

Example risk assessment for a poultry farm

Setting the scene

The farm manager did the risk assessment in this poultry farm, which employs him and five others (two people work part-time). There are eight poultry sheds, with 20 000 broiler chickens per shed.

Next to the sheds is a mess room with a toilet and washing facilities (hot and cold water), clothing lockers and a small kitchen for making hot drinks, preparing food etc.

The farm has been surveyed for asbestos and no traces were found.

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.

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 agriculture, hazardous substances and for small businesses to learn where hazards can occur;
- walked around the farm, noting what might pose a risk. Occasional activities, such as changing light bulbs, were also considered;
- talked to workers to learn from their knowledge and experience; and
- looked at the accident book, to understand what previous problems there had been.

2 The manager then wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.

- 3** For each hazard, the manager wrote down what controls, if any, were in place to manage these hazards. They were then compared with the good practice guidance on HSE's website. Where existing controls were not considered good enough, the manager wrote down what else needed to be done.
- 4** The manager discussed the findings with staff and displayed the risk assessment in the mess room for everyone to see. The actions identified as being necessary were implemented. As each action was completed, the manager ticked it off.
- 5** The manager decided to review and update the risk assessment every year or straightaway if major changes in the workplace happened.

Company name: Smith's Poultry Farm

Date of risk assessment: 1/7/07

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
Farm machinery, including PTO shafts	Workers and others may suffer serious and possibly fatal injuries from contact with moving parts of machinery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All PTO shafts guarded from the connector on tractor PTO to first bearing on the machine. ■ All dangerous parts of machinery, eg auger screw, pulleys on mechanical feeders/waterers, shearing hazard on skid-steer loader etc, guarded unless safely located, eg can't be reached. ■ All guards in good condition. ■ Workers trained in safe systems of work, including for jobs such as clearing blockages, emptying bulk feed bin etc. ■ A system of locking-off for maintenance work where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind workers to report any damaged or ill-fitting guards to farm manager immediately. 	Farm manager	7/7/07	6/7/07
LPG	Workers risk serious, possibly fatal injuries from escape and ignition of LPG from tank and pipework. Risk of injury/damage may extend off farm.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Small bulk LPG tank located in safe position; inspection/testing scheme in place; valve cover on tank kept locked. ■ Barriers protect fixed pipework (tank to heaters) from damage, eg from vehicle. ■ Safety devices (eg pressure relief valves) fitted. ■ Fire extinguisher nearby; ■ All work on LPG system done by a competent person, eg a Gas Safe registered engineer. ■ Workers know how to use system, including how to fill tank and what to do, if they suspect a leak. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clear vegetation from around tank. 	Farm foreman	1/8/07	
Electricity	Workers risk serious, possibly fatal injuries from a faulty electrical installation or appliances. Also from contact with overhead power lines when using vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Electrical system installed by competent person and protected against water ingress where necessary. ■ 30 mA RCD built into switchboard. ■ Electrical installation regularly inspected by qualified electrician. ■ Portable appliances tested according to manufacturers' instructions. ■ Workers visually check leads (including extension leads) and plugs of hand-held appliances before use. ■ Overhead (OH) power lines marked on farm map; workers aware of dangers of working near OH lines; marked tipping areas (away from OH lines) for vehicles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			

