Guide to Completing Risk Assessments

Introduction

At Orange Sky, a safe shift does not happen by chance. All hazards have the potential to cause harm, ranging from minor discomfort to serious injury. In order to operate a shift safely, we must think about what hazards are present during the shift then we must do whatever we reasonably can to eliminate or minimise the risks arising from these hazards.

There are four steps involved when managing risks:

1. **Identifying hazards** – identifying what could cause harm
2. **Assessing the risks** – understanding the nature of the harm and how serious it could be
3. **Controlling the risks** – implementing the most effective control measures in order to eliminate or minimise the risks
4. **Review the control measures** to ensure they are working as planned

Step 1 - How to identify hazards

A hazard is a situation or something that has the potential to harm a person or the van. It's important to learn how to identify hazards on shift. Identifying hazards involves spotting things or situations that could potentially cause harm to people or damage to the van. Hazards generally arise from the following aspects of work:

- The physical shift environment - e.g. next to a busy road.
- The equipment and materials used on shift - e.g. hoses causing trip hazards.
- The tasks undertaken on shift and how they are performed - e.g. manual handling when loading and unloading machines.
- The design and management of a shift - e.g. the setup, running, and pack down of a shift.

Regularly walking around shift and observing how things are done can help you predict what could or might go wrong. Watch how people are working, how equipment is being used, what safe or unsafe work practices are being performed, as well as the general state of housekeeping.

Step 2 - How to assess risks

A risk assessment involves considering what could happen if someone is exposed to a hazard. A risk assessment can help you determine:

- How severe a risk could be
- What action you should take to control the risk
- How urgently the action needs to be taken

When should a risk assessment be carried out?

A risk assessment should be done when:

- A new shift is proposed
- The shift location changes
- Changes at the shift location occur that may impact on the effectiveness of the existing control measures or introduce new hazards

Who Should Conduct The Risk Assessment?

Risk assessments are most effective when the person assessing the hazards is well informed. Being well informed includes having:

- Knowledge of the practice, process or situation that is being assessed
- A thorough understanding of the potential injuries or illnesses that could be associated with the task
- Knowledge and experience of the risk assessment process

A well-informed person is best suited to conduct a risk assessment

What To Consider When Conducting A Risk Assessment

When conducting a risk assessment, consider the following questions:

- What are the likely consequences of the hazard, i.e. what types of injuries are likely to result?
- How many people are exposed to the hazard?
- What is the likely severity of any injury, illness or damage?
- How often or how long is a person exposed to the hazard, e.g. intermittently or continuously?
- Does anyone exposed to the hazard have particular characteristics that may increase their risk, e.g. are they inexperienced, do they have ongoing health concerns?
- What risk control measures are already in place?
- If risk control measures are in place, are they sufficient to eliminate or adequately reduce the risk?

Consider the Consequences

When determining the consequences consider the most likely injury, harm or damage that could occur and it's level of severity such as minor injuries requiring first aid, serious injury or illness, or even death. Also consider whether a small incident could escalate to a much larger incident with more serious consequences, e.g. a chemical leak leading to a fire.

Determine the Likelihood

Then determine how likely it is to occur. Consider the following:

- How often the task is undertaken
- How close people get to the hazard.
- Whether an incident has ever occurred before as a result of the hazard.
- The number of people that could be harmed as the result of an incident.

You can rate the likelihood as one of the following:

- Certain - could happen once or more every month
- Likely - could happen once or more every 6 months
- Possible - could happen once or more every year
- Unlikely - could happen once or more every 5 years
- Rare - could happen once or more every 10 years

The level of risk will increase as the likelihood of harm and its severity increases.

Step 3 - How to control risks

The most important step in managing risks involves eliminating them, or if that is not possible, minimising them as much as you can.

For help deciding how to control risks consult with HQ staff and volunteers who could be directly affected. Their experience will help you choose appropriate control measures and their involvement will increase the level of acceptance of any changes that may be needed.

There are many different ways to control risks. Some control measures are more effective than others. You must consider various control options and choose the control that most effectively **eliminates the hazard** or **minimises the risk** in the circumstances. This may involve a single control measure or a combination of several controls that together provide a higher level of protection.

Some problems can be fixed easily and should be done straight away, while others will need more effort and planning to resolve and the team at HQ can assist to help you control more complex risks.

The Hierarchy of Risk Control

The ways of controlling risks are ranked from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest this ranking is known as the hierarchy of risk control.

Level 1 Controls

You must always aim to **eliminate** a hazard, which is the most effective control.

Level 2 Controls

If this is not reasonable you must minimise the risk by working through the other alternatives in the hierarchy which include

- **Substitute the hazard** with something safer. For instance, replace a broken step ladder with a new one.
- **Isolate the hazard** from people. This involves physically separating the source of harm from people by distance or using barriers. For instance, place a trip guard over an exposed hose or power cord.
- **Use engineering controls**. An engineering control is a control measure that is physical in nature, including a mechanical device or process. For instance, attaching safety guards around moving parts of machinery.

Level 3 Controls

These control measures do not control the hazard at the source. They rely on human behaviour and supervision, and used on their own, tend to be least effective in minimising risks:

- Administrative controls. Administrative controls are work methods or procedures that are designed to minimise exposure to a hazard. For instance, develop procedures on how to operate machinery safely.

- Use personal protective equipment (PPE). Examples of PPE include ear muffs, gloves, face masks, hard hats, gloves, aprons and protective eyewear. PPE limits exposure to the harmful effects of a hazard but only if people wear and use the PPE correctly.

Administrative controls and PPE should only be used:

- When there are no other practical control measures available (as a last resort)
- As an interim measure until a more effective way of controlling the risk can be used
- To supplement higher level control measures (as a backup)

Step 4 - How to review controls

The control measures that you put in place should be reviewed regularly to make sure they work as planned. Don't wait until something goes wrong.

There are certain situations where you must review your control measures. A review is required:

- When the control measure is not effective in controlling the risk
- Before a change at the workplace/location that is likely to give rise to a new or different health and safety risk that the control measure may not effectively control
- If a new hazard or risk is identified
- If the results of consultation indicate that a review is necessary

Where to find the risk assessments

Orange Sky has a purpose-built risk assessment for assessing the safety of our shifts. It includes many of the hazards you may encounter on a shift and covers topics such as driving, shift location, the environment, set up and security to name a few.

If you identify a hazard as being present a control is suggested to help eliminate or mitigate any risks. The suggested controls are the minimum required and you may feel extra controls are necessary to adequately deal with the risks.

While we have done our best to think of as many hazards as possible we understand it's not entirely possible to account for all of them, so we have included a section at the end of the risk assessment where you can include other hazards and suggest potential controls to manage the risks.

The shift risk assessment form can be found on the Portal, simply click the link below or type *risk assessment form* in the search bar and follow the link.

Shift risk assessment form

If you require a risk assessment for something other than a shift contact HQ and the team will provide you with the correct form.