

# Risk Assessment toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Risk Assessment.



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The PCBU has a duty to protect its workers and others from harm in the workplace. To do this, the PCBU must identify hazards in the workplace, risk assess those hazards, and put in place controls that eliminate or minimise the associated risk. The process of identifying a hazard is covered in the hazard assessment toolbox and the specific application of controls is covered in the various hazard specific toolboxes – this toolbox is on risk assessment.

The risk assessment process is an effective way to identify appropriate safety control measures, refresh worker knowledge, and engage workers in health and safety.

## Why run a Risk Assessment Toolbox Talk?

- Understand the importance of risk assessment
- Learn how to conduct a risk assessment

## The Risk Assessment Process

Risk assessment is a four-step process:

1. Select a hazard
2. Determine the likelihood of exposure to the hazard (1 = Rare, 2 = Unlikely, 3 = Possible, 4 = Likely, 5 = Almost certain).
3. Determine the likely consequence of exposure to the hazard (1 = Insignificant, 2 = Minor, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Major, 5 = Catastrophic).
4. Calculate the risk: Risk = Likelihood x Consequence.

Risk scores of 1-2 are considered Very Low, 3-4 Low, 5-9 Medium, 10-19 High, and 20-25 Very High.

It is best practice to risk assess a hazard before any controls have been put in place, and then again once all controls are in place to calculate the residual risk.

## Factors that affect risk assessment

Risk Assessments are subjective. Different individuals may come to different conclusions based on their own appetite for risk. For example, an unguarded machine may be determined high risk by a health and safety professional and medium risk by a worker who uses that machine frequently. For this reason, it is best to perform risk assessments in a group setting, which has the added benefit of worker engagement and participation.

Factors that may influence the risk assessment include:

1. **Personal:** regularly do the task, regularly use the machine, experience, knowledge, age, and skill level.
2. **Organisational:** initial and ongoing training of staff, safety management systems, behavioural factors of management and peers, staffing levels and workload, safety culture and supervision.
3. **Situational:** time pressures, stress, complacency, fatigue, workplace environment and personal emotions.

## Record and review risk assessments

It is critical to record and review risk assessments. You must be able to show that you eliminated or minimised all risk, as far as reasonably practicable. You should review your risk assessments regularly, including after an incident, change in process, and change in legislation.

### Key takeaways:

- A risk assessment 5 x 5 matrix is a good tool for calculating risk
- Risk assessments should be done collectively
- Record and review your risk assessments

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