

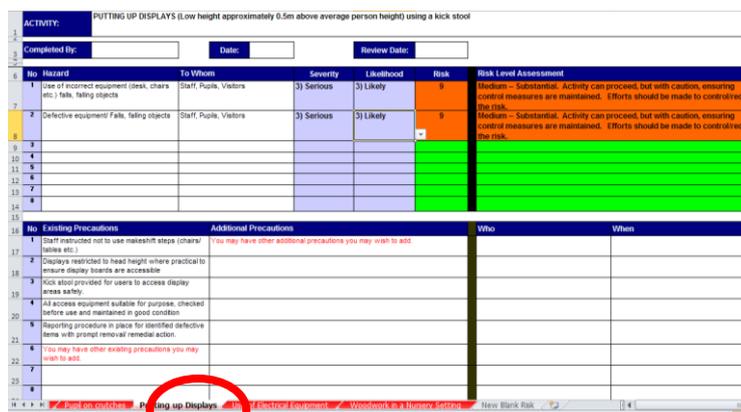
# GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT FOR SCHOOLS

## Introduction

Risk assessments are central to the management of health and safety within a school. This guidance provides information on the risk assessment process and how to complete the template generic risk assessments contained within this website in an Excel format. For ease of use, the generic risk assessments have been grouped under four headings:

- School risk assessments
- School site/premises
- Building supervision/cleaning
- School fun night

Generic risk assessments within each of these groups are contained on separate pages of the spread sheet and can be selected at the bottom of the page.

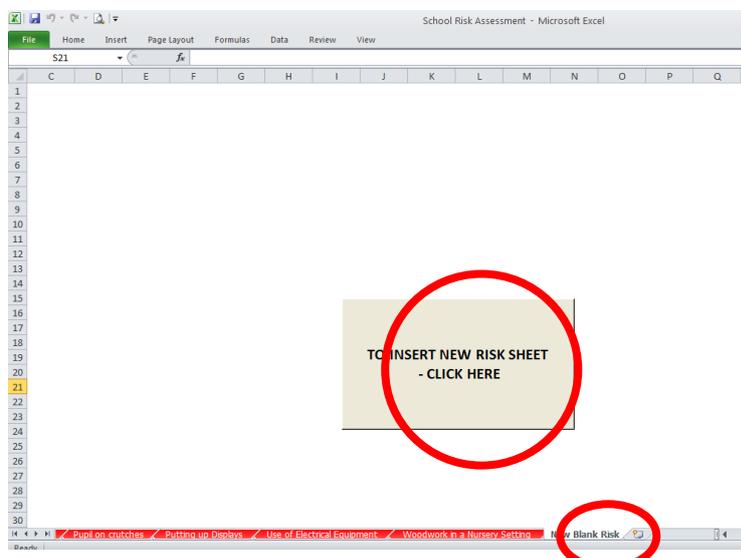


No	Hazard	To Whom	Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Risk Level Assessment
1	Use of incorrect equipment (ladders, chairs etc.) falls, falling objects	Staff, Pupils, Visitors	3) Serious	3) Likely	9	Medium - Substantial. Activity can proceed, but with caution, ensuring control measures are maintained. Efforts should be made to control/reduce the risk.
2	Defective equipment Falls, falling objects	Staff, Pupils, Visitors	3) Serious	3) Likely	9	Medium - Substantial. Activity can proceed, but with caution, ensuring control measures are maintained. Efforts should be made to control/reduce the risk.

No	Existing Precautions	Additional Precautions	Who	When
1	Staff instructed not to use makeshift steps (chairs, ladders etc.)	You may have other additional precautions you may wish to add		
2	Displays restricted to head height where practical to ensure display boards are accessible across safety			
3	Kick stool provided for users to access display			
4	All access equipment suitable for purpose, checked before use and maintained in good condition			
5	Reporting procedure in place for identified defective items with prompt removal/ remedial action			
6	You may have other existing precautions you may wish to add			

If you require a new risk assessment this can also be selected at the bottom of the page and then by clicking on the grey box.



