

Risk Assessment

The City of London's Process for Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is the basic 'toolkit' by which line managers can evaluate the extent of a given risk and therefore identify suitable risk control measures. Risk Assessment is not an end in itself, as we do not assess risk simply to comply with the law. It is the method by which we can understand the nature of the problems that are faced; so suitable risk control measures ([see section 'RISK CONTROL'](#)) can be implemented.

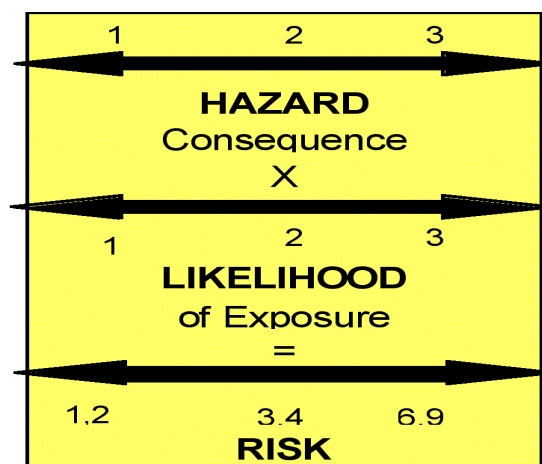
It is important to appoint risk assessors that can demonstrate appropriate competence both in the technical area under consideration and also in the skill of risk assessment itself. Line managers requiring risk assessments to be undertaken are responsible for ensuring the competence of their risk assessor(s). Risk assessment training is arranged through TRENT via the Learning and Development Team.

It is the responsibility, of all line managers to use their local risk assessor to assist them to identify and assess the reasonably foreseeable significant risks that arise from their work activities. Adequate and appropriate risk control measures must then be implemented and maintained. Line managers are reminded to stay focused on significant risks and not to become side tracked into dealing with the trivial or bizarre. Once these risks have been excluded, then the remaining risks can then be further prioritised using the risk assessment model in figure 3.

Therefore, risks are managed according to their relative significance to one another. If in doubt, always seek advice from the local line manager, competent risk assessor or the Corporate Health and Safety Team.

Risk assessment is a function of a judgment made on two independent variables. These variables are the nature and extent of the consequential harm were a given hazard to be realised, and the likelihood of that harm occurring. The judgment is not a random decision; it is made through an assessment of data about the hazard and likelihood measured against common criteria.

Fig 3. The City of London Corporation Risk Assessment Model



Criteria for Severity of Harm

Severity	Criteria	Rating Value
Low	Minor injury requiring minor first aid treatment only. A short time only away from work, if any.	L1
Medium	Injury/Illness requiring qualified medical attention. Time off work, but full recovery. Or by exclusion i.e. it simply isn't obviously 'High' or 'Low'.	M2
High	Injuries involving major trauma or death. A protracted period off work, many months or permanently.	H3

Criteria for Likelihood of Occurrence

Likelihood	Criteria	Rating Value
Low	May occur in time, low expectation of occurrence ('It could occur, but')	L1
Medium	Likely to occur in time. ('I'm not going to be surprised if it does happen because.....but there's no reason to think it will happen now'). Or by exclusion i.e. it simply isn't obviously 'High' or 'Low'.	M2
High	Likely to occur imminently or in the very short term. (It could easily happen at any time!')	H3

Risk Rating	Action Required
L1 or L2	Review control measures, take action if required
M3 or M4	Work to improve control measures and actively monitor
H6 or H9	Work to improve controls immediately if possible; raise awareness; consider stopping work; use strict supervision; and actively monitor

Types of Risk Assessment

To assist with the management of risk the following types of risk assessment have been adopted:

- **Initial Risk Assessment** - an initial 'pen-picture' of the risk, usually not containing a great deal of detail or data but just enough information upon which local line managers can base risk management decisions
- **Detailed Risk Assessment** - The line manager's decision to investigate a risk in detail is based on exception (e.g. clearly amongst the most significant, after a related serious incident, after litigation case history, on the grounds of operational imperative, the need to review present risk control strategies). In the main initial risk assessments will be sufficient. Statements made in

detailed risk assessments are supported by reference to fact, other documentation (e.g. incident records) & procedure.

