measure is a strict permit-to-work procedure requiring thorough preparation of a workplace. The validator will probably be a chartered engineer or professional with expertise in the task being considered. Examples of where validation is required include designs for pressure vessels, load-bearing equipment, lifting equipment carrying personnel or items over populated areas, and similar situations.

(4) **Location** : insert details of the exact location, ie building, floor, room or laboratory etc

(5) **Assessment ref no** : use this to insert any local tracking references

(6) **Review date** : insert details of when the assessment will be reviewed as a matter of routine. This might be in 1 year's time, at the end of a short programme of work, or longer period if risks are known to be stable. Note that any assessment must be reviewed if there are any significant changes – to the work activity, the vicinity, the people exposed to the risk, etc

(7) **Task / premises** : insert a brief summary of the task, eg typical office activities such as filing, DSE work, lifting and moving small objects, use of misc electrical equipment. Or, research project [title] involving the use of typical laboratory hardware, including fume cupboards, hot plates, ovens, analysis equipment, flammable solvents, etc.

(8) **Activity** : use the column to describe each separate activity covered by the assessment. The number of rows is unlimited, although how many are used for one assessment will depend on how the task / premises is sub-divided.

(9) **Hazard** : for each activity, list the hazards. Remember to look at hazards that are not immediately obvious. For example, use of a lathe will require identification of the machine hazards, but also identification of hazards associated with the use of cutting oils (dermatitis), poor lighting, slipping on oil leaks, etc. The same activity might well have several hazards associated with it. Assessment of simple chemical risks (eg use of cleaning chemicals in accordance with the instructions on the bottle) may be recorded here. More complex COSHH assessments eg for laboratory processes, should be recorded on the specific COSHH forms (link).

(10) **Who might be harmed and how** : insert everyone who might be affected by the activity and specify groups particularly at risk. Remember those who are not immediately involved in the work, including cleaners, young persons on work experience, maintenance contractors, Estates personnel carrying out routine maintenance and other work.

(11) **Existing measures to control the risk** : list all measures that already mitigate the risk. Many of these will have been implemented for other reasons, but should nevertheless be recognised as means of controlling risk. Controls might also include use of qualified and/or

experienced staff who are competent to carry out certain tasks; an action plan might include training requirements for other people who will be carrying out those tasks.

- (12) **Risk Rating** : the simplest form of risk assessment is to rate the remaining risk as high, medium or low, depending on how likely the activity is to cause harm and how serious that harm might be.

The risk is **LOW** - if it is most unlikely that harm would arise under the controlled conditions listed, and even if exposure occurred, the injury would be relatively slight.

The risk is **MEDIUM** - if it is more likely that harm might actually occur and the outcome could be more serious (eg some time off work, or a minor physical injury).

The risk is **HIGH** - if injury is likely to arise (eg there have been previous incidents, the situation looks like an accident waiting to happen) and that injury might be serious (broken bones, trip to the hospital, loss of consciousness), or even a fatality.

- (13) **Result** : this stage of assessment is often overlooked, but is probably the most important. Assigning a number or rating to a risk does not mean that the risk is necessarily adequately controlled. The options for this column are:

T = trivial risk. Use for very low risk activities to show that you have correctly identified a hazard, but that in the particular circumstances, the risk is insignificant.

A = adequately controlled, no further action necessary. If your control measures lead you to conclude that the risk is low, and that all legislative requirements have been met, then insert A in this column.

N = not adequately controlled, actions required. Sometimes, particularly when setting up new procedures or adapting existing processes, the risk assessment might identify that the risk is high or medium when it is capable of being reduced by methods that are reasonably practicable. In these cases, an action plan is required. The plan should list the actions necessary, who they are to be carried out by, a date for completing the actions, and a signature box for the assessor to sign off that the action(s) has been satisfactorily completed. Some action plans will be complex documents; others may be one or two actions that can be completed with a short timescale.

U = unable to decide. Further information required. Use this designation if the assessor is unable to complete any of the boxes, for any reason.

For T and A results, the assessment is complete.

For N or U results, more work is required before the assessment can be signed off.