

INSTRUCTION 2

RISK ASSESSMENT

References:

- A. Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.
- B. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (as amended).
- C. Risk assessment guidance Annex A to this policy.
- D. Risk assessment template Annex B to this policy.

2.1 The identification of hazards and the assessment of risk is a key part of the Council's policy for health and safety. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) require employers to identify and record significant hazards, put into place effective control measures to control the risk.

Definitions

2.2 *Hazard* - A hazard is something, which has the potential to cause harm. Note that this concept is neutral and embraces everything from the trivial to the catastrophic.

2.3 *Risk* – The risk is the probability/likelihood that harm (the result of a hazard) will occur, linked to its consequences. A risk is a relative concept - a means of judging the priority in which hazards should be addressed. This involves both the scale of the hazard and the likelihood of it occurring.

2.4 The aim of the risk assessment process is to identify and implement control measures, which will reduce or eliminate the level of risk. The hierarchy of risk control is as follows:

- a. Remove the hazard altogether.
- b. Avoid the hazard.
- c. Introduce precautions in order to:
 - Keep the hazard and the people apart.
 - Have a barrier between the hazard and the person e.g. Barriers include machine guards as well as actual barriers.
 - Keep exposure to a minimum e.g. Have four people working for two hours each in a noisy environment, rather than one person for eight hours.
 - Safe systems of work and permits to work. A safe system of work is a procedure, usually written down, which describes how a task can be carried out in ways which minimise the risks associated with that task.
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should only be used as a last resort and there is no feasible way to control the risk, i.e. the introduction of gloves, goggles, masks, hard hats etc.

2.5 When employees are given a task, which is not covered by normal operating procedures, then an assessment of the risk involved must be conducted. If it is a 'one off' task with no hazard then it is not necessary to record this risk assessment, but should it be a process, which might be repeated, or there are hazards involved, then a risk assessment must be carried out and recorded. As a result of the risk assessment a 'Safe System of Work' may need to be introduced and then further developed to reduce risk, which must be brought to the employees' notice.

2.6 The assessment of risk is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in this task, could cause harm to people (including contractors, visitors and members of public) so a determination can be made whether enough precautions have been taken.

2.7 Risk assessments are carried out on an ongoing basis and to be effective it is essential that all employees co-operate wherever they can in the risk assessment process. The findings of the assessments must be communicated to relevant staff. Risk assessments are held by relevant supervisors/managers.

Risk Assessment Guidance

2.8 Guidance on how to conduct a risk assessment can be found at Annex A, the Council's risk assessment form is found at Annex B.