

Risk Assessment Standard

Warwickshire County Council

This standard has been produced in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) Health and Safety Policy and outlines the minimum requirements that must be met.

The requirements within the standard need to be interpreted and included into service and team local arrangements.



Plan – consider activities, risks & competency.
Refer to legislation, WCC standards and industry best practice

Why do we need this standard?

Our vision is for Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to be a safe and healthy place to work where diverse and talented people are enabled to be their best. WCC is committed to ensuring best practice in all our activities. We are therefore committed to establishing, developing, and supporting positive and safe working environments in which all our people feel listened to, considered, respected and ultimately able to contribute to our success and theirs and others safety.

WCC aims to set an exemplary standard of health and safety to ensure that minimum risk is presented to employees and all those affected by the Council's activities which includes those in the council's care, contractors, and members of the public. WCC will ensure that hazards and risks associated with each work task / activity and work location are assessed and that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are undertaken. By identifying the level of risk, it will ensure appropriate measures are implemented to reduce or eliminate the risk. WCC will also ensure that those undertaking risk assessments are competent to do so and that the significant findings of any risk assessments are communicated to those affected in a suitable manner.

This standard is relevant to all employees of WCC and is supported by a **'How To' guide containing advice, guidance, and tips**. Each service should take account of their management arrangements and inherent risks associated with their activities and particular service culture.

What is a Risk Assessment?

WCC has adopted the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) definition, a risk assessment 'is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.'

Why do we do Risk Assessments?

Because they are a proactive and systematic process to help identify hazards and associated significant risks from our activities or processes. They enable the council to implement suitable and sufficient controls to manage and control the risk to reduce this to the lowest possible level.

The council and employees have a legal and moral duty to ensure the safety of our staff and those that can be affected by us and our activities.

What are the common definitions used in Risk Assessment?

Hazard - is anything that has the potential to cause harm; this can include, for example, hazardous substances, machinery, mobile working, lone working, stress, etc.

Risk - 'is the likelihood that harm will occur.' This is the chance; high, medium, or low, that somebody could be harmed by a hazard, together with an indication of how severe the harm could be.

Significant risk – hazards, which have the potential to cause actual harm and suffering and avoiding wasting resources on every day and insignificant risks. '

The HSE states 'insignificant risks can usually be ignored, as can risks arising from routine activities associated with life in general, unless the work activity compounds or significantly alters those risks. Risk assessments should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know – you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

Competent Person - Employees who are responsible for undertaking risk assessments should be competent to do so. This is defined as having a good understanding of the risk assessment process and the skills, knowledge and experience of the activities being assessed.

What is the Risk Assessment Management Process?

All services within WCC should have in place a Health and Safety Management Action Plan, this must include arrangements around their local risk assessments. A range of risk assessments must be available that cover the following:

- The Sector that the service operates within and any Regulations, Approved Codes of Practice and industry standards which should be reviewed to aid in creating a risk assessment and control any industry specific risks. (e.g., Social Care may need to refer to the Mental Health Act 1983 as amended 2007)
- The activities that are undertaken by the employees of the service, such as;
 - Agile working, which involves workers who spend most of their time working from home or other locations that are not their office-based location and that have no direct contact (face to face) with their support network.
 - Lone working (personal safety) which involves workers that are working away from their direct line management and support network- they may be working with other WCC employees, people or working alone.
 - Driving at work
 - Manual Handling
 - Display Screen Equipment use.



- Work equipment, plant or substances used.
 - Human behaviour, capabilities, groups who may be at a particular risk (young or new and expectant mothers), and other human factors.
 - Working with members of the public.
- Hazards associated with activities above.
 - Loss of contact with mobile or lone workers
 - Communication of emergency controls, procedures, and knowledge for home workers.
 - Violence and aggression from members of the public
 - Increased stress and impact on employee's mental health.
 - Work related upper limb disorders going unnoticed due to lack of contact.
 - Rural or isolated workplaces
 - A person's medical stability to work alone.
 - Slips and trips due to an untidy work area.
 - If you have any high-risk activities such as the following, they should not be carried out alone:
Confined space entry and work near exposed live electrical systems.

These lists are not exhaustive.

Please see guidance for a more detailed list.



Do - implement safe working practice & control measures,
produce documentation & records, arrange training,
inform staff

What about Training?

For undertaking risk assessments

For those undertaking risk assessments, a level of understanding of the risk assessment process is required. Those persons involved in undertaking risk assessments must complete the WCC health and safety risk assessment training course, this can be completed via the elearning training module on Learning Hub (course code HSW RA004) and for schools via the elearning or a face-to-face workshop course. It is required to undertake risk assessment training every three years. They must also have sufficient knowledge, experience and understanding of the work activities/ processes/ operations that they are assessing. Please refer to the guidance document for details on how to book available courses or contact the Workforce Health and Safety Team if further understanding is required.

