



UCU - Risk Assessment Information



Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (1999)

- These Regulations introduced the specific legal requirement for risk assessments for work activities.
- Risk assessments should be completed for all work activities.
- Ideally, should be completed by:
 - the individual carrying out the activity (as they know the activity best) with
 - the PI/line manager
 - May need expert advice and guidance (eg. input from local safety advisor, University Safety Services, etc).

Risk assessment – what is it?

- A careful examination of what, in your workplace, could cause harm to people (the hazard) and how you can prevent harm from occurring (by introducing control measures).
- Looks at what you're currently doing to protect people and also looks at whether you should be doing more, or if it is suitably controlled.



Risk assessment – what is it?

It involves answering the questions :

- What could cause harm (the hazard)?
 - What might go wrong?
 - How likely is it to go wrong?
 - How bad might the consequences be?
 - **What can be done to stop it going wrong?** (the control measures needed)
- } the risk



5 steps to risk assessments

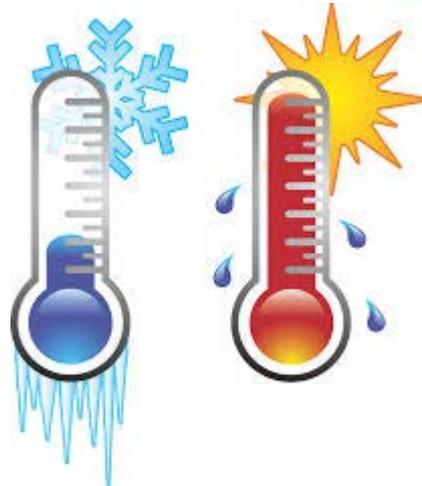
The HSE guidance splits risk assessments into 5 basic steps:

1. Identify hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate risks and decide the best way to control them
4. Record and communicate the findings
5. Review assessment periodically



Types of hazard

- Work environment – hot, cold, noise, vibration, heights
- Display screen equipment (eg. desktop computer, laptop, tablet, etc)
- Electrical
- Mechanical
- Radiation
- Chemical
- Biological
- Laser
- Stress





What is the difference between Hazard and Risk?

- Hazard - Something with the potential to cause harm
- Risk - The likelihood, high or low, that the harm will actually occur, combined with the severity of the harm

Risk = Likelihood x Severity

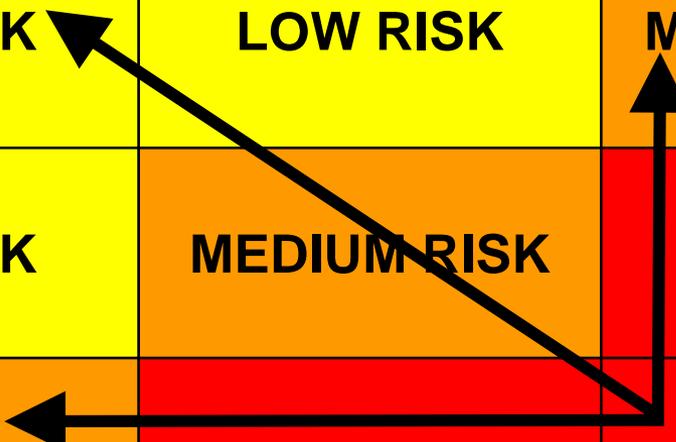
What factors affect the level of risk?

- Likelihood of harm occurring
- Severity of the harm e.g. injury, ill health
- Frequency of exposure to hazard e.g. how often hazard encountered
- Number of people affected/exposed to hazard



Risk assessment matrix

Probability/ Likelihood	Outcome/Severity		
	Insignificant minor injury/illness, no work absence	Minor short-term incapacity / ill health (up to 3 days off work)	Major intermediate incapacity / medium term ill health (eg > 3 days off work)
Virtually impossible	LOW RISK	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK
Possible	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK
Likely	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	VERY HIGH RISK



What makes a good risk assessment?

- Legally, you need to be able to show that:
 - A proper check was made
 - You considered who might be affected
 - You identified all the significant hazards, and took into account the numbers of people involved
 - The controls are reasonable and the remaining risk is low



