



# TECHNIQUE SCAFFOLDING

## Health and safety policy

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## 1. GENERAL STATEMENT

**This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of:**

**Technique Scaffolding**

**Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- to consult with our employees on matters affecting their health and safety
- to provide and maintain safe equipment
- to ensure safe handling and use of substances
- to provide information, instruction and supervision for employees
- to ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training
- to prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- to maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- to review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals.

**Signed:** Damian Baker (*Chair*)

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**Date:** 22/01/2019

**Review date:** 12 MONTHS FROM THE ABOVE DATE

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

### **2.1 The Management Committee**

2.1.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a statutory duty on all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of all its employees at work and other people who may be affected by their activities, e.g. users, volunteers, members of the public.

2.1.2 The Management Committee as the employer, has overall and final responsibility for health and safety matters at Technique Scaffolding, and for ensuring that health and safety legislation is complied with.

2.1.3 The Management Committee will periodically review the operation of its health and safety policy. And will ensure:

- employees and volunteers as appropriate receive sufficient information, training and supervision on health and safety matters
- a risk assessment is undertaken and the results written up and made available to all employees
- accidents are investigated and reported to the Management Committee
- there are arrangements in place to monitor the maintenance of the premises and equipment
- there are adequate arrangements to liaise and co-operate on health and safety matters with other employers at the premises of Marriott Rd Swinton

2.1.4 Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to:  
Damian Baker (the Health and Safety Officer).

The Management Committee can delegate responsibility for day-to-day tasks to someone else, e.g. manager, supervisor. Write their name here. Part of their responsibility will be keeping the Management Committee informed about health and safety matters.

### **2.2 All Employees**

2.2.1 All employees have to:

- co-operate with supervisors and managers on health and safety matters
- not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their health

- and safety
- take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- report all health and safety concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).

## **2.3 Fire Officer**

2.3.1 The Management Committee will appoint a Fire Officer who shall receive appropriate training. At the time of issue of this policy this is Damian Baker.

2.3.2 The responsibilities of the Fire Officer are to:

- be instructed on potential fire hazards and the use of fire fighting equipment
- ensure that Damian Baker arranges the testing of fire alarms and fire drills
- assist with the efficient evacuation of staff and visitors
- liaise with the Fire Brigade at the assembly point
- Ensure staff and volunteers at Technique Scaffolding are aware of the fire alarm and fire drill.

FOR DETAILED FIRE SAFETY ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 9.

## **2.4 First Aid Person**

2.4.1 At the time of issuing this policy, Damian Baker has undertaken a recognised training course approved by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and is the first aid person for Technique Scaffolding.

2.4.2 The trained first aid person named above will ensure that the first aid box is kept in the correct place, containing the items laid down in the Code of Practice and Guidance Notes published by the HSE and is regularly checked and restocked.

FOR DETAILED FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT ARRANGEMENTS SEE SECTION 11.

## **2.5 Risk Assessment**

2.5.1 The Management Committee will ensure that a risk assessment will be carried out by a competent person in accordance with the 1992 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations and the Approved Code of

Practice (ACOP). This risk assessment will be written up, and be made available to all staff.

- 2.5.2 The written risk assessment will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure it covers all employees against all risks, and to ensure that any action identified as needed in the risk assessment has been carried out. The risk assessment will also be updated every time that there is a major change in working practices. The risk assessment will cover all employees of Technique Scaffolding, wherever they may be based, and will cover all aspects of their work.

SEE SECTION 15

## **2.6 Training**

- 2.6.1 Technique Scaffolding. will ensure that new employees and volunteers receive information on health and safety as part of their induction.
- 2.6.2 Technique Scaffolding. Will organise training for employees and volunteers on health and safety matters as appropriate, including: general health and safety training, first aid, manual handling, fire safety, risk assessment. Technique Scaffolding. Will also organise training for appropriate use of equipment, and any special training needed to ensure safe systems of work.
- 2.6.3 If employees and volunteers consider they have health and safety training needs they should inform their line manager.

### **3. BUILDINGS**

- 3.1 Technique Scaffolding. Has a responsibility to provide a safe and healthy environment for staff and volunteers.
- 3.2 All the staff of Technique Scaffolding are responsible for spotting hazards or potential hazards. If a hazard is seen, it should be removed or dealt with as soon as possible, or if not, reports to the Competent Person.

