

Notes on Risk Assessment for Home Workers

Introduction

These notes provide guidance on why, when and how a risk assessment for home working should be undertaken. All employees who are or wish to participate in home working should complete this form. This includes those employees who work **from** home (contracted to work from home) and those who opt to sometimes work **at** home (when work is conducted at home over short periods of time).

This document has been adapted from the Health and Safety Executive's Home-working Guidance.

What the law requires

The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (HSWA) places duties on employers and employees. Employers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees at all times, including employees who work from or at home. Under this duty, employers are required to ensure a risk assessment is undertaken for all home-workers. A risk is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by a hazard. A hazard is anything that may cause harm.

How to undertake a risk assessment for home working

There are five steps that need to take place to make sure that a proper risk assessment is done:

1. Identify any hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Assess the risks and take appropriate action to remove them or reduce them as far as possible
4. Record the findings
5. Check the risks from time to time and take further steps if needed.

Use the following instructions and the Risk Assessment Form for Home Working to undertake your home working risk assessment.

If you are unsure about what you have to do at any stage speak to your line manager – it may be necessary for your line manager to visit your home to assist with the risk assessment.

Step 1 – Identify any hazards

Be as objective as possible; assess the areas that you use for working at home (including office space, routes to the telephone, kitchen and bathroom) for potential hazards. The hazard does not have to be major; it could simply be a box that you are used to tripping over!

Look out for trailing leads, loose wires, protruding files, sharp edges to office furniture and cluttered walkways.

While every care has been taken in compiling these notes, Action in rural Sussex cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions; the notes are not intended to be a substitute for specific legal advice.

Step 2 – Decide who might be harmed

Identify who could be harmed by the hazard – it may not be just you but family members or visiting children and friends.

Step 3 – Assess the risks

If you come across a hazard that may be a risk to you, a family member or visitor to your home, you have to decide how likely it is that someone will be harmed (*probability*) and the likely extent of their injury (*severity*). Using the following guide give a score both to the *probability* of injury and the possible *severity* of the injury. **Multiply these to get a “risk assessment score”**. Eg occasional x minor injury = 6 risk assessment score.

Rating Scores:

<u>Probability</u>	<u>Severity</u>
1. Improbable	1. Trivial injuries
2. Possible	2. Minor injuries
3. Occasional	3. Major injury to one person
4. Frequent	4. Major injury to more than one person
5. Common	5. Death to one or more persons

Step 4 – What can be done to eliminate or reduce the risk?

Taking each of the hazards or risks you have identified in turn, decide what can be done to eliminate or reduce the risk so that the *probability* and *severity* of injury are reduced as far as possible. Where expenditure is likely to be incurred, please discuss with your line manager and adhere to the organisation’s authorisation levels on expenditure.

Step 5 – List the actions that have been taken to eliminate / control the identified risks

Once you and/or your line manager have taken all necessary steps to eliminate or control the risks you have identified, please log them on the risk assessment form.

Step 6 – Residual Risks

It may be impossible to completely eradicate all potential risks. To ensure that the impact of any remaining hazards or risks is monitored, write down any residual risks and give each a risk assessment score (see 3. above for scoring method).

Step 7 – Review Date

Having completed the final risk assessment form, give a copy to your line manager, one to the Health & Safety Officer (if applicable) and one for filing on your personnel file. Agree a home working risk assessment review date with your line manager. Unless there are any unmitigated and serious risks, the review will usually take place annually as part of your yearly appraisal.