



# Risk Assessment Arrangements

## Contents:

- 1 Statement of purpose
- 2 Scope
- 3 Risk assessment
- 4 What you must do
- 5 Roles and responsibilities – who does what
- 6 Implementation
- 7 Compliance
- 8 Review of procedure

## 1 Statement of purpose

This arrangement outlines the process for carrying out risk assessments of Shropshire Council activities in order to manage the health and safety risks to employees and others affected by our activities, such as clients, volunteers, visitors, service users and members of the public. This is a requirement of the Management of Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1999.

## 2 Scope

This arrangement applies across Shropshire Council, in all service areas, whether work activities are carried out on Council premises, out on site or in employee's homes.

## 3 Risk assessment

A risk assessment is a **careful examination of what in the Council's work could cause harm**, to decide whether the precautions in place are adequate or if more are needed. It helps protect: employees, others affected by their work and the Council by identifying hazards, assessing the risks they pose and identify further actions to be taken to control those risks.

## 4 What you must do

The law requires us to:

1. Carry out suitable and sufficient assessments of foreseeable risks to the health and safety of:
  - employees, to which they are exposed whilst at work, and
  - others not in the Council's employment but who might be affected by the Council's work.

**This is done to identify the measures that need to be taken to comply with all other health and safety legislation.**

2. Review a risk assessment if:

- there is a reason to suspect that it is no longer valid;
- there has been a significant change in the matters to which it relates.

## 5 Roles and responsibilities – who does what

The Organisation - Specific Responsibilities document sets out the roles and responsibilities with respect to health and safety for all levels of staff within the Council, including those relating to risk assessment. This document forms part of the Council’s Health and Safety Policy and can be found here: [Health and Safety Policy](#). All staff need to be aware of their responsibilities under this policy.

## 6 Implementation

Management guidance in the form of Frequently Asked Questions is provided below to support the implementation of this arrangement.

## 7 Compliance

Heads of Service and Service Managers have a role in monitoring the completion of risk assessments and ensuring they are up to date.

Compliance with this arrangement will be checked during premise inspections and team audits carried out by the Health and Safety Team.

## 8 Review of arrangement

This arrangement will be reviewed by the Health & Safety Team, every five years or sooner if there are legislative changes.

### Approving Body:

Stage	By:	Reviewed Date:
Approval	Health and Safety Forum	
Consultation	Health, Safety and Welfare Group	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009
Reviewed	Health and Safety Team	Sept 2014
Reviewed	Health and Safety Team	Sept 2019
Reviewed	Health and Safety Team	April 2026

# Risk Assessment Arrangement

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Contents:

1. What is a risk assessment?
2. When to carry out a risk assessment?
3. Who should carry out risk assessments?
4. Who do I need to involve in the risk assessment process?
5. What training is available?
6. What do I need to risk assess?
7. What if I have already assessed some of the risks?
8. What if the work I do varies a lot, or I (or my employees) move from one site to another?
9. How should I record risk assessments?
10. I have completed my risk assessments, what next?
11. How long must I keep risk assessments for?
12. When should I review risk assessments?
13. Where can I get further support/advise?

## 1 What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is a systematic process, required by law, to:

- Identify anything within your work activities that could cause injury or ill health (hazards).
- Determine how likely it is that harm could occur and how severe the consequences could be (risk).
- Remove the hazard where possible, or where this is not reasonably practicable, implement appropriate control measures to reduce the risk to the lowest practicable level.

### What the law says on assessing risk

From: *Managing for Health and Safety, HSE HSG65 Third Edition 2013*

A risk assessment **must** be suitable and sufficient, i.e. it should show that:

- a proper check has been made;
- you asked who might be affected;
- you dealt with all the obvious significant risks, taking into account the number of people who could be involved;
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low;
- you involved the Council's workers or their representatives in the process.

The level of detail in a risk assessment should be proportionate to the risk and appropriate to the nature of the work. Insignificant risks can usually be ignored, as can risks arising from routine activities associated with life in general, unless the work activity compounds or significantly alters those risks. Your risk assessment should only include what you could reasonably be expected to know – you are not expected to anticipate unforeseeable risks.

## 2 When to carry out a risk assessment?

A risk assessment must be carried out **before** any work activity begins that could pose a risk to employees or others. It must also be completed:

- When introducing new equipment, substances, or processes.
- When making significant changes to the workplace.
- When incident data or concerns indicate existing controls may be ineffective.

- When staff report problems or new hazards are identified.
- When employing a young person, a new or expectant mother or an employee with a disability

Risk assessments should not be reactive only; they must be planned, proactive, and embedded into routine work planning.

### 3 Who should carry out risk assessments?

With the exception of fire and legionella risk assessments, which are organised by PSG, Line Managers are responsible for ensuring risk assessments are completed **competently** for their team's activities. It is recommended that teams have more than one person who is competent in carrying out risk assessments to provide cover and sustainability in the event of periods of staff absence, e.g. due to sickness, parental leave or staff turnover.

A **competent person** is someone with sufficient knowledge, training, and experience to identify hazards and evaluate risks reliably. To gain knowledge of the risk assessment process the Council provides online and face to face training – see below.

As well as understanding the risk assessment process, a **competent person** also needs to know what standards are expected by health and safety law, BS, BS EN or ISO standards, trade association or industry body codes, other inspecting authorities such as Ofsted for the hazards in their areas.

