

Example risk assessment for a nightclub

Setting the scene

The manager did the risk assessment at this nightclub, which is located in a city centre. It has three bars, three dance floors and an additional 'quiet bar'. Live bands also perform there.

Thirty staff are employed at the club, which is open to the public from 8.00 pm to 3.00 am. Five staff members do not speak English as their first language, but are sufficiently fluent to be able to do their job, understand safety instructions, deal with difficult situations etc. There is a staff room, where drinks can be prepared and food heated, and separate toilet and washing facilities for staff.

Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business might take. It can be used as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your business and the steps you need to take to control the risks. Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards and controls required in your business for yourself.

The club is cleaned every morning by cleaners from a general office cleaning contractors. The cleaners store the cleaning materials in a locked cupboard. Maintenance work with the exception of the most straightforward activities which are done in-house, is done by contractors. These are chosen from a preferred list of suppliers. Work is undertaken following procedures set out in the club's permit to work system for contractors.

The premises were built before 2000. The building has been surveyed for the presence of asbestos. Asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) were found but as the ACMs were in good condition and in places where they were unlikely to be damaged, worked on or disturbed, it was decided to leave them in place.

How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the guidance in *Five steps to risk assessment* (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf).

1 To identify the hazards, the manager:

- looked at HSE's web pages for small businesses (www.hse.gov.uk/smallbusinesses/index.htm), and for entertainment and leisure (www.hse.gov.uk/entertainment/index.htm), to learn where hazards can occur.¹
- walked around the club, noting things that might pose a risk and taking HSE's guidance into consideration;
- talked to supervisors and staff to learn from their

knowledge and experience of areas and activities, and to listen to their opinions about health and safety issues in the workplace;

- talked to the office cleaning contractors, and to his preferred suppliers of maintenance work, to ensure that their activities did not pose a risk to club staff, and vice-versa; and
 - looked at the accident book, to gain an understanding of previous incidents.
- 2 The manager then wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.
 - 3 For each hazard, he wrote down what controls, if any, were in place to manage these hazards. He then compared these controls to the good practice guidance provided on the HSE website. Where existing controls were not considered good enough, the manager wrote down what else needed to be done to control the risk.
 - 4 Putting the risk assessment into practice, the manager decided and recorded who was responsible for implementing the actions identified as necessary and when they should be done. When each action was done, he ticked it off and noted the date. He also made it part of the induction process for new staff.
 - 5 At the staff meeting, the office manager discussed the findings of the risk assessment with staff and pinned up a copy in the staffroom. He decided to review and update the risk assessment every year, or straightaway if any major changes in the workplace happened.

Company name: **Smith's Nightclub** Date of risk assessment: **01/10/07**

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Fire	Staff and public may suffer serious, possibly fatal, injuries from smoke inhalation, burns, structural collapse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full fire risk assessment, as per www.fire.gov.uk/Workplace+safety/ has been done and is available in the manager's office. ■ Constant checks to ensure all control measures in fire risk assessment are in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action necessary at this stage. 			
Falls from height	Staff may suffer serious, possibly fatal, injuries if they fall from any height. For example, performers might fall from platforms; staff doing cleaning/maintenance, or working on the lighting rig, might fall from ladders. Also, staff/pub risk serious injury if struck by glasses falling from balcony to lower levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All platforms for performers and others are adequately fenced with safe means of access. ■ Ladders to be suitable, regularly inspected, and used only for light work of short duration by trained staff. ■ Only trained, authorised staff may work on the lighting rig. ■ All other work at height, such as above the roof light – is done by contractors under a permit to work system and using trained staff and appropriate equipment. ■ Stewards extra-vigilant on the balcony. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Nosings (front edges) of steps to be highlighted. 	Technical manager	30/11/07	29/10/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide suitable nets under balcony edge (and ensure safe system of work, including the right equipment, for retrieving glasses/bottles from nets). 	Technical manager	30/11/07	29/10/07
Slips, trips and falls	Staff and public may suffer serious, possibly fatal, injuries if they fall from or on stairs, or suffer injuries such as sprains and fractures if they slip on spillages, trip over objects etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All stairs have handrails and midrails on open sides with kick boards where needed. ■ All enclosed stairwells have handrails on one side at least and both if stair wider than 1.8 m. ■ All carpets firmly secured. ■ Adequate lighting, particularly on stairs. ■ Good housekeeping – staff 'see it and sort it'. ■ Electrical cables managed so as not to pose a trip hazard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Replace loose floor tiles by the sink in the staff kitchen. 	Technical manager	30/11/07	29/10/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check there is enough gritting salt for the path to the outside bins, in icy weather. 	Technical manager	30/10/07	4/10/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spills to be cleaned up immediately using spill kits located around the club, glass collectors and bar staff to be on the look out for spills at all times. 	Technical manager	30/10/07	4/10/07

