

Example risk assessment for a plastering company

Setting the scene

The manager of a plastering company carried out a general risk assessment that covered their typical work. The deputy manager and the employee safety representative also helped. The risk assessment was used to help manage health and safety at the firm, and when tendering for contracts to demonstrate the firm's approach to health and safety. This meant that in the tender documents it was made clear exactly what was needed from the principal contractor to do the job safely and properly.

The firm won the plastering contract for a development

Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business might take. Use it 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.

of a three-storey block of flats. Work was due to start on 1 May 2007. The manager checked the construction phase plan and met the principal contractor's site manager on the site. One of the issues they considered was the sequencing and logistics of the work, alongside that of other fit-out trades, to ensure safe access and working arrangements for all. Another was the issue of fatigue, and the number of work breaks that were needed.

This extra information helped the manager to decide whether the general risk assessment covered all the hazards and risks expected in this job. If it did not, it would need to be amended to make the general risk assessment specific to the work and conditions of this job.

However, the manager decided that for this job his general risk assessment did cover all the expected risks and that therefore no additional paperwork was needed.

How was the risk assessment done?

To produce his general risk assessment, 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:
 - used training and experience of similar work;
 - took into account the rules of most construction sites; and
 - looked at HSE's website for free health and safety

advice and guidance for the construction industry.

- 2 The manager wrote down who would be harmed by the hazards and how.
- 3 He considered the risks of each hazard and decided what was needed to control those risks.
- 4 He discussed the findings with the deputy manager and the safety representative. He then put the risk assessment into practice, writing down who was responsible for doing what, and by when. When each action was completed, it was ticked off and the date recorded.
- 5 The manager told staff about the risk assessment, explaining that the risks identified were common to most plastering jobs and would be put into practice and the control measures identified would be put into place for all company jobs.
- 6 However, the manager also said that all sites were different and that extra risk controls might be needed at some jobs. This would be considered during site visits before each job started, and staff are to be made aware of any additional risks and what needs to be done to control those risks.
- 7 One of the workers did not speak English. The manager had planned for this, having previously arranged with the site manager for another worker, who was bi-lingual in the relevant language, to translate.

Company name: Smith's Plastering Date of risk assessment: 1 March 2007

(revised to be specific for internal plastering of three-storey flats job, 23 April 2007)

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Falling from height	Serious or even fatal injury could occur if an operator falls from height. Others working below also at risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sufficient Step-Ups available, all in good condition. ■ Platform trellis, with guardrail, used for stairwells and operators are trained in how to put it up, use and dismantle it. ■ Stairs and landings have handrails. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include work at height in toolbox talk before beginning work on day one. 	Site Manager Foreman	1/5/07	
Slips and trips	All operators, and tradesmen nearby, may suffer sprains, bruising or fractures if they trip over objects, such as work debris, or slip on spillages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All operators wear safety boots – ‘no boots, no job’ policy. ■ Good housekeeping, eg debris such as plaster bags put in skip, brush available to use to keep work area clear. ■ All trailing cables in work area hung up or otherwise kept out of harm's way. ■ Safe route to job agreed with site manager based on site health and safety plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to check on-site housekeeping during visits. 	Site Manager	From 1/5/07	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include in toolbox talk before beginning work on day one. 	Site Manager	From 1/5/07	
Workplace transport	Operators risk serious or even fatal injuries from moving vehicles on site – particularly when reversing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Safe route to workplace, and to welfare facilities, agreed with site manager based on site health and safety plan. ■ Staff know that they must never move vehicles on a site unless authorised by site manager. ■ Staff wear high-visibility tabards while on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Include in toolbox talk before beginning work on day one. 	Site Manager Foreman	1/5/07	
Manual handling	Operators risk injury, particularly to the back, from lifting and handling heavy or awkward objects, eg, plasterboard, and from repetitive strain problems from plastering.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dry plaster mix lifted to the work areas using a hoist supplied by the site manager and operated by a competent person. ■ Dry plaster mix supplied in bags weighing less than 25 kg. ■ Plasterboard for ceilings is of smallest size practicable. ■ Operators know and follow safe system of work for fitting plasterboard to ceiling, including knowledge of maximum weight for an individual manual lift. ■ Job rotation between ceiling and walls. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind operators of plasterboard safe system of work at toolbox talk. 	Site Manager Foreman	1/5/07	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by when?	Done
Hazardous substances Dry plaster mix	Operators and nearby tradesmen at risk from dry plaster powder which may irritate eyes or sensitive skin, or cause short-term irritation of respiratory system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Operators know the risks of dry plaster powder and know to avoid skin contact, excessive dust build-up and contact with eyes. ■ Work area suitable to prevent excessive dust build-up. ■ Water supply nearby to wash dust off skin. ■ Operators wear eye protection when plastering ceilings. ■ Operators keep work area clean. ■ Gloves and barrier creams available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At toolbox talk, remind operators of risks of dry plaster powder, and to wear gloves, eye protection and dust masks when emptying sacks and preparing the mix. 	Manager	1/5/07	
Electricity	Operators and others risk potentially fatal injuries if they receive a shock from faulty electrical equipment and/or installation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Site manager will arrange for permanent electric supply to be turned off while plastering work ongoing. ■ Site manager to supply 110 v temporary supply. ■ Staff know to check all cables, leads etc of all powered tools/ equipment before use, and to report all faults to their supervisor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ At toolbox talk on day one, manager to reinforce rules on electrical safety. 	Manager	1/5/07	
Welfare	Good welfare facilities reduce risk of dermatitis, help good hygiene etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Agreement with site manager that staff may use site welfare facilities – toilets, washing facilities with hot and cold water and mess room/kitchen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tell staff about facilities at toolbox talk on day one. 	Manager	1/5/07	

Assessment review date: 1/7/08