

HOW TO MANAGE WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS Code of Practice 2011 [TOOLBOX TALK]

Who has responsibility for managing work health and safety risks?

Real Community Services as an employer, is responsible for the overall management of the risks associated with a workplace. The management function includes considering what is reasonable practicable (including all input as part of the consultation process)

Deciding what is 'reasonably practicable' requires weighing up all relevant matters, including:

- the likelihood of the hazard or risk concerned occurring
- the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or risk
- knowledge about the hazard or risk, and ways of eliminating or minimising the risk
- the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk, and
- After assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

At RCS we need to have a good understanding of the hazards and risks associated with the operations of the business, then ensure that the appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety are available. Support staff need have access to and report on any concerns to their line manager prior to undertaking the risks.

What is involved in managing risks?

Management commitment

The involvement and cooperation of support staff and management is needed to obtain a successful risk management process.

To demonstrate your commitment, you should:

- ❖ Get involved in health and safety issues
- ❖ Ensure health and safety responsibilities are clearly understood.

Identify hazards – find out what could cause harm

Step 2- assess risks if necessary – understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard

Table 1: (step 2) Risk

Rating Calculation Table

Figure 1: The risk management process



		PROBABILITY		
		Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
CONSEQUENCES	Low	Low	Low	Low
	Medium	Low	Low	Moderate
	High	Moderate	Moderate	High

Control risks – implement the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances

Review control measures to ensure they are working as planned.

Consulting your workers

Ensure the consultation process that has been agreed to is implemented

HOW TO IDENTIFY HAZARDS (PROCESS)

Hazards generally arise from the following aspects of work and their interaction:

1. Manual Handling
2. Physical work environment
3. Hoisting
4. Work tasks and how they are performed

Example table:

Hazard	Potential harm
Manual tasks	Overexertion or repetitive movement can cause muscular strain
Gravity	Falling objects, falls, slips and trips of people can cause fractures, bruises, lacerations, dislocations, concussion, permanent injuries or death
Electricity	Potential ignition source. Exposure to live electrical wires can cause shock, burns or death from electrocution
Hazardous chemicals	Chemicals (such as acids, hydrocarbons, heavy metals) and dusts (such as asbestos and silica) can cause respiratory illnesses, cancers or dermatitis
Extreme temperatures	Heat can cause burns, heat stroke or fatigue Cold can cause hypothermia or frost bite
Noise	Exposure to loud noise can cause permanent hearing damage
Psychosocial hazards	Effects of work-related stress, bullying, violence and work-related fatigue

How do we find hazards?-by observing how work is performed

Things to look out for include the following:

Does the work environment allow work without risks to health and safety (for example, space for unobstructed movement, adequate ventilation, and lighting)?

How suitable are the tools and equipment for the task and how well are they maintained?

Have any changes occurred in the workplace which may affect health and safety?

Consult your workers

Ask your workers about any health and safety problems they have encountered in doing their work and any near misses or incidents that have not been reported-try to engage your staff members where possible when it comes to health and safety matters.

HOW TO ASSESS RISKS?

1. How severe a risk is
2. Whether any existing control measures are effective
3. What action you should take to control the risk
4. How urgently the action needs to be taken.

Work out how hazards may cause harm- incidents occur as a result of a chain of events

One way of working out the chain of events is to determine the starting point where things begin to go wrong and then consider: 'If this happens, what may happen next?' This will provide a list of events that sooner or later cause harm.

You can rate the likelihood as one of the following:

Very likely - will probably occur in most circumstances

Likely – might occur occasionally

Unlikely – could happen at some time

See RCS-Risk rating table

Implementing controls:

- a) *Work procedures*
Develop a safe work procedure that describes the task, identifies the hazards and documents how the task is to be performed to minimize the risks.
- b) *Training, instruction and information* Train all involved in the work procedure to ensure that they are able to perform the task safely. Training should require support staff to demonstrate that they are competent in performing the task according to the procedure. Training, instruction and information must be provided in a form that can be understood by all workers.
- c) *Supervision* The level of supervision required will depend on the level of risk and the experience of the workers involved. High levels of supervision are necessary where inexperienced workers are expected to follow new procedures or carry out difficult and critical tasks.

KEEPING RECORDS

Keeping records of the risk management process has the following benefits;

- allows you to demonstrate how decisions about controlling risks were made
- assists in targeting training at key hazards
- provides a basis for preparing safe work procedures
- allows you to more easily review risks following any changes to legislation or business activities
- Demonstrates to others (regulators, investors, shareholders, customers) that work health and safety risks are being managed.