

## **Starting the risk assessment**

Remember, risk assessments must be carried out and the appropriate control measures put in place before any new activity, task or process starts, and before any changes to existing working practices, equipment or personnel are implemented.

### **Which form should I use?**

In order to keep consistency across the University and within schools and services, the form for recording assessments has been agreed as a minimum standard. If this form is filled in correctly, the assessment will meet the legislative requirements of being "suitable and sufficient".

The form should be used for all risk assessments except for the following where other specific forms are available.

- Fire
- Display screen equipment
- Manual handling
- Control of substances hazardous to health (COSHH)
- First aid
- Field trips
- Genetic modification
- Ionising Radiation
- Lasers
- Lone working
- Pregnant workers

Some of these specific risks may be included in a general risk assessment, for example manual handling and fire may be identified in a general office risk assessment.

Blank risk assessment forms are available in paper format and electronically from health and safety services. You can also download the blank risk assessment form from Appendix 1

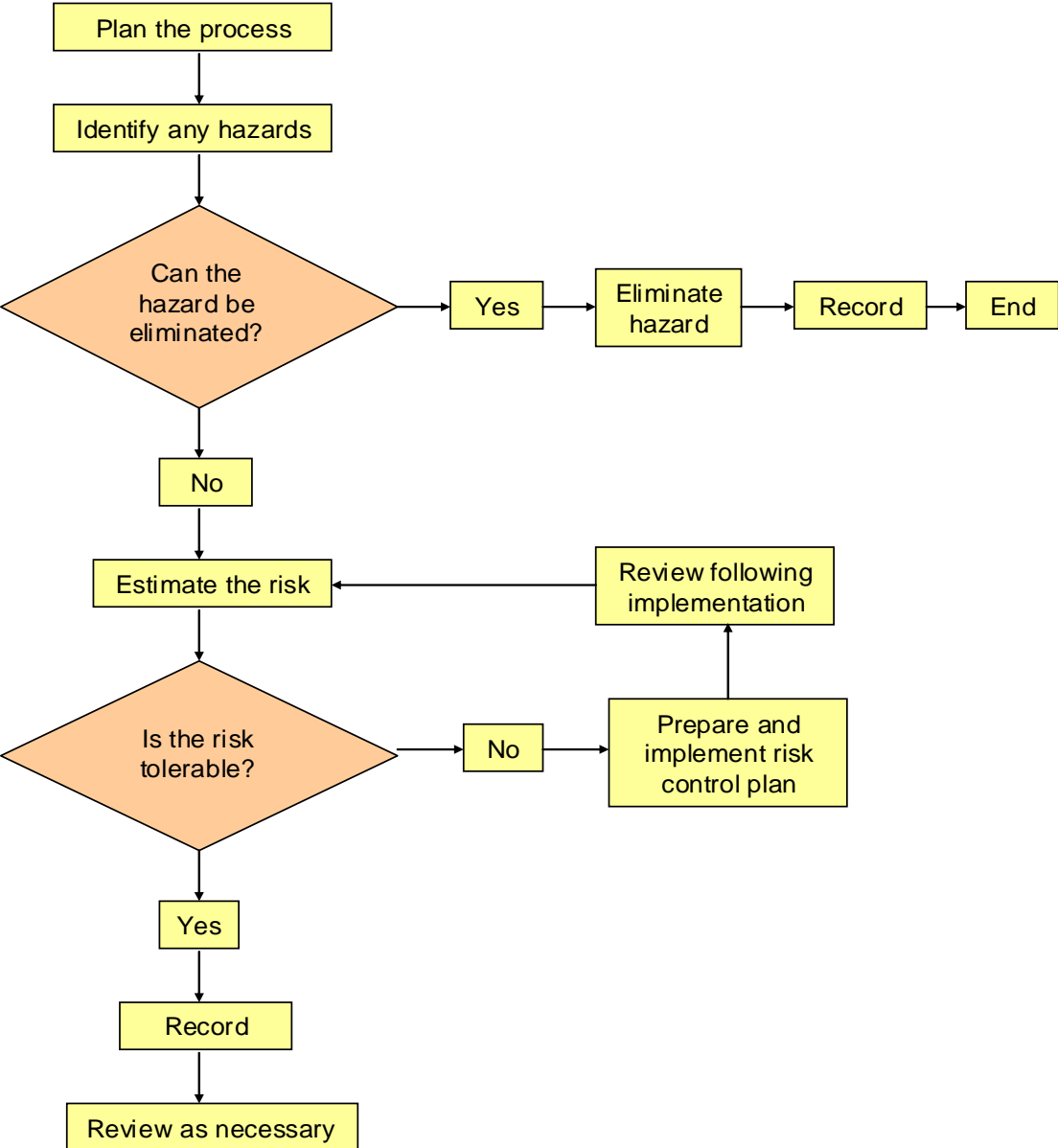
### **Planning the risk assessment process**