- **Generic Risk Assessments** - A central resource of detailed risk assessments will be kept on the intranet. This reference resource contains exemplar risk assessments for all departments and divisions to utilise as a base. **However, it is stressed** that the risk assessor **must tailor** the assessment to local conditions before the local line manager accepts it as a true reflection of the local risk. Without this local tailoring it will not be a suitable and sufficient assessment as required by law.
- **Dynamic Risk Assessments** - if an employee is faced with a situation that is truly dynamic, and then any significant learning from the situation must be fed back into the department so that the knowledge can be shared.

Task Lists

An effective risk management system relies on a systematic method for identifying where significant risks may be present. This provides assurance that the search has been reasonably comprehensive.

Risk is a task-based concept because people must interact with the hazards for a risk to their health and safety to be present. Without first identifying the activities, the risk assessor cannot identify which staff are exposed to these hazards and to what degree. Therefore, the starting point for any risk management procedure is to complete a comprehensive task list within each department. These can be easily managed if the tasks are scoped from the team upwards through the structure.

Risk Registers

The function of risk assessment is to prioritise risks to enable appropriate risk control action. Line managers are expected to act on the most significant or highest priority risks first. By compiling a risk register for each division, the line manager is able to follow the progress of the risk management system and feed information about risk to managers further up the organisation as required. This also makes your **Top X** process easier to identify and scope.

Suggested Model for Risk Assessment to be used by Departments

- An initial risk assessment is required for any task that a line manager identifies as having a **reasonably foreseeable** significant risk (to the manager; their staff or others i.e. public / visitors). Detailed risk assessments will be completed in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the line manager.
- After initial risk assessments have been completed, a brief description is entered onto an risk register in priority order, (keeping it electronic is best). This enables the line manager to act. Action will be taken on the most significant risks first (as far as local resources allow). If the risk is reduced it must be moved down the list, reflecting its new residual risk level. If it remains intolerable it is passed up to the next level of management. If no additional

resources are required, but the risk remains significant, then the next level of management must be informed about the risk and what has been done to control it.

All risk assessors should follow the methodology set out above ([see section 'The City of London's Process for Risk Assessment'](#)) and must have attended and passed the relevant City of London Corporation training details of which can be accessed by following this link (Learning and Development - <http://colnet1/deptwww/TC/training/CourseTools/CourseGroups.aspx?CGID=9>) or be appropriately competent to conduct the risk assessment.

- All risk assessments must be quality checked and reviewed by the line manager.
- All risk assessments are to be signed by the relevant line manager.
- Where more complex or specific technical risk assessments are required (e.g. chemical, display screen equipment, manual handling) the line manager should use a risk assessor with the relevant competencies to carry out the assessment
- Risk assessments must be reviewed on a regular basis depending on the level and spread of risk. All risk assessments must be reviewed at least annually.
- Risk assessments should also be reviewed if there is a significant change in circumstances and after any significant incident (if the incident is not already covered by a risk assessment, then one should be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable).

What documentation should be Kept?

- All risk assessments should be kept on the intranet ([need a location](#)), so that they are accessible to all members of staff who undertake the tasks that have been assessed.
- Risk assessment records should be kept on file until the task under consideration no longer takes place or the risk assessment becomes irrelevant for any other reason. (These 'dead' assessments are to be passed to the [Corporate Health & Safety Team](#) who will decide whether the assessment should be archived or can safely be erased).
- When a risk has been identified it must be entered on the local risk register, which forms the list of all local significant risks in priority order.
- Risk control plans for significant risks should be recorded and kept with the risk assessment record.