#### **3.3 Examples of Hazards**

##### 3.3.1 Things Out of Reach:

Chairs or other furniture must not be used to stand on for the purpose of replacing light bulbs, reaching for things off top of cabinets, etc. A properly maintained, undamaged step ladder must be used.

##### 3.3.2 Damaged Equipment:

Regular checks must be carried out on furniture and equipment for damage which leaves sharp edges protruding or other hazards. Any damaged furniture must be reported for repair or condemnation straight away and must be removed from use.

##### 3.3.3 Damage to Fabric of Building, Windows, etc:

All such damage must be reported immediately to the competent person as named above.

##### 3.3.4 Misplaced Furniture, Equipment or Supplies:

Any furniture, equipment or supplies left in an inappropriate place, for example obstructing a gangway, must be removed immediately and placed in an appropriate, safe place.

## **4. GOOD HOUSEKEEPING**

### **4.1 Aisles & Gangways**

Aisles & gangways must be kept clear from obstructions and materials must be stored in safe areas. Under no circumstances must goods or materials be stacked immediately in front of or obstructing fire doors, fire exits, fire alarms or fire equipment.

### **4.2 Smoking**

Smoking is not allowed at Marriott Rd yard and offices, in any vehicle and only in designated areas on sites.

### **4.3 Overcrowding**

Technique Scaffolding. Will avoid unhealthy and overcrowded working conditions, and will consult staff on any changes in office layout.

### **4.4 Ventilation**

Technique Scaffolding. Will endeavour to provide a well ventilated workplace in which staff have control over their local level of ventilation.

### **4.5 Temperature**

In office workplaces a minimum temperature of 16<sup>0</sup>C must be maintained. Efforts will be made so far as is reasonably practical to ensure the workplace temperature does not rise to an uncomfortable level. A thermometer will be provided in such a position as to be easily seen.

### **4.6 Lighting**

Adequate lighting must be provided. If lights are found to be out of order, the fault must be corrected as soon as reasonably possible.

### **4.7 Noise**

Technique Scaffolding. Will endeavour to ensure that noise in its offices is kept to as low a level as is practicable.

### **4.8 Office Atmospheric Pollutants**

Office equipment such as photocopiers and printers can emit pollutants into the atmosphere. The organisation will take reasonable precautions in ensuring that these levels are kept as low as possible. Employees and volunteers will not be expected to work in enclosed spaces with equipment that emits atmospheric pollutants. Spaces where these pollutants are present shall be kept well ventilated.

#### **4.9 Equipment Storage and Usage**

- Equipment must not be left lying around but must be suitably stored
- No wires must be left trailing across floors
- Non flammable rubbish bins must be positioned at various points
- Except in emergencies, and with the permission of the H&S Officer, no paraffin, bar electric or gas fires will be used at the premises of Technique Scaffolding

#### **4.10 Electrical Equipment**

4.10.1 All building maintenance such as electrical work, carpentry, painting, etc should be carried out by skilled people. Staff should not endanger themselves and others by carrying out such work.

4.10.2 Broken, ineffective or damaged electrical equipment must be reported. Staff should use electrical equipment in accordance with instructions.

#### **4.11 Working at height**

4.11.1 Injuries are often caused by falls from:

- ladders
- scaffolding
- roofs and roof-edges - particularly fragile roofs
- gangways and catwalks
- vehicles

The poor selection, use and maintenance of equipment causes falls, e.g. using a ladder because it's easier than erecting a tower scaffold.

The Working at Height Regulations place duties on employers, to ensure:

- all work at height is properly planned
- those working at height are competent or supervised
- the risks of working on or near fragile surfaces are properly controlled



- equipment for working at height is properly inspected and maintained

Work at height should be avoided where possible and equipment should be used to prevent or minimize the consequences of falls where working at height is the only option.

**All scaffolds to be erected following TG20 08 and within SG4:10 and WAHR 2005**

## **5. WELFARE ARRANGEMENTS**

### **5.1 Toilet and Washing Facilities**

Technique Scaffolding will ensure that suitable and sufficient toilets and washing facilities are provided for all staff in accordance with the minimum requirements of Health & Safety legislation.

