

Title:

Risk Assessment in The Workplace. Part 2.

Word Count:

533

Summary:

As a small business owner you need to be concerned about hazards and the risk assessment requirements, within your workplace. This is now a legal requirement.

Keywords:

risk assessment, accident at work, work accident claim

Article Body:

Step 3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.

Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. This will determine whether or not you need to do more to reduce the risk. Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. What you have to decide for each significant hazard is whether this remaining risk is high, medium or low.

Firstly, ask yourself whether you have done all the things that the law says you have got to do. As an example, there are legal requirements on prevention of access to dangerous parts of machinery. Then ask yourself whether generally accepted industry standards are in place. But do not stop there, think for yourself, because the law also says that you must do what is reasonably practicable to keep your workplace safe. Your real aim is to Make All Risks Small by adding to your precautions as necessary.

If you find that something needs to be done, draw up an action list, and give priority to any remaining risks which are high, and those which could affect most people.

In taking action ask yourself:

1. Can you get rid of the hazard altogether?
2. If not, how can you control the risks, so that harm is unlikely?

In controlling risks apply the principles below, if possible in the following

order:

1. Try a less risky option.
2. Prevent access to the hazard (eg by installing guards)
3. Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard.
4. Issue personal protective equipment.
5. Provide welfare facilities (eg washing facilities for removal of contamination) and first aid.

Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner to help prevent vehicle accidents or putting some non-slip material on slippery steps, are relatively inexpensive precautions considering the risks.

And failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen.

But what if the work you do tends to vary a lot, or if you and your employees move from one site to another?

Identify the hazards you can reasonably expect and assess the risks from them. Then, if you spot any additional hazards when you arrive at the site. Get information from others on site, and take what action seems necessary.

But what if you share a workplace?

Tell the other employers and self-employed people working there about any risks your work could cause them, and also the precautions you are taking. Also, think about the risks to your own workforce from those who share your workplace.

But what if you have already assessed some of the risks?

If, for example you use hazardous chemicals and you have already assessed the risks to health and the precautions you need to take under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH), you can consider them checked and move on.

More information about legal requirements and standards can be found in the HSE publications:

An Introduction to Health and Safety. Essentials of Health and Safety. And Management of Health and Safety at Work: Approval Code of Practice.

Thats it for this section.

I'll cover Steps 4 and 5 in Part 3.

