

## Smartcomm Safety Bulletin

### Health & Safety – What is a Risk Assessment?

'What is a risk assessment?' This bulletin aims to allow you to answer basic questions on risk assessments such as a definition of risk assessment, why do a risk assessments? When to do a risk assessment? and how to do a risk assessment?

The HSE's definition of a risk assessment is:

*"...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...."*

A risk assessment is a vital element for our health and safety management and its main objective is to determine the measures required to comply with statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 by reducing the level of incidents/accidents.

#### **Why do a risk assessment?**

A risk assessment will protect our workers and business, as well as complying with law. As for when to do a risk assessment it should simply be conducted before any our employees conduct some work which presents a risk of injury or ill-health.

You should seek advice from your risk assessment trained person (in Smartcomm this is Mr. S. Dhanoya) or an experienced member of management who is competent and will have abilities such as hazard identification, ability to categorise and evaluate risk(s). These abilities will allow a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment to be conducted.

#### **How to do a risk assessment**

Five steps to risk assessment can be followed to ensure that the risk assessment is carried out correctly:

1. Identify the hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures
4. Record findings and implement them
5. Review assessment and update if necessary

#### **Step 1: Identify the hazards**

In order to identify hazards we need to understand the difference between a 'hazard' and 'risk'. A hazard is 'something with the potential to cause harm' and a risk is 'the likelihood of that potential harm being realised'.

#### **Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how**

Once we have identified a number of hazards we need to understand who might be harmed and how, such as 'people working in the warehouse', or members of the public.

#### **Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures**

After 'identifying the hazards' and 'deciding who might be harmed and how' we are then required to protect the people from harm. The hazards can either be removed completely or the risks controlled so that the injury is unlikely.

**Step 4: Record your findings**

The findings should be written down as it's a legal requirement where there are 5 or more employees; and by recording the findings it shows that we have identified the hazards, decided who could be harmed and how, and also shows how we plan to eliminate the risks and hazards.

**Step 5: Review your assessment and update as and when necessary**

It should not be forgotten that few workplaces stay the same and as a result this risk assessment should be reviewed and updated when required.

I hope this bulletin has given you more insight into risk assessments, please feel free to discuss this information or for further information.

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