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## LEAFLET 2 TO

## PART 3 TO SHEF MANUAL

### RISK ASSESSMENT

1. The risk assessment process assists employers to focus on the risks that really matter in the workplace, the significant ones with real potential to cause harm. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations require employers to undertake suitable and sufficient risk assessments. However, the Regulations do not necessarily require the elimination of all risk but employers are required to protect people so far as reasonably practicable. Part of this protection involves an informed, rational and structured evaluation of the risks presented by working practices and/or the working environment. The MoD through its Line Managers is legally required to assess the risks in the workplace so that an effective plan to control the risks can be put in place.

2. A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your workplace or processes could cause harm so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or whether you could do more to reduce the risk to a lower level. In SCE the responsibility for ensuring risk assessments are conducted lies with Line Management. The task is often delegated to another member of staff but it must be understood that the responsibility for ensuring all risks have been assessed cannot be delegated.

3. The person conducting the assessment must be competent. This means they must have understanding of the risk assessment process as well as knowledge of the task they are assessing. This will often mean that it will take involvement from more than one person. For example, if an assessor has competence in conducting assessment but little competence in the task then an assessment will need to be conducted in conjunction with an expert in that field. Suitable risk assessment training is provided by SCE. Head teachers and Line Managers at all levels must ensure that relevant personnel attend this training. Available courses can be found on the CPD Planner.

4. In order to conduct a risk assessment successfully it is necessary to understand the difference between a hazard and a risk:

- a. A Hazard – can be defined as something with the potential to cause harms e.g. a moving vehicle.
- b. The Risk – is the likelihood of harm occurring when in contact with the hazard and weighed against the potential consequences. e.g. if a child is hit by a moving vehicle the risk is that they will be killed/seriously injured and with no control

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measures in place to protect them from the hazard that is very likely to happen and therefore clearly a high risk.

5. Risk assessment is a subjective but logical process which can be broken down into 5 Steps:

a. Step 1 Identify the hazard:

- Review the task and or work area, talk with the persons involved and identify any hazards. Assessment is not limited to normal work activities. Open days, displays etc if organised by a School or department or taking place on MoD property or using MoD owned equipment, shall be subject to risk assessment. Remember to include hazards arising from normal activities and the potential hazards if things go wrong. Focus on the reasonably foreseeable (that is an event that can logically be predicted to occur and which could result in harm) not remote possibilities. Tasks/activities that pose trivial safety consequences should not be subject to risk assessment. It is helpful to record the hazards, the Hazard Survey Form at Annex A to this leaflet is the template to be used for recording, and this will help ensure hazards are not missed during the risk assessment process.
- It is important to remember that an effective risk assessment looks at the whole activity not individual hazards.

b. Step 2 Decide who might be harmed and how:

- For each hazard establish who might be harmed, it will help to identify the best way to manage the risk. This does not mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people, e.g. staff in rest rooms, visitors, members of the public etc.
- In each case decide how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur. For example, stores personnel may suffer back injury from repeated lifting of boxes.
- Some workers have particular requirements, e.g. new and young workers, women of child-bearing age, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities may be at particular risk.
- Shared workplaces present particular problems. Risk assessments should consider the effect of the activity on other workers. Line Managers should also ensure that they are familiar with the risk assessments produced by other groups within the workplace that may affect their staff.

c. Step 3 Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

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- Evaluating the risk is a subjective process which becomes easier with experience. To help assessors a 'Risk Rating' calculation matrix is provided on the Risk Assessment Form which can be found at Annex B to this leaflet.
- If the product of the hazard severity and likelihood of occurrence is 1 or 2, then the item being assessed is categorised as Low risk. Similarly if the score is 3 or 4 then the risk category is Medium while scores of 6 or 9 signify a High risk category. When recording the Risk Rating include the individual "Likelihood" and "Consequence" scores, this allows resources to be targeted at the right areas.
- The legal requirement for most health and safety Regulations is to reduce the risk of harm so far as is reasonably practicable. The level of acceptable risk is dependent on circumstances, e.g. the perceived risks of working in an office environment are different to those of working in a military front line hostile environment. It is the Line Managers responsibility to decide when the level of risk is acceptable, a well constructed risk assessment will aid in this decision.
- The first step in evaluating the risk is to establish what controls are currently in place, it is important that this is based on what is actually being done not what is thought to be done. The second step is to decide whether anything else can and needs to be done, this could involve the introduction of additional control measures or better implementation of existing control measures.
- If the need for additional control measures is identified their implementation needs to be managed, this will require identification of ownership and the setting of implementation dates. Large numbers of additional control measures should be addressed in priority order, the most affective being implemented first. Once additional controls have been identified the risk rating is to be recalculated and recorded in the "Residual Risk" column. If existing controls are considered adequate the "Additional Controls" section of MOD Form5010a should be marked "Controls Adequate".
- When assessing risks the following points should be considered:
  1. Can the hazards be eliminated altogether?
  2. Can the risks be controlled so that harm is 'most unlikely'?
  3. Is there a less risky option?
  4. Can access to the hazard be eliminated or reduced e.g. barriers, guards etc?
  5. Can the work be reorganised to eliminate or reduce the risks?

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6. Are additional welfare facilities required e.g. first aid or washing facilities for removal of contaminants?

7. Is Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required? The use of PPE is a last resort and should not be preferred to other forms of risk elimination or reduction. It should also not be used as a single control measure but only in conjunction with other control measures.

d. Step 4 Record your findings and implement them:

- On completion of the risk assessment the details must be recorded and the assessment brought to the attention of all those who are at risk or are responsible for implementing the control measures.
- The recording of the risk assessment shall be clear and concise; it is to be easily read with the minimum use of acronyms. The Risk Assessment Form at Annex B should be used for recording the assessment.

The most important part of any risk assessment is effective implementation of the control measures. Once implemented Line Management is to ensure that the control measures remain effective and that staff are compliant with the risk assessment requirements.

e. Step 5 Review your assessment and update if necessary:

- Risk assessments are to be regularly reviewed to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient.

A review is to be conducted:

1. Annually.
2. If there is reason to doubt the effectiveness of the assessment.
3. Following an accident or near miss.
4. Following significant changes to the task, process, procedure or Line Management.
5. Following the introduction of more vulnerable personnel, e.g. persons who are not familiar with the process, task or environment, persons who may have special needs.

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- If following review there are no changes to be made to the assessment, the Line Manager is to sign and date the original assessment confirming that it is suitable and sufficient.