You don't need to anticipate unforeseen risks

Different types of risk assessment

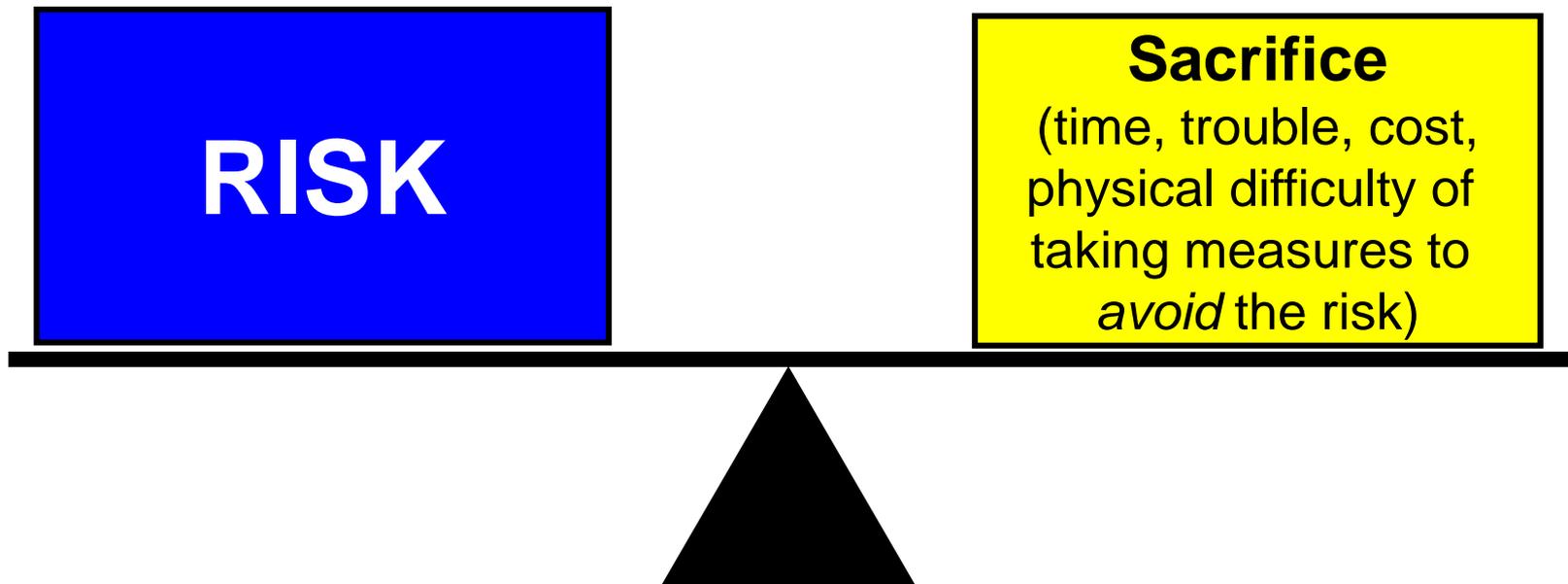
The University has different types of risk assessment, including:

- General (activity) risk assessments
- COSHH assessments
- Chemical risk assessment
- Biological/GM assessments
- Manual handling assessments
- Display screen equipment assessments



They might have different names and use different forms, but they ALL ask and answer the same 5 basic questions.

Sensible risk assessment – a balancing act



If risk cannot be avoided then control measures are required to manage it



Sensible risk assessment – a balancing act



Risk assessments

- Must be “suitable and sufficient” – must adequately identify the likely hazards of the task and the risks involved.
- Must ensure that risks are reduced to as low a level as “reasonably practicable” by the introduction of suitable and sufficient control measures.
- It should be noted that risk will NEVER be reduced to zero – there will always be some residual risk.
Life is not risk free.





Risk assessments

- Risk assessments must be signed (usually by you or your line manager/local safety advisor).
- The contents of the risk assessment must be communicated to everyone completing the task, and those who could be affected.
- For less hazardous activities, you might not see the actual risk assessment – you might just see a procedure sheet telling you what to do to complete the task safely.
- You are legally entitled to see the original risk assessment – you can ask your line manager to send you a copy.

Risk assessments

- Risk assessments must be reviewed at regular intervals (usually annually at the University – it depends on the task) or if a change occurs.
- Changes which would trigger an immediate review of the risk assessment include:
 - Change in current legislation or government guidance
 - Change in work location
 - Change in personnel – such as if a vulnerable employee is about to start a task
 - Something indicates it's no longer valid or can be improved – eg. following an accident
- “Vulnerable employee” is a legal term, and covers employees who are pregnant, who may be disabled, or who may be young workers (there are others – these are examples).

Risk assessment – what it isn't.....

- About producing piles of useless paperwork
- About stopping your work/research taking place
- A waste of time
- A back-covering exercise to stop the University being sued!



Where to go for help...

The University of Manchester has a central Safety Services unit; see:

<http://www.healthandsafety.manchester.ac.uk/>

Their website has information on:

- Finding your local safety advisor (every unit should have one) – you should ask them as your first contact for safety information.
- University H&S policy and guidance
- Risk assessments – forms and guidance

You can always ask the local UCU branch for help and support



University general risk assessment form

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

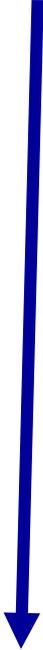
Action plan (14)

Ref No	Further action required	Action by whom	Action by when	Done

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

Hierarchy of control measures

Effectiveness



- Eliminate the hazard
- Use a lower risk option (e.g. substitution)
- Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. LEV, containment, enclosure, guarding)
- Organise work to reduce exposure
- Provide training and supervision
- Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Provide first aid

- We must also remember that when assessing complex hazards (such as coronavirus!) we must consider all factors relating to the hazard, and must weigh up the cost-benefit of control measures.
- Specifically, for coronavirus, we need to balance up the necessity of things such as reducing the amount of face to face teaching (lowering infection risk, etc), with the benefits of a return to some campus working (where home working for some is associated with the additional stress of isolated working, in a poor home working environment, with unsuitable DSE set-up).
- The complexity of trying to determine a reasonable balance which is acceptable to all is extremely difficult (probably not possible to please everyone!).
- If you have specific concerns, remember to discuss them with your line manager/local safety advisor
- You can also contact your local UCU H&S rep, or the branch:

ucu@manchester.ac.uk