The Council's arrangements provide guidance and instruction on most relevant health and safety laws and standards, and the Health and Safety Team can assist with identifying any other specific guidance that may be relevant.

### 4 Who do I need to involve in the risk assessment process?

Line Managers are strongly encouraged to involve team members in the process as this is likely to ensure more accurate and relevant assessments. Team members understand how the work is **actually** done in practice, rather than a Line Manager's expectation of how it is being done. This can provide valuable insight into the hazards and practical control measures. It also helps promote ownership of the assessment and supports effective implementation of controls.

If a team have an appointed **Trade Union Safety Representative** or **Employee Safety Representatives**, it is a good idea to give them the opportunity to be consulted as well. in their area as part of your legal duties to involve workers in health and safety matters.

When involving employees and representatives, remember to consider individuals who may have **particular requirements**—for example:

- new or young workers
- new or expectant mothers
- employees with disabilities

### 5 What training is available?

The Council provides the following training:

- “The Principles of Risk Assessment” – free course available on Leap into Learning. It is a 30 minute course, essential for anyone involved in risk assessment as a stop gap until they can attend a face to face course, or as a refresher.
- “Risk Assessment Training” – free face to face course with the Health and Safety Team, bookable via ERP for anyone needing to be competent in risk assessment.

2.5 hours classroom time.

- “Risk Assessment Training – Day Services” - free face to face course with the Health and Safety Team, bookable via [health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk). For anyone in adult day services needing to be competent in risk assessing service users. 2.5 hours classroom time.
- “Intermediate Occupational Health and Safety” – risk assessment is just part of this course. It is a charged, face to face course with the Health and Safety Team, accredited by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), bookable via ERP, for managers and supervisors.
- Local refresher sessions provided by the Health and Safety Officers, on request.

The Health & Safety Team can provide advice on selecting the most appropriate training for different roles or work activities.

## 6 What do I need to risk assess?

There are many situations where a risk assessment is required, and in many cases, it is a legal requirement to complete one. The examples below are not exhaustive:

- **Overall work activities** for a range of roles including office workers, site managers, caretakers and cleaners.
- **Specific activities** such as working with display screen equipment (DSE), use of specific machinery, handling chemicals, working at height, manual handling, exposure to noise, stress and vibration to name a few.
- **Personal risks**, including circumstances involving workers with specific needs such as those who are visually impaired, new or expectant mothers, young people, visits and journeys, dealing with challenging (aggressive or violent) behaviour, operating council vehicles, handling food, using lifting equipment, using play equipment, operating machinery or tools, outdoor events, and working with pressure vessels.

## 7 What if I have already assessed some of the risks?

If you have already assessed certain risks under specific legislation, such as the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations, you should **reference the existing assessment** within your more general risk assessment to demonstrate that the hazard and required controls have already been considered. This helps avoid duplication while ensuring all relevant risks are captured and linked appropriately.

## 8 What if the work I do varies a lot, or I (or my employees) move from one site to another?

If your work varies or involves moving between different sites, you should complete a **general risk assessment** that covers the hazards you can reasonably foresee in most situations. When you start work on a site that differs from your usual environment, you must identify any **new or changed hazards** and update the assessment or complete a **site-specific assessment**. You do not need to start from scratch each time—existing assessments can be adapted and updated as necessary.

## 9 How should I record risk assessments?

For most services, use of the [Shropshire Council Risk Assessment Template](#) is strongly recommended to ensure consistency and that all necessary information is captured.

An exception to this is the two-part service user specific risk assessment used in Adult Services’ to identify pertinent risks to those accessing their day services. The templates for this can be found here [Adult Services Risk Assessments](#).

## 10 I have completed my risk assessments, what next?

Completed risk assessments must be:

- Communicated to all employees who carry out the activity and obtain a dated signature to confirm they have read and understood;
- Shared with contractors or third parties where relevant;
- Easily accessible at the point of work;
- Further actions identified monitored and signed off when complete;
- Reviewed regularly and updated when changes occur;
- Stored securely for compliance and audit purposes.

Managers must ensure that workers understand the content and required control measures.

## 11 How long must I keep risk assessments for?

Risk assessments should be stored in a location accessible to all relevant staff, such as local shared drives, SharePoint sites, or service-specific health and safety folders. If a risk assessment is replaced by an updated version, the previous version should be archived for reference unless it is no longer required.

Archived general risk assessments must be retained for **four years**, however, COSHH assessments must be retained for **40 years**. The latter should be transferred to the Council's Records Management service after four years.

## 12 When should I review risk assessments?

Risk assessments must be reviewed:

- After an accident, near miss, or when incident data suggests controls may be insufficient
- When new equipment, substances or processes are introduced
- When significant changes occur to work locations, staffing or working methods
- When new information becomes available (e.g., updated guidance, manufacturer instructions)

Where none of the above factors occur, assessments should ideally be reviewed **annually** to confirm they remain suitable and sufficient.

Risk assessments should be reviewed whenever there is a reason to believe they are no longer valid — for example, after an accident, near miss, introduction of new equipment or processes, significant workplace changes, or when new information becomes available. If none of these occur, they should ideally be reviewed annually to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient.

## 13 Where can I get further support/advise?

Further advice is available from the Health & Safety Team. Please contact them via email at [health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:health.safety@shropshire.gov.uk) or by telephone on 01743 252819.