



# Risk Management-what is suitable- fit for purpose?

**Mike Pearson @ SATS LTD (NEBOSH, BOHS & PTLIS Qualified)**

**Member of BHSEA-Birmingham Health, Safety & Environmental Association**

**CHAS & SMAS Worksafe Approved Consultant to Construction Contractors**

# The basics of risk assessment

- Start with the premise that it is simply a process to control risk-ERIC is your best pal!
- Anyone who can Eliminate , Reduce, Inform & Control risk must do so if practicable, this begins with the Client brief, then Designers who must follow this process. The Designers then provide details of resulting hazards to those who will be affected by the remaining (residual) risk.
- Contractors must use the same principles by Avoiding (e.g. work at ground level, don't cut slabs), Substitute for another safer method (e.g. Lower risk substance or mechanical handling), Inform (by telling workers about the risks), and Control (Manage, Supervise, Monitor, Provide PPE & RPE as last resort).

# Principles of Prevention-Appendix A of L153

- They are within the 1999 Management Regs & CDM, and provide a risk control framework
- Key points are: Avoid risk; evaluate residual risk; combat risk at source; adapt tasks for individuals & make use of technical progress;
- Replace hazardous with less hazardous
- Have a clear policy to manage risk
- Collective protection priority over individual
- Give instructions to those who need to know

# Hazard & Risk Assessment guidance

## WHEN IS A RISK ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

- You should carry out an assessment before you do work which presents a “significant” risk of injury or ill health.
- **Significant** means something that is reasonably likely to happen or could cause harm which is foreseeable. E.g. Working at height could lead to a fall, handling sharp or heavy items is likely to lead to significant injury, working with asbestos fibres can lead to an early death.
- Things that may happen without taking due care shouldn't be written within a risk assessment such as injuring yourself with a pen or hitting your thumb with a hammer!
- **Reasonably Practicable** means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time or trouble. However, you do not need to take action if it would be grossly disproportionate to the level of risk.

## HAZARD

- A hazard is anything that may cause harm, e.g. chemicals, fumes, electricity, using ladders, noise, confined space working, excavations, traffic/ plant movement etc

## RISK

- Risk is the chance, (often expressed as: high, medium or low), of somebody being harmed by the hazard, and how serious the harm could be i.e.: serious or minor injury

## CONTROL MEASURES

- The steps taken by you or others to do the job safely. It is best to think about this in a logical sequence i.e.: To start with, if a trained competent person who is aware of the risk assessment content & the control measures does the job you have reduced the risk.
- The sequence in which measures are applied can have an enormous impact on reducing risk e.g. removing others from the area and selection of correct equipment are effective early measures. Remember, selecting & using the correct PPE/RPE should be the last line of defence so should come last- NOT THE FIRST OR ONLY THING TO DO!

## LEVEL OF RISK or RISK RATING

- A method of deciding how likely the risk of occurrence is & how severe an injury or event may be when the “Control Measures” have been applied as the “Residual Risk” . We suggest:
- **Severity of incident/injury:** - High = permanent harm / fatality ;Medium = broken bones / serious injury; Low = cuts / abrasions
- **Probability of incident/injury:** - High = very likely, Medium = possible, Low = unlikely

## **WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WITHIN A RISK ASSESSMENT?**

- How what you may do or don't do can affect everyone in the workplace during your work, during breaks & afterwards.
- It should take into account any controls which are already in place and identify what, if any, further controls are required. Look at fire safety, protecting everyone from falls, selecting the right tools, access equipment, harmful substances, handling, asbestos, lead in paints etc

## **WHERE DO I START?**

- Identify what can harm people in the workplace
- Identify who might be harmed and how
- Evaluate the risks and deciding on suitable controls, taking into account the controls already in place
- Record your findings, consulting with others to advise you if you are unsure
- Review if the controls you have do the job: are risks reduced to the lowest level possible or removed completely?

## **ALLOWING FOR OTHERS**

- You will know what you are doing & the risks involved, but others may not-such as occupiers, young people, people with disabilities, those who do not understand your language, simply inquisitive folk, those who should be there & those who should not be- you must allow for them in your assessment. Maintaining a safe secure work area throughout is key to this.

## **WHAT ARE "RAMS"?**

- This term is a shorter term for "risk assessment & method statements". It is widely used within the UK Construction Industry. Clients have a duty to ensure that work is risk assessed & properly planned before work begins, so by reviewing RAMS, Clients verify that you know what you are going to do. Although method statements are not strictly a legal requirement, they describe in logical sequence the plan to carry out the work so are helpful, particularly for higher risk or complex work. A good set of control measures within a risk assessment for routine work can be used as a method statement.

## **PERMITS TO WORK**

- A permit to work is required to be agreed between whoever is in charge & those who are to carry out the work for all “High Risk operations”, e.g. work at height when only personal or if no fall protection is available, hot works, deep excavations & when working in occupied premises as required by the client. The permit sets out specific start & finish times, how work is to be managed throughout. At completion, the permit is then signed off by the person in charge & the workers to “close off the permit” resulting in a safe handover.

## **INFORMING THOSE AFFECTED**

- If people are unaware of the RAMS & not briefed on the control measures, how can they be expected to follow the arrangements? - so briefing people is vital, with a signature to prove this has been done. Consultation is a legal requirement anyway

## **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

- The Health & Safety At Work Act 1974 requires everyone to work safely following instructions given – therefore everyone at work must be aware of & follow the controls within RAMS. Risk Assessments are required by the Management Regulations 1999 & ALL other UK H & S Regulations.
- Self employed people & agency workers are regarded as employees when working for other contractors.
- **Finally see example Risk Assessment produced by SATS Ltd**