- The toilet will be in a separate, lockable room
- Washing facilities will include a supply of clean hot and cold water, soap and suitable means of drying.

### **5.2 Drinking Water**

An adequate supply of drinking water will be provided for all staff.

### **5.3 Rest Areas**

So far as is reasonably practicable, Technique Scaffolding will provide its staff with a seating arrangement where, during rest periods, they may have a break away from their workstations.

### **5.4 Pregnant Women**

Suitable rest facilities will be provided for pregnant employees.

### **5.5 Hours of Work**

The employees of should not work excessively long hours, and should take adequate breaks for meals and rest as indicated within their statement of terms and conditions of employment.

## **6. PERSONAL SAFETY**

### **6.1 Office Security**

- 6.1.0 It is in the nature of the organisation's work that staff or volunteers may, on occasions, find themselves in potentially dangerous situations whilst on Technique Scaffolding business. The following policy is concerned to minimise the risk to people working for Technique Scaffolding.
- 6.1.1 Staff or volunteers who are working on their own should not allow access to casual visitors who have no appointment, (except in the case of the library). Such callers should be encouraged to make an appointment.
- 6.1.2 Where staff are dealing with an individual but feel uneasy about being alone with him or her they have the right to refuse to make an appointment or give access if it would put them in that position. In these situations the management will put their trust in the feelings of the worker.
- 6.1.3 An alarm buzzer is sited in reception and in the library. Staff will be inducted in how the alarm sounds, how to set it off and how to respond on hearing it.
- 6.1.4 All windows and entry doors will be lockable.

### **6.2 WORKING AWAY FROM THE OFFICE**

- 6.2.1 Staff who are going to be working away from the office should make it clear to other staff where they will be, how long for and how they can be contacted.
- 6.2.2 If in the course of a trip away from the office plans change significantly, this should be communicated back to the office.
- 6.2.3 Staff should make clear who they wish to be informed (outside of work) in the event of an emergency and how they can normally be contacted.

### **6.3 HOLDING OR CARRYING MONEY OR VALUABLES FOR THE ORGANISATION**

- 6.3.1 Staff who carry money for Technique Scaffolding. Have the right to be accompanied by another person.
- 6.3.2 Large amounts of cash, over and above petty cash should not be kept on the premises of Technique Scaffolding.
- 6.3.3 Visits to the bank should not be at a regular time.
- 6.3.4 Under no circumstances should staff put themselves at risk on account of the property of Technique Scaffolding. If money is demanded with threats it should be handed over.

### **6.4 PERSONAL AWARENESS:**

There are lots of things we already do that keep us safe, but becoming more aware of our surroundings puts us in control of our environment. The following steps are recommended to all staff as being helpful.

### **6.5 WHILST OUT AND ABOUT:**

**Trust your intuition and listen to your feelings.** If you sense something is wrong, it probably is. Acting on intuition may prevent an aggressive situation.

**Be prepared.** Do you know whom to contact and what to do if a difficult situation arises? Find out and if there is no one designated, ask for a supervisor or manager to be nominated.

**Be observant.** Notice everything around you - exit doors, telephones, windows, sources of help. This will make you more aware of your surroundings and help you escape if you need to.

**Assess potential risks.** Avoid dangerous short cuts, walk facing the traffic on the street side of pavements, think about where you park your car and remember where you have parked it.

**Make sure you have all relevant information with you.** Have you checked to see if there is a known problem with whom you are or where you are going?

**Look confident.** "Walking tall" and being aware of your surroundings deters assailants.

**Never stay in a situation where you think you may be at risk.**

Don't feel you have to stay because of your work. You can see the client, arrange the visit or do the interview again. You can ask a colleague to come in or be with you. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

**Be aware of personal space** - yours and others. Encroaching on other people's personal space can make them aggressive. If other people are too close to you and making you uncomfortable, ask for more space or move away.

**Don't get into lifts with people who make you feel uneasy.** If you are in a lift and feel uncomfortable, get out and use the stairs, or wait for another lift. Make sure you know where the emergency button is and stand where you can reach it.

**Don't accept lifts in vehicles from people you have no reason to trust.**

**Think about what you are wearing.** Can you run if you need to?

## 6.6 IN DEALING WITH AGGRESSION

If you find yourself in an aggressive situation, what can you do?

