

12.5 Risk Management and Administrative Processes

Risk assessments in occupational activities use administrative techniques is to bring some formality to day to day behavior so that:

- a) Hazards are identified
- b) Control strategies are formulated and documented
- c) Training is given to those at risk in the implementation of control strategies
- d) Actions necessary to implement the control strategies are completed
- e) Hazards and controls are periodically reviewed.

These administrative techniques rely on documentation, consultation and meetings for their successful implementation. Employers are primarily responsible for ensuring risk assessments are carried out and implanting controls to prevent the identified hazards from causing harm. Unions may disagree with the means by which the employer shall make the final choice because it bears the ultimate legal accountability in the event of injury. It is no defense to say 'that was what the union wanted'.

12.5.1 Risk Management: Administration and Documentation

Formal risk assessments shall be written down and recorded. Risk assessment documents should exhibit the following features:

- a) Clear identification of the hazards being addressed. Listing the hazards associated with the process enables a reviewer to see if any have been missed. It also allows others in the future to see if newly identified hazards in the process can be controlled by the original controls. This is important as new technical and scientific information, emerges, e.g. newly identified risks from an existing chemical.
- b) Identification of the risk assessment process being followed. Several formal risk assessment processes are discussed in other chapters. Each has merits. The documentation should clearly reveal which process is being employed so that its relevance to the current operations can be evaluated. For example, a typical job hazard analysis is not appropriate to assess risks arising from a machine interlock.
- c) Identification of the actions to be followed to avoid the hazards identified. This should be accompanied with time limits within which the actions shall be completed.
- d) Assessment of the residual hazards, i.e. those that cannot be eliminated and the means used to award priorities for actions.
- e) The system whereby the risks from the residual hazards are reduced to a minimum.
- f) Arrangements for monitoring the actions agreed.
- g) Identifications of the person(s) who carried out the risk assessment. Risk assessors shall be trained and experienced in the type of work covered by the assessment. It seems to be a fact of human nature that requiring people to sign their name to an assessment heightens the degree of responsibility they bring to the task. Identifying the assessors also permits an auditor to check that the assessors have received suitable training.
- h) Management sign-off to accept the assessment and implement the controls identified.
- i) The document should bear a date and number so that it can be identified and reviewed periodically. The review process is best performed by different assessors to ensure an independent review with greater objectivity.