**If you experience any difficulties opening Excel spread sheets, please refer to the advice in the document entitled *Using Excel* on the H&S Section of the Board's website.**

Line Managers (Principals, Vice Principals, Heads of Departments) have a responsibility to carry out risk assessments and ensure that they are suitable and sufficient. Risk assessments must be carried out for all activities that pose a significant risk. Trivial risks can be ignored.

The generic risk assessments for schools have been developed using the formulas below. It is unlikely that the generic assessments will be totally appropriate for each individual school which may have different circumstances. They should therefore be modified by each school by applying the criteria below to the generic assessment, making that assessment specific to the school.

Risk assessment should be approached in a series of steps. These are as follows:

- Divide your work into manageable categories
- Identify the hazards
- Identify who might be harmed
- Evaluate the risk
- Prepare a plan for controlling the risks
- Review and revise the assessment.

Each step will now be examined in greater detail.

### **Divide your work into manageable categories**

To enable these assessments to be made, it is advisable to divide the work into manageable categories. For a school this could be:

- Separate work areas, e.g. classrooms, offices, playground etc.
- Activities, e.g. school trips, school sports, using play equipment etc.
- Defined tasks, e.g. playground supervision, provision of first aid, locking up etc.
- Individual, e.g. 'runners', evacuation of disabled persons, assaults etc.
- Equipment, e.g. play equipment, electrical equipment/machinery, stepladders etc.
- Substances, e.g. cleaning material, science chemicals, excessive dust etc.

In the example below, the category is cookery activities. Remember to fill out the box indicating who completed the assessment and the date the assessment was made.

ACTIVITY: COOKERY ACTIVITIES						
Completed By: <input type="text"/>		Date: <input type="text"/>		Review Date: <input type="text"/>		
No	Hazard	To Whom	Severity	Likelihood	Risk	Risk Level Assessment
1	Possible burn to the skin	Child or adult	1) Minor	3) Likely	3	Low – Tolerable. Activity can proceed. Control measures must be monitored and reviewed as required to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient.
2	Food poisoning due to poor hygiene practices.	Person who consumes the food	3) Serious	2) Unlikely	6	Medium – Substantial. Activity can proceed, but with caution, ensuring control measures are maintained. Efforts should be made to control/reduce
3	Cut or injury from equipment	Persons using room	2) Significant	2) Unlikely	4	Low – Tolerable. Activity can proceed. Control measures must be monitored and reviewed as required to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient.
4	Slip on the floor due to a spillage	Persons using room	2) Significant	3) Likely	6	Medium – Substantial. Activity can proceed, but with caution, ensuring control measures are maintained. Efforts should be made to control/reduce

## Identify the hazards

The second stage in the process is to identify the hazards within the categories you have chosen to assess. This is not as daunting as it may first seem as you can ignore the trivial and concentrate on the significant hazards which could result in a genuine injury or ill health. A hazard is defined as *'anything which has the potential to cause harm'*. This may be any event, activity or behaviour which can cause potential harm or pose a threat to you or others. Examples of hazards within a school are: (This is not an exhaustive list)

- Slips, trips and falls
- Collisions, pedestrian or traffic
- Electricity
- Falling or moving objects
- Manual handling
- Temperature, humidity etc.
- Unsafe systems
- Unsuitable equipment.

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## Identify who might be harmed

When completing this part of the risk assessment the assessor would normally write 'all staff' and 'all pupils' which, while correct, can cause the assessor to potentially miss other groups who may be at greater risk and may legally require a specific risk assessment, e.g. young workers and new or expectant mothers. In addition to staff and pupils, those who have to be considered in any risk assessment are:

- New employees
- People with disabilities
- Building Supervisors and cleaners

- Visitors
- Contractors
- Maintenance workers

There may be others, ask your staff if they can think of anyone you could have missed. This inclusive approach helps identify additional hazards previously not considered.

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## Evaluate the Risk

Once you have completed the list of all hazards and those who may be harmed by those hazards, you must then evaluate the risk from each hazard. A risk is defined as *‘the chance or likelihood that someone will be harmed to some extent by the hazard’*.

