

Global Compliance

Health and Safety

Risk Assessment Roadmap – Preview



For more information on this roadmap, and any of the others in our Global Compliance Roadmap series, please get in touch with the Osborne Clarke team [here](#).



Introduction

All employers have duties to control the risks to the health and safety of their employees and those who may be affected by their business. In order to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers must be able to demonstrate that they have taken steps to reduce such risks to a level as low as is reasonably practicable.

The starting point is to ensure that all material risks associated with your business have been identified. Those risks should then be assessed and where practicable adequate control measures implemented.

Health and safety management should be a continually evolving process of improvement. Changes to business practices or the introduction of new equipment can introduce new risks or alter existing risk profiles. As such risk assessments should not be viewed as a one off exercise but be subject to a regular review.

Set out below is a 'roadmap' of questions and issues designed to identify key information that will need to be taken into account by a business in determining the health and safety risks it may face.

Having answered these questions, an assessment can be made of the extent to which a commercial organisation's policies and procedures adequately address those risks, and what further measures could or should be adopted to assist the business in meeting its statutory health and safety obligations.



1. Assessing your health and safety risks

1.1 About your business

- What is the principal function of your business?
- Does this require interface with the public?
- Do you regularly have contractors working on your premises and/or premises which you control?

1.2 Business management

- Do you have someone senior in the business who is responsible for health and safety?
- Who sets the organisational health and safety policy and standards and how are they monitored?

- Do you use key performance indicators to monitor health and safety performance?
- Do you periodically review your health and safety in light of an assessment of your business?
- Are the health and safety implications of business decisions recognised and addressed?
- Have you undertaken an analysis of what health and safety risk may arise within the operation of your business?

1.3 Corporate structure

- Do you have subsidiary companies or divisions with operational control?

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2. Assessing your current approach to health and safety

2.1 Safety culture

- Is safety perceived to be ranked high, low or not at all, in the priorities of senior management/the Board (or equivalent)?
- Are there clear communication lines on health and safety matters from the senior leadership team to employees and back up again?
- Do managers give feedback on safety performance to the leadership teams?
 - (i) If so, how is that feedback provided?
- How does the business learn from accident history, incident reporting etc.?

2.2 Policies and processes

- Do you have a clear policy stating how the business will ensure a safe and sound working environment for employees and anyone else who may be affected by business activities?
- Are health and safety roles/responsibilities clearly defined?
- Are the right people conducting risk assessments (i.e. with an understanding of the business and safety risk and how to manage it)?
- How does the business brief employees on health and safety?
- How does the business manage contractors?

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3. Communication and training

3.1 Employee engagement

- Do you ensure health and safety information is communicated effectively, for example, using a variety of mediums within your organisation?
- Are the needs of any vulnerable workers (temporary or agency staff, or those whose first language is not English) appropriately met, including through, for example, the use of interpreters, use of symbols and diagrams rather than written instructions?
- Are employees consulted in good time about significant matters that could affect their health and safety?
- Does your organisation have a whistleblowing procedure and if so, is this overseen by a member of senior management?

3.2 Competence and training

- Have the senior leadership team received relevant health and safety training?
- What level of training, qualifications and experience do you require of any health and safety staff in your business?
- Does your organisation provide relevant health and safety training to relevant employees?
- Is the training tailored so that it is relevant to the training relative to their roles?
- Is understanding of the training needs of your employees assessed?
- Do you have a system for assessing the effectiveness of your training?

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4. Checking health and safety performance

4.1 Monitoring and review

- What review and audit processes are in place for health and safety?
- Is the level of monitoring proportionate to the risk profile of the business?
- How are managers and supervisors made aware of health and safety performance in their team/across the business?

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5. Specific concerns

- Have any potential health and safety issues or red flags been identified as part of any internal or external audits conducted within the past 5 years? If so, how were these dealt with?
- Have any whistleblower reports referred to potential health and safety issues within the past 5 years? If so, how were these dealt with?
- Are you aware of any allegations, inquiries, investigations, prosecutions or other actions by a regulator which may indicate a health and safety issue connected to your organisation or a third party that performs services for or on your behalf?

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