

## HAVE YOU CARRIED OUT RISK ASSESSMENTS?

### What is risk assessment?

Risk assessment is an effective management tool that can help reduce the substantial costs associated with accidents and ill-health. In simple terms, it is a judgement of the likelihood that a **hazard** will cause injury to people or loss of some kind.

Risk assessment is a **legal requirement** and therefore **must** be done – no ifs, buts, or “I haven’t got time”!

### What is meant by “hazard” and “risk”?

- A **hazard** is something which has the **potential** to cause injury or loss;
- **Risk** is the **likelihood** of injury or loss occurring during **exposure** to the hazard.

Some examples of typical hazards are:

- Working at height;
- Falling objects;
- Moving vehicles.

All of which, if not effectively prevented or controlled, can cause fatal or serious injury.

### How are risk assessments carried out?

The whole process can be broken down into 3 distinct stages:

1. **Preparing for the assessment:** e.g. reading the Company H&S Policy, raising the forms, involving/briefing your team, etc;
2. **Carrying out the assessments:** e.g. walking the premises/site, observing tasks and activities, comparing with Policy procedures, assessing the level of risk, etc;
3. **Post-assessment activities:** e.g. decide on any further control measures (action plan), monitoring and reviewing assessments (set your periodicity, e.g. annually).

***Please note:*** An incomplete, or badly carried out risk assessment is at best a waste of time and at worst, of no value in providing suitable and sufficient information for protecting people from dangers in the workplace. It may also be a breach of the law!