In evaluating the level of risk you will assess the likelihood, or probability, of an event actually occurring using the drop down menu. This ranges from ‘very unlikely’ to ‘very likely’. **When assessing the likelihood, existing precautions must be taken into account.** Existing precautions are those rules, procedures, physical measures etc. that are currently in operation in your school pertaining to a particular hazard. You may have those that we suggest already in operation. If not, delete them from the *existing precautions* column and assess the risk accordingly. It may increase, therefore, you may wish to consider initiating these precautions as *additional precautions*. Consideration should also be given to the following factors when deciding the likelihood:

- Number of times the activity or situation occurs.
- Location of the hazard
- Duration of the exposure
- Environmental conditions
- Competence or experience of the people involved
- Condition of the equipment

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2	Food poisoning due to poor hygiene practices.	Person who consumes the food	3) Serious	1) Very Unlikely 2) Unlikely 3) Likely 4) Very Likely	6	Medium – Substantial. Activity can proceed, but with caution, ensuring control measures are maintained. Efforts should be made to control/reduce
3	Cut or injury from equipment	Persons using room	2) Significant	4) Very Likely	4	Low – Tolerable. Activity can proceed. Control measures must be monitored and reviewed as required to ensure they remain suitable and sufficient.
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Existing Precautions			Additional Precautions		Who	When
1	Children are kept away from heat sources.	Work with smaller groups of children. Discuss safety issues with the children. Staff to be trained in health and safety issues.			Class teachers and Classroom assistants.	Before and during cookery sessions.
2	Adults use oven gloves when handling hot objects	Cooking surfaces are kept clean and tidy, anti bacterial spray used on cooking area.			Class teachers and Classroom assistants.	Before and during cookery sessions.
3	Children and adults wash hands before cookery activity	You may have other additional precautions you may wish to add.				
4	Good supervision of children when using equipment					
5	Spillages are wiped up immediately					
6	You may have other existing precautions you may wish to add					

The second part of the evaluation is an assessment of the severity of the harm that could be caused by that hazard. As before, this is selected using the drop down menu. This can range from a minor injury to a very serious injury. **When assessing the severity, existing precautions must be taken into account.**

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This simple calculation, completed for you by the spreadsheet will allow you to prioritise the risks and give emphasis to those which require immediate attention.

Upon completion of the risk evaluation you will be able to identify whether a risk is high, medium, low or insignificant. **Essentially a risk assessment will determine if additional precautions are necessary to control or reduce the risk.**

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### Prepare a plan for controlling the risks

Risk assessment is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end, that ‘end’ being the control of risk. Starting with the most serious risks, you decide if you are happy with the existing precautions, and you should then decide what additional precautions, if any, are necessary to reduce the level of risk further.

You should at this stage identify who is responsible for the implementation of each additional control measure. Is it the school, or someone specifically within that school, or is it the Board that is responsible? Or is it a mixture of both? When identified, the responsible person/organisation should be informed of their responsibility and a reasonable time frame agreed for remedial action.

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### Review and revise the assessment

Nothing stays the same for ever, things change, including the circumstances around which the risk assessment was originally made. Risk assessment is a continuous process and review

of those assessments is important in ensuring they are kept up to date. In any review you should take account of:

- New activities and hazards
- New employees
- New equipment
- New work practices
- Accidents or incidents.

Additionally the adequacy of existing control measures need to be reviewed periodically and revised if necessary. As far as risk assessment is concerned, you should always seek to learn from your experience, improve existing assessments and develop new ones if necessary. The objective should always be to control or mitigate risk.

It is beneficial to have a review date for assessments of no more than one year from the assessment is made. For a school the optimum time for review is the week just prior to the new academic year.

The review date should be stated here:

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### Further Advice

If you have any queries on how to complete a risk assessment please contact David Orr or Gillian Sterritt at 3751 2429.

If you produce a new risk assessment not already covered, please send it to [david.orr@eani.org.uk](mailto:david.orr@eani.org.uk) or [gillian.sterritt@eani.org.uk](mailto:gillian.sterritt@eani.org.uk) to enable us create a new generic risk assessment for the benefit of all schools.