**Try to stay calm** if someone is starting to get angry. Your body language, voice and response can help to defuse a situation. Take a deep breath, keep your voice on an even keel, and try to help.

**Offer an angry person a range of options** from which they can choose the one they prefer. They will find it difficult to stay angry.

**Do not be aggressive back** - this is how anger can escalate into violence.

**Are you the best person to deal with this situation?** Going to get someone else is often helpful particularly if they can solve a problem that you can't.

**Get on the same level as the aggressor.** If they are standing so should you. It makes you feel less vulnerable and makes it easier for you to get away or fetch help if necessary.

**Keep your balance and keep your distance.**

**Do not touch someone who is angry.**

**Don't let your escape route be blocked.**

**Keep yourself between an escape route and an aggressor** so you can still get away.

**If the situation is dangerous, then get away as fast as you can.**  
Never remain alone with an actively violent person.

**If you cannot get away, then scream or use the panic alarm.**

## **6.7 REPORTING AND RECORDING**

6.7.4 All incidents of aggression or violence should be reported to management and recorded in the accident book.

6.7.5 Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe working environment. Staff should report any current or potential situation at work which is a threat to personal safety. Talking about fear and other problems related to aggression or harassment are not marks of failure but good practice. A serious incident, even if it results in no physical harm, may cause feelings of fear, panic or despair which can carry on long afterwards. The management committee of Technique Scaffolding recognises this and will be disposed to provide whatever support, counselling or time off work seems appropriate.

## **7. HOMEWORKING**

- 7.1.1 When employees are carrying out work for Technique Scaffolding at home all health and safety rules and guidance in this policy apply in the same way that they do in the workplace.
- 7.1.2 It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their home working environment and equipment used in the home is safe. A risk assessment in accordance with the guidance given in this policy should be carried out. Should advice be needed, advice should be sought from the nominated health and safety officer at Technique Scaffolding.
- 7.1.3 The employee will be asked to indemnify the organisation from damages caused by accidents in the home.

## **8. VISUAL DISPLAY EQUIPMENT**

### **8.1 General**

8.1.1 It is the policy of Technique Scaffolding to comply with the law as set out in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

8.1.2 Technique Scaffolding will conduct health and safety assessments of all workstations staffed by employees who use VDU screens as part of their usual work. All workstations must meet the requirements set out in the Schedule to the Regulations.

### **8.2 Nature and Organisation of Work**

8.2.1 Appropriate seating must be available to all users.

8.2.2 Staff will take regular breaks (at least 10 minutes away for every hour at the screen). Short frequent breaks are more satisfactory than occasional longer breaks.

### **8.3 Equipment**

8.3.1 Resources will be sought by Technique Scaffolding to:

- (a) provide VDUs with a detachable and adjustable screen, i.e. in height, swivel, etc, to allow for the individual preference of the operator.
- (b) provide computer cleaning supplies
- (c) provide a wrist and foot rest at each workstation
- (d) an anti-static mat at each workstation
- (e) provide keyboards which are separate from screens
- (f) provide anti glare screens, where direct light cannot be prevented from falling on the screen
- (g) provide adequate workstation space.

### **8.4 Maintenance**

*Damian Baker* should hold copies of manufacturers' detailed instructions on the maintenance of machinery, and will ensure that maintenance contracts are adhered to and, where appropriate, renewed.



## 8.6 WRULDS/RSI

Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (also known as Repetitive Strain Injury) are often associated with keyboard work. It is the intention of Technique Scaffolding, by following best advice, to provide VDU/keyboard equipment and furniture which help prevent the development of these musculoskeletal disorders. Staff should contribute to their own safety and welfare by:

- avoiding sitting in the same position for long periods
- adjusting equipment and furniture to appropriate and comfortable positions
- taking regular rest breaks from VDU work ( at least 10 minutes away from the screen in every hour) by doing some other work.

## **9. FIRE SAFETY**

### **9.1 General**

9.1.1 It is not only the responsibility of the Fire Officer, but of all staff and members working at Technique Scaffolding's offices to be aware of fire hazards, to know the location of fire exists and the assembly point. Everyone must know the fire drill instructions and these will be part of the induction process for all new staff and volunteers.

