**How to start thinking about Risk and Risk Assessments - notes for Smaller Organisations**

Firstly you need to consider:

* Risk assessments are not difficult but they take time to do properly.
* It pays to be sensible and spread the load as far as possible, it is not something that one person should do!
* People should carry out risk assessments in their own particular areas of responsibility such as premises, equipment maintenance, catering, manual handling, event management, finance etc. or other specialist areas specific to your organisation.

**The advantage of adopting this system is that the people carrying out the risk assessments will have detailed knowledge of the areas concerned.** **People are also more likely to buy into the process if they have been involved in writing the assessment rather than having it imposed upon them.**

The risk assessment process and resulting **Risk Register \*** (*the document that pulls all the identified risks and mitigation actions to reduce risks together*) should be coordinated by the lead employee (or identified volunteer) and the person who has overall responsibility for health and safety within your organisation. If this is the same person, then perhaps the Chair or Vice Chair might be the second person. Risk management and health and safety are key areas for the Board/Executive/Management Group to understand and continuously monitor.

Firstly, look systematically at each area with the aim of identifying all the hazards, risks and existing safety measures to mitigate the risk e.g. policies, procedures, action plans etc. Then consider if any additional safety measures or ‘controls’ if put in place would reduce the risks further.

A **hazard** is something with the **potential to cause harm** and this can include substances or machines as well as methods of work/activities.

**Risk** is the **likelihood** of harm from a particular **hazard** occurring and the **likely severity** of the harm (e.g. loss of funding, fraud, doping issue, reputational damage).

**Risk assessments** must be carried out for any activities that your organisation undertakes both in the usual place of work and away from your usual premises such as visits, fundraising activities etc.

To determine the **risk rating**, grade both the likelihood of something happening and the severity of the outcome should the event occur.

The likelihood is usually graded on a scale of 1 to 5 with one being low and five high. The severity is again graded on a scale of 1 to 5 with one representing low and five being high. Multiply these two values together to calculate the **risk rating**. The answer will between 1 and 25.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **5 X 5 Risk Matrix** |  |  |
|  LIKELIHOOD | 5 | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |  | **Risk Rating** |
| 4 | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |  | High |
| 3 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |  | Medium |
| 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |  | Low |
| 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |  |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |  |
|  | CONSEQUENCES |  |  |

To make life simple use a risk matrix. This allows prioritisation of actions needed to reduce the most exposed areas of risk first.

Developing a Risk Register is largely common sense, it can be extremely helpful in keeping everyone safe from harm and focusing minds on potential for other risks e.g. losing volunteers or training venue.

When creating your own risk assessment, you also need to consider how much risk your organisation is prepared to take and how risk should be managed within the organisation. This process would be considered the **“risk management strategy” \*** (*example available on WSA site*)