

## RISK ASSESSMENT

### 1.0 GENERAL

The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 came into effect on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1999 and placed a legal obligation upon heads of establishment to carry out and record risk assessments. This is not a new obligation, it has always been implicit both in the common law duty of care and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 section. 2. What is new is the requirement to formalise the procedure. The responsibility for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out within Poole Housing Partnership Limited managed properties lies with the Head of Maintenance.

**Accountability for assessments at properties under their control is delegated to each Manager.**

### 2.0 AIM

The aim of this instruction is to prescribe the method that is to be applied within Poole Housing Partnership Limited when carrying out risk assessments.

### 3.0 DEFINITION

Before the subject of risk assessment is considered, it is necessary to understand the terms used below:

- **Hazard:** This is anything that has the potential to cause harm (e.g. chemicals, electricity, working from ladders etc.).
- **Risk:** This reflects both the likelihood that harm will occur and its severity e.g. a risk may be high, low or negligible.
- **Risk Assessment:** Can be defined as the systematic identification of hazards present in work places and the estimation of the magnitude of risks to the health and safety of the workforce and others.
- **Risk Management:** The process whereby decisions are made either to accept the risk or implement action to reduce the probability of its occurrence and the consequences

### 4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT – METHOD

The following steps must be considered when assessing the risks in the workplace:

- Identify the hazards (ask the employees, consult manufacturer's instructions etc.).
- Decide who might be harmed and how (do not forget cleaners, visitors, contractors or the public etc.).
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done (the aim is to make all risks as low as possible by elimination, substitution or control).

- Record the findings (ensure employees receive this information).
- Review the assessment and revise it if necessary (generally reviewed annually or if a significant change has occurred with the activity).

## 5.0 RISK RATING

**Identification:** A draft list should be made of everything that represents a hazard including the harm it can cause within each geographical area e.g.

The hazards associated with:

Offices, common areas of residential properties, warehouses, industrial premises, shopping precincts or other workplace areas.

Work activities (e.g., office work, caretaking, porters duties, printing, retail, warehouse, industrial, cleaning, maintenance, surveying, driving, site visits etc.).

The introduction of new equipment/processes into the workplace. (e.g. a new item of grounds maintenance equipment)

The introduction of new staff or changes in work patterns.

Activities that are generally similar for groups of people will be covered by a “generic task risk assessment” e.g. those clerical/administrative personnel in a section will have similar duties. Persons that may have disabilities, lack of training, are young or are inexperienced should be considered on an individual basis, as a higher duty of care will be owed to them.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT

When completing the risk assessment the forms shown at Appendix 4 are to be used. A risk rating for each hazard is then obtained by multiplying the severity rating by the likelihood rating. To do this the assessor uses the two scales as follows;

### **Severity:**

5 = Fatality (Causing death or large-scale destruction and are reportable as defined by RIDDOR).

4 = Major injury/ill health (Causing serious injury/ill health to an individual that would include injuries such as fractures and hospitalisation and are reportable as defined by RIDDOR. Illnesses that could be fatal or serious are included).

3 = Serious injury/ill health (Causing injury/disease which could keep an individual off work for more than 7 days and are reportable as defined by RIDDOR).

2 = Minor injury/ill health (Causing injury/ill health that may require an individual to be off work for up to 7 days).

1 = Slight injury/ill health (Causing minor injury that would allow the individual to continue work after first aid treatment or to be off work for a maximum of one day).

**Likelihood:** *depends on the adequacy of control measures, how often people are exposed to the hazard and how long they are exposed to the hazard.*

5 = Common (accidents occur regularly).

4 = Probable (accidents are less likely to happen but still occur fairly regularly).

3 = Occasional (accidents are known to have occurred but are unusual).

2 = Possible (accidents are unlikely but conceivable for them to occur).

1 = Improbable (accidents are highly unlikely and have not been known to occur).

The process of deciding the individual rating is a matter of judgement based on knowledge and experience. Once the decision is made concerning the individual ratings, the risk rating for each hazard is calculated by simple multiplication. Therefore a hazard allocated a “likelihood rating” of 4 (probable) and a severity rating of 3 (serious injury/ill health) has an overall risk rating of 12.

## 7.0 PRIORITY FOR ACTION

The above example assessed at 12 should be allocated a higher priority for elimination or control than one rated lower. Alternatively, a hazard rated higher must be given a higher priority for action. With the restrictions on finance it is inevitable that not all risks can be corrected immediately so the under mentioned priority guidance should be adopted;

<b>RISK RATING</b>	<b>PRIORITY</b>	<b>LEVEL OF RISK/TIMESCALE FOR ACTION</b>
25	1	<b>A serious risk/unacceptable risk of injury exists</b> – the work activity must cease until action is taken to reduce the risk.
15 – 20	2	<b>A high risk of injury exists</b> – corrective actions require to be implemented to minimise the risk as soon as practical.
9 – 12	3	<b>A significant risk of injury exists</b> – improvements in control measures should be implemented as soon as possible
4 – 8	4	<b>Low risk</b> – action may be considered within one year if there are no major cost implications or included in next year’s budget estimates.
1 – 3	5	<b>Insignificant/trivial risks</b> – no action is required but assessment records should be kept and reviewed.

Further important decisions need to be made at this stage. It is necessary to examine each hazard. When deciding what additional action or control measures need to be taken to reduce the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable, to the lowest level, the following options should be considered:

- Can the hazard be eliminated or reduced at source by the use of an alternative process, material, equipment or work location?
- Can physical safeguards such as guardrails, enclosures or ventilation systems etc. be used to protect personnel from hazards?
- Can the number of personnel exposed to the hazard be reduced by such means as changing work procedures?
- Can the time individuals are exposed to the hazard be reduced by such means as changing work procedures?
- Can personal protective equipment (used as a last resort) provide protection?

Finally, examine the Safety Manual, relevant Approved Codes of Practice or Regulations to determine whether the existing controls are adequate or require modification. Instances where the risk assessments indicate new control measures are required are to be incorporated into a “Safe Systems of Work” procedure and recorded in the Safety Manual.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT RECORDS**

Where more than five persons are employed the regulations require that findings from assessments be recorded. Managers are to keep risk assessment records on file. These records are essential because they:

- Provide proof that hazards have been considered with a view to their elimination or control.
- Form a basis and record for review purposes.

## **9.0 INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING**

On completion of the risk assessments, employees must be given all relevant information and instruction on the risks pertinent to their work activity and where appropriate receive adequate training to enable them to undertake such work activities safely.

On managed properties the aim is to involve everyone in the risk assessment process. Suitable training in risk assessment will be given to all levels of staff (and employees staff under management) to enable them to undertake “suitable and sufficient risk assessment” of the tasks they carry out.

## **10.0 REVIEW**

Workplace and task risk assessments are to be regularly reviewed to accommodate changes in the workplace, of equipment, in the workplace activity and changes in personnel and work-patterns.