9.1.2 Access to escape doors, extinguishers and other fire fighting equipment must not be obstructed and the Fire Officer will be instructed on their use.

### **9.2 Fire Drills**

9.2.1 Technique Scaffolding's Fire Officer is responsible for carrying out fire drills and will arrange these to take place at regular intervals, reviewing the success or otherwise of the evacuation and making recommendations for improved practices. He/she is responsible for ensuring that staff and volunteers are aware of the evacuation procedures and has the power to remove obstructions from fire exists.

9.2.2 The fire alarms shall be tested at regular intervals by Technique Scaffolding's Fire Officer and staff will be notified of any testing taking place during office hours.

9.2.3 Visitors and all staff, including volunteers, must be made fully familiar with the escape routes and Technique Scaffolding's assembly point.

### **9.3 Fire Drill Procedure**

If The Fire Alarm Sounds

- Evacuate the building immediately by the nearest exit
- Ensure any visitors leave the building
- Do not put yourself at risk
- Assemble in front of the building
- Do not re-enter the building for any reason until the Fire Officer or fire brigade confirm that it is safe to do so.

If You Discover a Fire

- Raise the alarm
- Evacuate the building immediately as above.



## **10. HYGIENE**

10.1 All areas must be kept clean and tidy.

10.2 Toilets must be washed regularly and kept clean.

10.3 All wash basins should be provided with hot water, soap, clean paper towels or hand dryers.

10.4 Vending machines for sanitary products and disposal bins should be provided. Bins should be emptied and sanitised regularly.

## **11. FIRST AID AND ACCIDENT REPORTING**

### **11.1 First Aid**

- 11.1.1 First Aid provision will be available at all times in an appropriate and accessible First Aid Box.
- 11.1.2 The First Aid Box is kept in the kitchen area.
- 11.1.3 At least one employee will receive appropriate first aid training.
- 11.1.4 All new employees will be told as part of their induction of the location of first aid equipment and the employee who has received first aid training.
- 11.1.5 A record of all first aid cases treated will be kept in the Accident Book, which will be kept with the First Aid Box.

### **11.2 Accidents and Emergencies**

- 11.2.1 All employees must report all incidents which resulted or nearly resulted in personal injury to themselves or others, to the Health & Safety Officer and make sure the accident is recorded in the Accident Book.
- 11.2.2 The Health & Safety Officer will ensure that personal details of individual(s) will be stored separately from the Accident Book in a secure location to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 11.2.3 It is the responsibility of the Health & Safety Officer to ensure that any necessary follow-up action is taken to reduce the risk of the accident or near accident recurring.
- 11.2.4 The Health & Safety Officer is responsible for reporting incidents which come within the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), to the London Borough of Islington Environmental Health Department. RIDDOR covers the following incidents:
  - (a) fatal accidents
  - (b) major injury accidents/conditions
  - (c) dangerous occurrences
  - (d) accidents causing more than 3 days incapacity from work
  - (e) certain work-related diseases.

## 12. HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES (COSHH)

Organizations are responsible for ensuring that employees are safely protected from substances that might be hazardous to their health. This could include cleaning materials, printing materials or even correction fluid. These are called COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessments.

### 12.1 General Statement

- 12.1.1 Under the 1992 COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations employers have a duty to make an assessment of the risks related to hazardous substances e.g. chemicals, noxious fumes etc. In accordance with the Approved Code of Practice this assessment will be carried out and written down by a nominated competent person.
- 12.1.2 The person responsible for carrying out this assessment will be Damian Baker.
- 12.1.3 Following this assessment, in accordance with the Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) Technique Scaffolding:
- In the first instance take action to remove any hazardous substances
  - If this is not possible, action shall be taken to find a substitute for the hazardous substance
  - If this is not possible, such substances shall be enclosed within a safe environment
  - If none of the above is possible, protective equipment will be issued to ensure the safety of staff.

### 12.2 Monitoring

- 12.2.1 If for any reason a member of staff or volunteer has been exposed to a possibly hazardous substance, levels of exposure will be monitored.
- 12.2.2 At all times levels of ill-health related to exposure to hazardous substances at work will be monitored.

