

# Risk assessment template and guidance



Risk assessment of:

Assessor:

Date:

Overview of activity/location/equipment being assessed:

Hazard(s) identified	Person(s) affected	Existing controls (how the risk is being mitigated)	a	b	(a) x (b)	Additional controls required

Signed:

Review date:

# Risk Assessment Record

The assessor can assign values for the 'hazard severity' and 'likelihood of occurrence' on scales of 1 – 5 to aid with rating risks:

## Hazard Severity (a)

- 1: Trivial (eg discomfort, scratch, slight bruising)
- 2: Minor (eg small cut, abrasion, basic first aid need)
- 3: Moderate (eg strain, sprain, incapacitation > three days)
- 4: Serious (eg fracture, amputation, hospitalisation > 24 hours)
- 5: Fatal

## Likelihood of Occurrence (b)

- 1: Remote (almost never)
- 2: Unlikely (occurs rarely)
- 3: Possible (could occur, but uncommon)
- 4: Likely (recurrent, but not frequent)
- 5: Very likely (occurs frequently)

The risk rating (high, medium or low) indicates the response to be taken for the assessed risks.

	Trivial	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Fatal
Remote	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

Rating Bands (a x b)		
LOW RISK (1 – 8)	MEDIUM RISK (9 - 12)	HIGH RISK (15 - 25)
Continue, but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective	Continue, but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	-STOP THE ACTIVITY- Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to medium or low level

# Risk Assessment Action Plan

Action plan in respect of:

Prepared by:

Ref number	Action to be taken, including cost	By whom	Target date	Review date	Outcome at review date
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					

Signed:

Date:

# Guidance: risk assessment for activities

Risk management is something we all do, whether managing large projects or simply crossing the road. Performing a risk assessment is a way of formalising the judgements we make day in day out.

A risk assessment is a useful tool to help think through making activities safe for everyone. It is not meant to be a deterrent to doing things, but rather a proactive way to make things as safe as possible. It does not mean eliminating all risk but deciding what is acceptable (eg children need to learn to manage risks as part of their development, but activities need to have an age-appropriate level of risk with appropriate supervision and contingency plans for dealing with problems that arise).

Additional guidance on risk assessment, particularly in relation to buildings, is available from the Health and Safety section of the URC website.

## What is a risk assessment?

The goal of a risk assessment is to:

- Identify any hazard that has the potential to cause harm
- Decide if there are already enough controls in place to make the risk at an acceptable level
- Decide what further control measures you need to implement to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Completing a risk assessment does not mean that you know everything there is to know about what you are assessing. Sometimes it can in fact mean knowing when you need to call in an expert or get further advice (eg from your Synod).

## When should risk assessments be done?

Risk assessments should be completed before activities start. They should be reviewed if circumstances change, or annually. It may be that if an activity is a one off, it will not be necessary to review it. It is, however, useful to keep copies of any risk assessments done as they could be a useful guide for someone completing a similar risk assessment in future.

If risk assessments are not done or are inadequate, this could have a negative impact in terms of financial and reputational risk, and in extreme cases, could involve liability. They are therefore crucial for a number of reasons, as well as most importantly, ensuring safety at church activities.

## Step one

### Identify the hazards

If you are assessing an activity, think about it step by step so that you know what is going to happen and potential risks are identified.

## Step two

### Decide who might be harmed and how

Often in assessing events involving children and young people, it will either be the children or staff that could be harmed, and sometimes both. It could also be members of the public. Give careful thought as to how each risk could affect people. Remember that the risk of harm could be physical and/or emotional.

## Step three

### Evaluate the risks and decide what precautions need to be put in place

Think about what measures are already in place and decide whether additional ones need to be put in place. Where possible, ask staff and those who take part in the activity if they have any concerns or ideas about how things could be managed more safely.

#### Stage one – severity of harm that could be caused (a)

When deciding on a score for the severity of the outcome, try to avoid always choosing the worst-case scenario. For example, if someone tripped on a trailing cable, they could in theory fall and bang their head, experience a blood clot and end up dying, so you might be tempted to record the severity as 'fatal'. Indeed, you may conclude that any injury could in theory be fatal. However, taking this approach will skew your risk assessment findings, and it will be very difficult to prioritise any action needed if everything ends up as a 'high risk'. Instead, a more realistic approach is needed.

It is useful to know something about the people who are going to be involved in an activity.

For instance, for an individual with a rare blood disorder the consequences of a slight bump could be much more serious than for other people. It may be that risk assessments should be done in respect of particular individuals with additional needs or disabilities.

A helpful guide is the following in relation to severity:

1. Trivial eg scratch, slight bruising
2. Minor injury eg small cut, abrasion – first aid needed
3. An injury that would take three days to heal/recover from eg sprain
4. Major injury eg amputation, fracture, hospitalisation over 24 hours
5. Fatal.

#### Stage two – likelihood (b)

It has been found useful to allocate a numerical value to assist in determining levels of risk. So, in terms of likelihood, it will be as follows:

1. Remote – highly unlikely
2. Unlikely – may occur rarely
3. Possible – could occur, but is uncommon
4. Likely – probable it could occur
5. Very likely – frequently occurs, more certain than not.

#### Stage three – combining severity and likelihood

You then need to multiply the likelihood of harm by the severity. So for instance, if your assessment concludes that it is possible (3) some harm would be caused and that the severity of harm being caused would amount to a major (4) injury then this would make it 3 x 4 equalling 12.

You may find the matrix below helpful in arriving at your level of risk.

	Trivial	Minor	Moderate	Serious	Fatal
Remote	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	4	8	12	16	20
Very likely	5	10	15	20	25

If you consult the table below you will see that a score of 9-12 calculates as a medium risk and you should therefore implement additional controls. If, however, your score was 15 or over, you should not proceed with the activity before additional controls have been implemented.

Rating Bands (a) x (b)		
LOW RISK (1 – 8)	MEDIUM RISK (9 – 12)	HIGH RISK (15 – 25)
Continue, but review periodically to ensure controls remain effective	Continue, but implement additional reasonably practicable controls where possible and monitor regularly	<b>– STOP THE ACTIVITY–</b> Identify new controls. Activity must not proceed until risks are reduced to medium or low level

#### Step four: Record your findings

This is a crucial stage as it provides proof that a risk assessment was carried out. Of equal importance, it also helps to crystallise your thoughts and is a way of ensuring accountability for tasks that have been agreed as needing doing.

#### Step five: Review risk assessment and update

It is important if you have identified action points and dates by which these should be achieved, that this is checked upon and the risk assessment amended and updated. Failure to carry out control measures by the dates specified could obviously have serious ramifications were anything to happen during the identified activity.