For Completing Tasks

Employees must be competent for the work activities that they will be undertaking. The required information, instruction, and training requirements for undertaking a work activity must be identified and recorded as part of the risk assessment process. This is known as a control measure.



What do I use to record my Risk Assessments?

A WCC template is available, this has been provided to record teams and service risk assessments, to include actions that are required to ensure risks are reduced to the lowest possible outcome. The risk assessment form is used to record the current arrangements (i.e., control measures) that are in place to prevent/reduce the risk. The risk level is then evaluated to identify whether more should be done to control the risk further. The form therefore encompasses a 'further action column,' which should only be used if there is additional 'action' (i.e., control measures) required to reduce the risk. If these control measures are now in place the controls are to be moved across to existing controls column.



Check — monitor how effective arrangements & measures are/any incidents/issue

What are the Roles and Responsibilities?

Managers (Head teachers, line managers, supervisors) must ensure

- All work activities, processes, and operations under their control are risk assessed and appropriate control measures are implemented and followed in accordance with this standard.
- That the level of detail in a risk assessment is proportionate to the risk and appropriate to the nature of the work (i.e., focus on foreseeable significant risks)
- That a risk assessment is undertaken prior to the introduction of new processes, new equipment, or changes in working practices.
- That risk assessments are undertaken by a 'competent person.' This can either be the manager themselves or delegated to an employee.
- That risk assessments are recorded on the WCC risk assessment template form, or other designated WCC template (Manual Handling, COSHH), that employees are involved in the risk assessment process to ensure inclusion of their practical knowledge.
- They have consulted with employees and others who are likely to be affected by the activity/ process/ operation being risk assessed, ensuring controls are suitable and sufficient and any issues raised by employees are amended.
- The findings of the risk assessment are communicated to employees and others who are likely to be affected by the activity/ process/ operation risks and that they sign to say they understand the risk assessments and controls.
- That all risk assessments are accessible to all employees and others for whom they apply.
- That they have planned, co-ordinated and monitor how their risk assessments are implemented and managed locally (i.e., is the risk assessment being implemented as planned? Is it achieving the desired results? etc).



- That current risk assessments are recorded in an electronic or hardcopy version and a risk assessment register is in place.
- Ensure that risk assessments are reviewed:
 - every 12 months, or
 - when any significant change occurs,
 - equipment, or machinery,
 - change in legislation or approved practice or in accordance with any group specific requirements
 - if employing or about to employ young persons, or
 - if there is an accident/incident

Employees (Must)

- Co-operate with and engage in the WCC risk assessment process.
- Be familiar with the risk assessments in place, understand and follow the control measures detailed within the risk assessments as relevant to their role and the activities, processes, and operations they are involved in to ensure the safety of themselves and others.
- Speak to their manager immediately if they have any concerns with the risk assessments or identify, become aware of any hazards or risks during their work activity.

Health and Safety Team will

- Provide the WCC risk assessment training via an elearning module, or a face-to-face workshop, as part of the corporate learning and development offerings.
- Provide support, guidance and advice where required to managers and employees on undertaking risk assessments.
- Monitor / review as part of the audit regime.



Act

— take action/have a plan of action for any gaps /revisit arrangements/measures/ documentation

Revisit measures

Once risk assessments are reviewed:

- ensure any further control measures are implemented, if required, and the risk assesment is shared with employees.
- for legal reasons, ensure any old versions of risk assessments are kept for at least 5 years, stored in an easily accessible folder. For any relating to Schools, keep records for 18 years, plus a further 3 years, totalling 21 years.
- ensure the responsible person for creating risk assessments within the team completes the WCC risk assessment training and it is refreshed every 3 years. Remember to record this in your teams training matrix.

Equality and Accessibility Information

If this information is difficult to understand, the Health and Safety Service can provide it in another format, for example braille, large print, on audio tape or another language. A full equality impact assessment has been undertaken for this standard.

Links and References

Here is a list of other relevant information from internal and external sources.

Internal Sources:

- [Risk Assessment Guidance](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy and Action Plan Template](#)
- [Please check our corporate A to Z pages for further information on related topics and areas of risk.](#)
- [Please check our H&S Documents for Schools pages for other information on related topics and areas of risk.](#)

External Sources:

- [Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work HSE Pages](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work HSE Pages](#)
- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#)
- [The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)

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