

Example risk assessment for a travel agency

Setting the scene

The owner/manager did the risk assessment in this travel agency, which is located in a row of shops on a busy street. The shop is open every day from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm. Ten people work there, six full-time and four part-time. A cleaner also works every day between 4.15 pm and 5.15 pm.

At the rear of the premises is a staff area with a toilet/bathroom, a kitchen where hot drinks and food can be prepared, and a stockroom.

The shops were built in the 1980s and the landlord has surveyed the building for asbestos. None was found.

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, to learn where hazards can occur;
 - walked around all areas of the shop, noting potential risks and taking HSE's guidance into account. Occasional activities, such as changing light bulbs, were also considered;
 - talked to staff to learn from their knowledge and experience, and listen to their opinions about health and safety issues; and
 - looked at the accident book, to understand what had previously resulted in incidents.
- 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. These controls were then compared to the 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, put the risk assessment up in the staffroom for everyone to see and made it part of the induction process for new staff. The improvements that the risk assessment identified as necessary were put into practice.
- 5 The manager decided to review and update the risk assessment every year, or straightaway if major changes in the workplace happened.

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.

Company name: Smith's Travel Agents

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
Slips and trips, eg doorways (rain), spillages, stock on floor, uneven surfaces	Staff and customers may suffer sprains, fractures or bruising if they trip over objects, such as stock, or slip on spillages, and fall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ General good housekeeping - staff 'clean as they go'. ■ Floor is only vacuum cleaned when office is closed. ■ Doormats at entrance fitted flush to the carpet. ■ Floor in good condition. ■ Good lighting in all areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff who stock shelves not to leave brochures on the floor, if called to help with a customer. 	All staff	7/7/07	5/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff to clean up spillages promptly, leaving the floor dry. 	Manager	7/7/07	5/7/07
Violence and threatening behaviour, eg verbal abuse, robbery	Staff may suffer assaults, threats and abuse from members of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained not to resist a robbery. ■ If customers pay in cash, money is immediately put in the safe. ■ Staff provide good, polite service. ■ Three members of staff trained in dealing with difficult and potentially confrontational situations, eg dissatisfied customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contact local police station to get advice on what else can be done (eg safe procedures for opening up and closing). 	Manager	30/7/07	29/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ask those staff trained in dealing with difficult situations to share best practice with colleagues. 	Manager	7/7/07	5/7/07 & agreed, date fixed
Manual handling, eg stacking brochures	Staff risk injuries or back pain from handling heavy and bulky objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Porters trolley to move heavy objects, eg deliveries of boxes of brochures and staff trained how to use it. ■ High shelves in stockroom used for light objects only. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Periodic checks to make sure heavy objects not stored on high shelves. 	Manager	7/7/07	7/7/07, then ongoing

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
Display screen equipment	Staff risk posture problems and pain, discomfort or injuries, eg to hands or arms, from overuse or improper use or from poorly designed workstations. Headaches or sore eyes can also occur, eg if the lighting is poor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ DSE training and assessments of workstation from CD ROM carried out by all new starters early on in induction. Any actions to be carried out ASAP. ■ Reassessment to be carried out at any change to work feature, eg equipment, furniture or the work environment such as lighting. ■ Workstation and equipment set to ensure good posture and to avoid glare and reflections on the screen. ■ Shared workstations are assessed for all users. ■ Staff take short, frequent breaks away from workstation. ■ Staff do not use computers for long, continuous periods without breaks. ■ Lighting and temperature suitably controlled. ■ Adjustable blinds at window to control natural light on screen. ■ Noise levels controlled. ■ Eye tests provided for those who need them, dutyholder to pay for basic spectacles specific for VDU use (or portion of cost in other cases). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Check that identified actions from self-assessments are followed up ASAP. 	Manager	30/7/07	5/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Tell staff to inform the manager of any pain they have that may be linked to computer use. 	All staff	30/7/07	5/7/07
Work at height Changing light bulbs, pinning up promotional displays	Falls from any height can cause bruising/fractures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong stepladder provided and staff trained how to use it safely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to make periodic checks on condition of stepladder. 	Manager	7/7/07	7/7/07, then ongoing
Contact with bleach and other cleaning chemicals	Cleaning staff risk skin irritation or eye damage from direct contact with cleaning chemicals. Vapour may cause breathing problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cleaning products marked 'irritant' have been replaced by milder alternatives. ■ Mops, brushes and strong rubber gloves are provided and used. ■ Staff shown how to use cleaning products safely, eg follow instructions on the label, dilute properly and never transfer to an unmarked container. ■ Cleaning materials stored in a cool, secure place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to check for dry, red or itchy skin on their hands. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to wash gloves before taking them off and to remove them carefully. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07

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
Electrical, eg faulty building wiring, faulty electrical appliances	Staff could get electrical shocks or burns from faulty electrics, including portable electrical equipment – heaters, fans etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 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. ■ Qualified electrician does safety check of building electrics every five years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to do random, visual checks of plugs, sockets, cables and on/off switches. 	Manager	20/7/07	First check done on 18/7/07
Fire, eg smoking, faulty electrics, arson	If trapped, staff could suffer from smoke inhalation/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"> ■ Necessary actions set out in fire risk assessment. 	Manager		

Assessment review date: 1/7/08