### 12.3 Removal, Substitution, enclosure and Protection

All members of staff shall avoid using hazardous substances at all times if at all possible. Where substitute materials are available they should be used (e.g. water based markers,

correction fluid, etc). If there is no way of avoiding such use, staff must use the substance in an enclosed, ventilated environment away from other workers, and use proper protective equipment which shall be made available.

### **13. LIFTING AND HANDLING**

- 13.1 The employees of Technique Scaffolding should avoid manual lifting where at all possible. However, employees may occasionally be required to manually lift and handle loads. Correct manual lifting and handling reduces the effort required and prevents strain and risk of injury.
  
- 13.3 Employees should not put themselves at risk by attempting to lift heavy loads which could be taken apart or divided into smaller quantities. The assistance of other employees, or tenants during home visits, should always be sought for moving large quantities or for lifting heavy and awkward loads. When lifting is done by a team, instructions should be given by one person only.
  
- 13.4 Any employee feeling a strain should stop immediately and record the incident in the Accident Book.
  
- 13.5 Aids to reduce the risk of injury (e.g. trolleys) must always be used if available.



## 14. STRESS MANAGEMENT

14.1 Stress at work is a serious issue. Workers can suffer severe medical problems, which can result in under-performance at work and cause major disruptions to the organisation.

14.2 Stress is a workplace hazard that must be dealt with like any other. Thus the responsibility for reducing stress at work lies both with employer and employee.

14.3 Technique Scaffolding will do all it can to eradicate problems relating to stress at work. In particular it will:

- ensure close employee involvement, particularly during periods of change
- give opportunities for staff to contribute in the planning and organisation of their own jobs
- ensure staff have work targets that are stretching but reasonable
- implement effective policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and any form of harassment
- encourage good communications between staff and management
- promote the maintenance of a supportive culture in the workplace
- where appropriate take into consideration employees' personal situation/problems at home
- Ensure employees avoid working long and unsocial hours.

14.4 Technique Scaffolding will ensure as far as practicable that its policies, working practices and conditions of employment support its commitment to the above.

14.5 Employees should ensure that they do not work in a way that could cause them to suffer an increase of stress, nor cause an increase of stress on others.

14.6 Employees must respect other members of staff, and ensure that interpersonal conflict is avoided or dealt with sensibly.

14.7 Employees must not make unrealistic demands on other workers by increasing others' workload.

14.8 Employees should participate with the organisation's intention to maintain a supportive workplace environment.

14.9 If an employee is suffering from stress at work, s/he should discuss this with their line manager at the first opportunity. Where practicable and reasonable, Technique Scaffolding will seek to provide assistance to the employee.

## 15. RISK ASSESSMENT

### 1. What is a Risk Assessment?

Risk assessment helps you protect your workers and everyone using your organisation. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter, the ones with potential to cause harm. A risk assessment is, as the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) describe: "a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people.... the aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill".

### 2. Carrying out a Risk Assessment:

Carrying out a risk assessment is a relatively straightforward process, simply a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, and what precautions need to be taken.

The HSE prescribes a 'Five Step' process:

#### Step one – Identify the hazards

First walk around the workplace identifying anything that could be potentially hazardous - **write everything down - make a list**. Include *everything* you can think of: not just things that are currently obviously dangerous, but anything with a *potential* risk. It is a good idea to get two people to do this separately (one of these could be a trade union safety representative if there is one) and to compare lists afterwards, in case either of you have missed anything out.

Then think about **invisible** hazards - for example, in the voluntary sector one of the biggest risks people endure is stress (often related to working long hours, under pressure, to tight deadlines) or physical assault. Invisible hazards often include fumes - for example, photocopiers and laser printers emit ozone when in use.

Finally consider whether things that might not normally be hazardous might be in relation to specific people – e.g. pregnant women, disabled workers.

#### Step Two – identify who is at risk

Once you have identified and listed all the hazards, you need to (i) identify what the specific risk is, and (ii) who is particularly at risk.

