

The Health and Safety Executive's Five steps to risk assessment



Step 1: Identify the hazards

- **Walk around** your venue and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.
- **Ask your other people** what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.
- Visit the **HSE website**. HSE publishes practical guidance on where hazards occur and how to control them. There is much [information](#) on the hazards that might affect your event.
- If you are a member of a **trade association**, contact them. Many produce very helpful guidance.
- **Check manufacturers' instructions** or data sheets for chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and putting them in their true perspective.
- **Remember to think about long-term hazards to health** (eg high levels of noise or exposure to harmful substances) as well as safety hazards.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (eg 'people working in the storeroom' or 'passers-by').

Remember:

- some workers have particular requirements, eg new and [young workers](#) , [migrant workers](#) , new or [expectant mothers](#) and [people with disabilities](#) may be at particular risk. Extra thought will be needed for some hazards;
- cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers etc, who may not be in the venue all the time;
- members of the public, if they could be hurt by your activities;
- ask others if they can think of anyone you may have missed.

In each case, identify how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur. For example, 'shelf stackers may suffer back injury from repeated lifting of boxes'.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

First, look at what you're already doing, think about what controls you have in place and how it is organised. Then compare this with the good practice and see if there's more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard. In asking yourself this, consider:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?