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Electricity	Staff and public may suffer serious and possibly fatal electric shock/burns injuries from faulty electrical equipment or installation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Electrical installation and all equipment inspected by a competent person according to a planned inspection programme, and maintained as necessary. ■ Staff trained to spot and report any defective plugs, discoloured sockets, damaged cable and on/off switches and to take defective equipment out of use. ■ Staff know how to safely turn the electricity off in an emergency. ■ Clear access to the fuse box. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure that all starters know where the fuse box is and how to safely turn off electricity in an emergency. 	HR Manager	Ongoing	
Noise	Staff might suffer permanent or temporary hearing damage from long-term exposure to loud music. All staff assumed to be at risk, particularly DJ and bar staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Noise limiter fitted to sound system and DJ informed. ■ Regular check of sound systems to ensure balance/proper control. ■ Quiet areas provided. ■ Staff rotation between quiet and noisy areas. ■ Staff trained in noise risks and the protective measures needed. ■ Staff considered to be particularly at risk identified and provided with ear plugs. ■ Health surveillance, including hearing tests, for 'at risk' staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure that protection of staff from excessive noise is designed in during the refitting of bar areas/dance floors planned for next year. 	Manager and technical manager	For next year	
Violence	Staff and the public risk serious injury, if assaulted or if caught up in fighting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained to spot potential trouble makers, defuse tense situations etc. ■ Adequate number of trained, SIA badged security staff. ■ Staff trained in procedures re-entry, queuing, searches, etc and signs displayed for public. ■ Information sharing with police and other security staff at licensed premises in the area. ■ CCTV system. ■ Walkie-talkie system allows bar staff to talk to security staff. ■ Overcrowding not permitted in any area. ■ Security staff aware of all exits. ■ Live bands told not to encourage stage diving etc. ■ Drinks not served to people obviously under the influence. ■ Glass collectors used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			

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Glazing and mirrors	Staff and the public may suffer serious injury from impact with windows/ mirrors that are not evident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All safety-critical glazing complies with British Standard 6262. ■ Where necessary, glass is marked to make it evident. ■ No mirrors sited where they might cause confusion or disorientation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			
Gas	Staff and others risk injury from fire and explosion if not properly maintained and used.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Boiler checked and serviced annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer. ■ Staff trained in defect reporting procedure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			
High temperatures	Staff and the public may suffer from dehydration or fainting if it is too hot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adequate ventilation supplies fresh air to public areas at a rate of 8 litres/sec/person. ■ Air conditioning in hot weather. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			
Hypodermic needles	Staff may suffer puncture injuries from discarded needles, which may result in serious ill-health problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strict no-drugs policy, enforced by club security procedures. ■ Staff trained in collecting discarded needles using 'sharps kit' - puncture-resistant gloves, tongs and sharps box. ■ Staff trained to dispose of sharps container as clinical waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reminder to staff that they must always use the sharps kit when discarded needles are found. 	Manager	4/10/07	4/10/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Train staff in action to be taken in case of needle-stick injury. 	Manager	4/10/07	4/10/07
Manual handling	Staff may suffer from back pain from carrying heavy or awkward objects including kegs, cases of beer, speakers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kegs taken to and stored in cellar by brewery draymen. ■ Beer drop properly designed and maintained. ■ Sack truck/porters trolley used where possible for cases of bottles, speakers etc. ■ Only authorised staff, trained in manual handling, handle the sound system, speakers etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Install portable ramp for rear step, to prevent having to awkwardly manoeuvre the sack truck up or down the step. 	Technical manager	30/11/07	29/10/07
Transport	Staff may suffer serious injuries if struck by a vehicle, eg during deliveries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reversing of vehicles to be supervised if other people in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Talk to the brewery about agreeing safe procedures for deliveries. 	Bar manager	30/11/07	15/10/07

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CO₂ leakage	Staff risk potentially fatal suffocation injuries from any CO ₂ leak in the cellar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adequate ventilation to cellar. ■ Staff trained to check for and to recognise leaks, and to turn equipment off if there is a leak. ■ Brewery provides 24-hour cover for dealing with leaks. ■ CO₂ alarm installed, and regularly maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure all new starters know how to check for and recognise leaks, and how to safely turn equipment off. 	Bar manager	Ongoing	
Asbestos-containing materials found in two insulating board panels to the cellar door	Staff and others carrying out normal activities at very low risk as asbestos only poses a risk if fibres are released into air and inhaled. Maintenance workers most at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Insulating boards in good condition – asbestos unlikely to be disturbed during normal activities. ■ Systems in place to inform contractors, and others who might disturb the asbestos, where it is and to ensure safe working. ■ 'Danger, asbestos, do not disturb' signs posted at cellar door. ■ Staff told to report any accidental damage immediately. ■ Condition of insulating boards checked periodically. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At next staff meeting, remind staff that the asbestos must not be disturbed and to report immediately any accidental damage to the insulating boards. 	Manager	4/10/07	4/10/07
Pyrotechnics	Danger from fire, explosion, direct impact and panic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF LICENSING AUTHORITY, ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY OF VENUE BY COMPETENT PERSON, FULL RISK ASSESSMENT AND COMPLIANCE WITH ABTT GUIDANCE. ■ If all above met then use only stage pyrotechnics with cold fall out and according to manufacturers' instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			
Lasers	Staff and public may suffer eye damage if used improperly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT PERMISSION OF LICENSING AUTHORITY, ASSESSMENT OF SUITABILITY OF VENUE BY COMPETENT PERSON, FULL RISK ASSESSMENT AND COMPLIANCE WITH HSE PUBLICATION HSG95.² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			
Smoke and fogs	Staff may suffer skin damage from handling dry ice. Fumes and mists can cause irritation to eyes, nose and breathing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Only trained workers have access to the products, which are kept in a locked container. ■ Only workers trained in the risk of the product, use the products, following safe systems of work – including wearing appropriate gloves, as recommended by the manufacturer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Download HSE document SR25 <i>Smokes and fogs in nightclubs and small venues</i> (www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/assets/live/SR25.pdf) to check that the right controls are in place. 	Technical manager	30/11/07	29/11/07

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<p>Hangings, drapes, inflatables etc used for decoration</p>	<p>May be flammable and obscure exit signs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Must be flame retardant. ■ Must not be hung anywhere that hides exit routes, signs etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			

Assessment review date: 1/10/08

1 For more information on noise at work in venues where music is played, see www.hse.gov.uk/noise/musicound.htm.

2 *The radiation safety of lasers used for display purposes* HSG95 HSE Books 1996 ISBN 978 0 7176 0691 7