When planning the process for risk assessments, consider the following points:

- Is the risk assessor competent?
- Is there any activity-specific or technical information that could help with the assessment? If you are not sure, contact health and safety services who have access to all legislation and various best practices guides and British Standards. These documents can be emailed or sent by hard copy.
- Is there a team that carries out similar activities, and who have already done an assessment? - check the risk assessment log.
- Is there a generic assessment that could be modified to be specific to your service area? Now a corporate risk assessment form has been agreed, a bank of new generic risk assessments will be posted on the website (with the managers' permission). This will avoid reinventing the wheel and also enable best practice to be shared.
- Has the accident / incident reporting system been analysed to identify significant risks?

A good risk assessment will have input from all the team involved and it is a good idea to include health and safety representatives (union and non union). In some cases you might need professional help from health and safety services or the occupational health service.

### Flowchart of the risk assessment process



### What should be risk assessed?

The types of assessment listed below show the diversity of hazards, but this list is not exhaustive. Assessors can select the type of risk assessment that best suits their service or use a combination. Risk assessments can be cross-referenced to avoid replicating information, so an assessment for "aqua-aerobics" would not need to contain all the information in the "running and maintenance of a swimming pool" assessment.

<p><b>Equipment specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of hand tools</li> <li>• Use or maintenance of electrical items</li> <li>• Still saw</li> </ul>	<p><b>Person specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New and expectant mothers</li> <li>• Young workers</li> <li>• Employees with a disability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hazard specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire or explosion</li> <li>• Electricity</li> <li>• Noise or vibration</li> <li>• Heat or cold</li> <li>• Radiation</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Vehicle movement</li> <li>• Compressed air</li> <li>• Falling objects</li> <li>• Slippery, uneven or worn floors</li> <li>• Obstructions and projections</li> <li>• Repetitive hand or arm movements</li> <li>• Handling sharps - broken glass, razors</li> <li>• Violence and aggression</li> </ul>	<p><b>Activity specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash handling</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Educational visits</li> <li>• Organised trips</li> <li>• Minibuses</li> <li>• Working at heights - eg. Using ladders</li> <li>• Reception duties</li> <li>• Cleaning</li> <li>• Office moves</li> <li>• Fieldwork</li> </ul>
<p><b>Job specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecturer</li> <li>• Bar attendant</li> <li>• Porter</li> <li>• Cleaner</li> </ul>	<p><b>Building or environment specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swimming pool</li> <li>• Out of hours working</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Studio</li> <li>• Workshop</li> <li>• Laboratory</li> <li>• Confined spaces</li> <li>• Room by room assessments</li> <li>• Personal safety, security, lone working</li> </ul>
<p><b>Process Specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of waste</li> <li>• Use of dyeing machine</li> <li>• Use of oven</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Combination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A kitchen risk assessment could include: knives, hot water, steam, regeneration ovens, microwave ovens, grills, serving counters, water boilers, dishwashing machines (may link in with COSHH), waste disposal units, food mixers and processors, deep fat fryers, ovens, ranges, fan assisted ovens, heated sinks, gravity feed slicing machines, slips, electricity etc.</li> <li>• A general building assessment could include: asbestos, maintenance of buildings, security, etc.</li> </ul>	

Legislation and guidance state that you can ignore trivial risks or normal life risks, unless the work activity compounds the risk or significantly alters it.

For example an assessment is not required for normal use of public transport, but is required if people transport large quantities of cash or prescription medicines as part of their job. Similarly loading a dishwasher at home is a normal life risk but loading an industrial machine in the kitchen at the University would be a different proposition.

Observing the activity in action is likely to give a more accurate risk assessment than treating it as a desktop exercise. Managers should also use their knowledge and experience of the staff carrying out the work when assessing them.