



# Risk Assessment Policy

## Policy and Guidance

It is the policy of NCG that a risk assessment is carried out in respect to activities, processes and substances and that it is regularly reviewed and documented where necessary. This responsibility rests with the appointed health and safety officer. The Health and Safety officer may also, from time to time, nominate competent staff to carry out these assessments.

## Legal Framework

NCG has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of employees and other persons (students, visitors, contractors, etc.) who may be affected by work activity. The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1992 further amplify this duty and impose a specific requirement upon NCG to carry out a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment of all risks to the health and safety of employees and others arising at or from a work activity. Furthermore, all modern legislation now contains a duty to carry out risk assessments for specific types of hazards such as those associated with substances, electricity, noise, manual handling etc. The purpose of this document, therefore, is to:

1. Provide guidance to enable NCG to comply with risk assessment duties as required by relevant law.
2. Introduce a structured, systematic and pro-active approach to the management of risk.
3. Outline the five principal steps to risk assessment.

## Definitions

**RISK ASSESSMENT:** A structured and systematic procedure for identifying hazards and evaluating risks in order to prioritise decisions to reduce risks to an acceptable level.

**HAZARD:** Something with the inherent 'potential to cause harm'. This can include substances, machines, methods of work or work organisation.

**RISK:** Is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by the hazard. The magnitude/scale of the risk is measured in terms of its consequences, frequency and severity. It can be expressed as:

**RISK = HAZARD SEVERITY X LIKELIHOOD/PROBABILITY OF OCCURRENCE**

## **The Five Principal Steps to Risk Assessment**

### **Step 1 : Look For The Hazards**

This necessitates an inspection of the workplace to identify what could reasonably be expected to cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate only on significant hazards which could result in serious harm or affect several people. Involve both staff and students in this exercise because they may be aware of hazards which are not immediately obvious. Manufacturers' instructions, data sheets, check lists and accident records will assist in identifying hazards.

### **Step 2 : Decide Who Might be Harmed and How**

Take into account staff, students, contractors and members of the public in general as well as those people who may not be in the workplace all the time, e.g. cleaners and maintenance personnel. Consider how such people may be harmed. Pay particular attention to lone workers and those with disabilities since they may be more vulnerable.

### **Step 3 : Assess The Risks**

Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.

Even after all precautions have been taken, usually some risks remain. Decide for each significant hazard whether this remaining risk is acceptable. Consider whether the existing precautions:

- Meet the standards set by legal requirement
- Comply with a recognised industry standard.
- Represent good practice.
- Reduce risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

If the answer to any of the above is 'NO' then consider what further precautions can be taken to control the risk so that harm is unlikely.

### **Step 4 : Record Assessment Findings**

An assessment should be supported by accurate record keeping unless the identified risk is trivial and the likelihood of injury is remote or that the adverse consequences would result in a very minor injury. The significant risks only, therefore, need to be recorded. Records should contain at least the following information:

- A description of the process/activity assessed.
- Identification of the significant risks.
- Identification of any staff/student/visitors at particular risk.
- Date of assessment and, where appropriate, next review.
- The name of the person carrying out the assessment.

### **Step 5 : Assessment Review**

An assessment must be kept up to date and reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains valid. Factors that may necessitate an automatic re-assessment include:



- A change in legislation.
- A change in control measures.
- Any significant change in the work carried out.
- Transfer to new technology.
- Any other reason to suspect that the original assessment is no longer valid or could be improved.