

Quick Guide to Risk Assessments

Five Steps to Risk Assessment:

1. Identify the hazards.
2. Decide who may be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks and decide upon control measures.
4. Record your findings.
5. Review your risk assessment and update if necessary.

Hazard: Anything that can cause harm – *a gas, a liquid, a solid, a work process etc...* Even an inert environment such as an office will contain hazards within it.

Risk Assessment: A realistic review of how likely the hazard will cause harm – and just how bad it could be, by quantifying the **Likelihood** (the chance of something bad happening) and the **Severity** (how bad it will be be).

A **Boston Square** matrix is used:

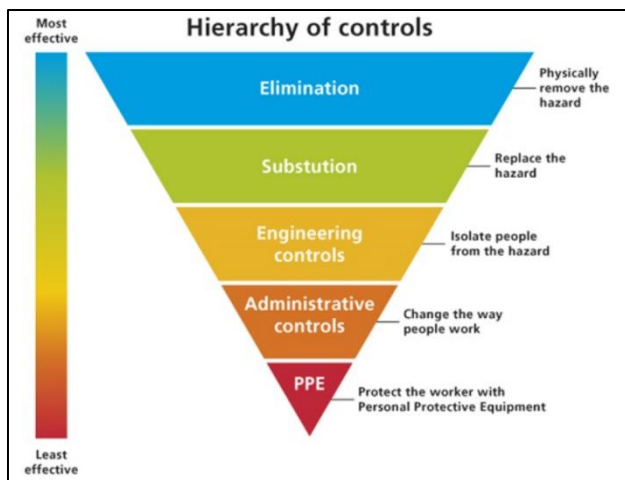
		Likelihood		
		Not Likely	Likely	Very Likely
Severity	Minor	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk
	Moderate	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
	Major	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk

What do the Red Amber and Green Colours mean? Think about how we obey the traffic light:

Low Risk	The ideal solution – there may still be a residual risk
Medium Risk	The risk has been brought down to a reasonable level – we can carry out the task with caution. Report any changes or concerns immediately.
High Risk	Work Stops! We need to make the task safer by introducing more control measures

Control Measure: A sensible precaution that will reduce the risk of the hazard causing harm. This can also be called mitigation or a preventative measure.

Hierarchy of Control Measures:



Risks should be reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level by taking preventative measures, in order of priority. The table below sets out an ideal order to follow when planning to reduce risk from construction activities. Consider the headings in the order shown, do not simply jump to the easiest control measure to implement.	
1) Elimination	Redesign the job or substitute a substance so that the hazard is removed or eliminated. For example, dutyholders must avoid working at height where they can.
2) Substitution	Replace the material or process with a less hazardous one. For example, use a small MEWP to access work at height instead of step ladders. Care should be taken to ensure the alternative is safer than the original.
3) Engineering controls	Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where you cannot avoid working at height. Install or use additional machinery such as local exhaust ventilation to control risks from dust or fume. Separate the hazard from operators by methods such as enclosing or guarding dangerous items of machinery/equipment. Give priority to measures which protect collectively over individual measures.
4) Administrative controls	These are all about identifying and implementing the procedures you need to work safely. For example: reducing the time workers are exposed to hazards (eg by job rotation); prohibiting use of mobile phones in hazardous areas; increasing safety signage, and performing risk assessments.
5) Personal protective clothes and equipment	Only after all the previous measures have been tried and found ineffective in controlling risks to a reasonably practicable level, must personal protective equipment (PPE) be used. For example, where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall (should one occur). If chosen, PPE should be selected and fitted by the person who uses it. Workers must be trained in the function and limitation of each item of PPE.
It is not necessary to implement every measure. For example, in the case of a fully boarded and guarded scaffold, workers would not be expected to wear personal fall-arrest equipment.	

Residual Risk: Once all the control measures have been set, there will always be a certain amount of risk remaining – but this will be acceptable. We are not robots!

Refer to <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm> for more advice, templates etc

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Hazard spotting: the office