Some people will be more at risk from particular hazards than others - for example a VDU user will be more at risk of suffering RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury - also known as WRULDs - Work Related Upper Limb Disorders), a cleaner might have specific risks related to the chemical cleaning agents being used, etc. And there will be those particularly at risk in some circumstances for example because they may be working alone, or they may have a disability. **List those potentially at risk.**

### **Step Three – Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**

Think about what you can do to remove the risk. Compare what you currently do with what is accepted as good practice. (You may need to seek advice on this from experts) The main purpose of doing a risk assessment is to be aware of the risks, so that you can take action to eliminate or at least reduce the risks. On a simple level if an electrical wire is exposed, you could replace it, or cover it with insulating tape. On a more proactive level, for example, if your cleaner is using potentially dangerous chemical agents - change the cleaning product - use something water-based. **Write down the actions currently taken and those actions you propose to be taken, and write down who will take the action, by when.**

### **Step Four – Record your findings**

If you employ five people or more, the law requires you to record your findings. Ensure the written record of your findings is made available to staff, and that they co-operate with the carrying out of the recommendations made as a result of the assessment. This might involve a change in working practices, a change in machinery or equipment, and **appropriate training** being undertaken.

### **Step Five**

Review your assessment. Few workplaces remain the same. You **must** review your assessment when there are major changes in the workplace, such as the introduction of new machinery, or new ways of working - but you must carry out regular reviews anyway - possibly annually. If your original assessment was properly recorded the review should be a relatively simple job but be aware of changing working practices.

### **Other considerations:**

- \* If you share a building with other groups, it is a **legal requirement** that you all co-operate with each other in carrying out assessments.

- \* If your workers have a trade union health and safety representative, you should consult with them before carrying out the assessment, and again after carrying out the assessment - in case they strongly disagree with the results of the assessments, or the proposals you may be making to remedy a potential hazard.

## Sample Risk Assessment Form

<p><b>What are the hazards?</b></p> <p>Spot hazards by walking around the workplace, talking to workers, checking machines and their instructions</p>	<p><b>Who might be harmed, and how?</b></p> <p>Remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some workers have specific needs</li> <li>• People who are not present when the assessment is taking place</li> <li>• Members of the public</li> </ul>	<p><b>What are you already doing?</b></p> <p>List precautions already in place</p>	<p><b>List actions to be taken</b></p> <p>Note <b>Who</b> will take the action, by <b>what date</b></p>

# What do I have to do?

You must make sure that **all** work at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by people who are competent (someone who has the skills, knowledge and experience) to do the job. This must include the use of the right type of access equipment.

To prevent or minimise risk when planning for work at height, consider what needs to be done and take a sensible, risk-based approach to identify suitable precautions.

## Control measures

There is a simple hierarchy of control measures (as described below) which you should follow to minimise the risk of a fall from height. The hierarchy should be followed **systematically** and only when one level is not reasonably practicable may the next level be considered.

Those in control of the work **need to:**

- avoid work at height where they can
- use work equipment to prevent falls where work at height cannot be avoided
- where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, use work equipment to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall if one occurs
- always consider measures that protect all those at risk, ie collective protection measures (scaffolds, nets, soft landing systems) before measures that only protect the individual, ie personal protection measures (a harness)

## Dos and don'ts of working at height

### Do....

- make sure the surface/access equipment in use is stable and strong enough to support the worker's weight and that of any equipment. Any edge protection should be wide enough and strong enough to prevent a fall
- as much work as possible from the ground or partly from the ground, for example assemble structures on the ground and lift them into position with lifting equipment

- take precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces, eg an asbestos cement roof, to prevent a fall or to minimise the distance and consequences in the event of a fall
- ensure workers can get safely to and from where they want to work at height and also consider emergency evacuation and rescue procedures
- make sure everyone involved is competent to do the work they are responsible for, including those who plan and organise it
- choose the most appropriate equipment for the type of work being done and how often it will be used
- provide protection from falling objects
- make sure equipment used for work at height is well maintained and inspected regularly

### **Don't...**

- overload ladders – the person and anything they are taking up should not exceed the highest load stated on the ladder
- overreach on ladders or stepladders – keep your belt buckle (navel) inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task
- use ladders or stepladders if the nature of the work is deemed to be 'heavy' or if the task will take longer than thirty minutes or so to complete
- use ladders if workers cannot maintain three points of contact (hands and feet) at the working position. If this is not possible, consider an alternative safe system of work
- let anyone who is **not** competent (someone who doesn't have the skills, knowledge and experience to do the job) carry out work at height