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
Dust from poultry dander and litter	Workers risk lung diseases, such as asthma, from inhaling poultry dander and litter dust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All doors open and ventilation fans on when putting litter down/cleaning sheds. ■ Suitable air filtration fitted to tractor cab, well maintained and tested before use (eg putting litter down). ■ Suitable respiratory protective equipment available for use for other jobs inside the sheds (eg populating sheds, inspecting/catching birds) and workers know how and when to use it. ■ For general work in sheds workers wear suitable disposable dust masks (BS EN 149 FFP2 standard). ■ Workers trained to fit masks properly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind workers of risk of asthma and other lung diseases from poultry dander and litter dust. 	Manager	20/7/07	17/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Change cotton overalls (these retain dust) to synthetic overalls (these don't retain dust). 	Manager	20/7/07	17/7/07
Workplace transport	Workers and others risk serious, possibly fatal, injuries if struck by a vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workers trained by competent person to operate tractors and forklift trucks. ■ All vehicles maintained and inspected according to manufacturers' instructions. ■ Suitable machines available to remove litter from sheds to avoid head injury on roof beams. ■ Load chains on lift truck inspected every six months by insurance company. ■ Bar rings checked regularly for wear. ■ Workers wear lap belts when using vehicles. ■ During delivery/despatch of poultry, no unauthorised persons allowed in yard. ■ High-visibility vests available and worn as necessary, eg night-time catching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cut hedge by gate leading onto road to improve visibility for oncoming traffic. 	Farm manager	20/7/07	17/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce one-way traffic flow system on farm. 	Farm manager	1/10/07	17/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Introduce speed limit on farm. ■ 	Farm manager	1/10/07	17/7/07
Work at height	Workers and others risk serious, possibly fatal, injuries if they fall from height, eg when cleaning exhaust fans in sheds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low-level filler on diesel tank eliminates need to climb on top of tank. ■ Ladder fixed to feed bin (boarded off to prevent access by children). ■ Suitable ladders, in good condition and suitable for heavy work, provided and workers know how to use them. ■ Properly designed cage for lift truck available and safe system of work followed when using it. ■ Competent contractors do building maintenance/repairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Print off HSE guidance on stepladder safety and give it to workers. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07
Manual handling	Workers may get musculoskeletal problems, eg back pain from handling heavy and/or awkward objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained in safe manual handling. ■ All goods (eg shavings) supplied in bulk or in bags below 25 kg weight. ■ Goods stored on pallets to ensure convenient height for handling. ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workers reminded to tell manager if manual handling of certain objects causes a problem, or if they have any ideas as to how to reduce manual handling. 	Manager	20/7/07	17/7/07

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 Contact with fumigants etc.	Workers risk skin problems, such as dermatitis, from contact with chemicals or breathing problems from vapour.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained in safe use of fumigants. ■ All access doors to sheds under fumigation locked and warning signs displayed. Access prohibited until sheds ventilated and declared safe. ■ When using cleaning products, workers told to read the instructions on the container and follow them. ■ Suitable gloves available for handling irritant or corrosive chemicals. ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workers told to check their hands regularly and to report to manager any dry, red or itchy patches on the skin. 	Manager	20/7/07	17/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ensure new workers made aware of chemical hazards during induction training. 	Manager	20/7/07	17/7/07
Zoonoses	Workers risk ill-health from contracting diseases from animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Workers told to use protective clothing, eg gloves, overalls in sheds. ■ Workers trained in using rat poison and the safe removal of dead rats. ■ Hot/cold water, soap and paper towels available in mess room near the sheds. ■ Workers told to wash hands after contact with animals, and especially before eating, drinking or smoking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind workers to cover small cuts and abrasions with plasters (first-aid kit in mess room). 	Manager	20/7/07	17/7/07
Structural collapse	Workers risk serious, possibly fatal injury if fixed structures collapse.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sheds and feed bins inspected last year by a competent person and confirmed as being in good condition. ■ Workers aware of responsibility to report any damage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action at this stage. 			
Fire Smoking, faulty electrics, arson	If trapped, staff risk serious, possibly fatal injuries from smoke inhalation or burns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fire risk assessment done, see www.communities.gov.uk/fire, and necessary action taken. ■ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Random checks to make sure that actions identified as necessary in the fire risk assessment are being complied with. 	Manager	Random checks	Random checks
Slips and trips	Workers and visitors risk serious injury if they slip or trip, even on the level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Even concrete floors in all sheds. ■ Yard surfaced and regularly checked for potholes. ■ Lighting installed in yard. 				

Assessment review date: 1/7/08