Safety Toolbox Talk

Tarmac

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Golden Rules require that before any task proceeds, particular risks that may arise are fully considered.

Completing a risk assessment before work proceeds is also required by Health and Safety Law.

Risk assessment need not be a complicated or lengthy process. For many tasks a risk assessment can be completed quite easily and quickly.

A risk assessment is careful examination of what could cause harm to people in the work place. You need to ensure that sufficient **precautions** have been taken to **prevent** people being **injured** or affecting their health.

Decide if the **hazard** is **significant** (that is, it could cause harm if it is not properly controlled) and whether there are sufficient and adequate precautions in place.

Most risk assessments follow a five stage process.

1. Look for the hazards

A **hazard** is anything that can cause **harm**, and could include

- electricity
- handling or using chemicals
- working from a ladder

2. Decide who may be affected by the hazard

People who may be affected could include:

- employees
- contractors
- members of the public

as well as those actually undertaking the work.

3. Evaluate or consider the risks arising from the hazard, and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate, or whether more needs to be done

Consider how likely it is that the hazard will cause harm (injury or ill health).

You need to decide whether you have done all the law requires you to do (guarding dangerous parts of machinery, for example), whether generally acceptable industry standards are in place (no work above 2m on a ladder without fall prevention in place, for example), and whether you have done all that is reasonably practicable.

Reasonably practicable means that you must do all that you can taking account of the effort in time and money versus the benefit in improved safety.

You must aim to reduce the risk of injury or ill health to the lowest reasonably practicable level.

When controlling risk, the following measures should be considered.

- Can we remove the hazard altogether?
- Try a less risky option.
- Prevent access to the hazard (by improved guarding, for example).
- Organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard.
- Ensure appropriate personal protective equipment is used.
- Ensure adequate welfare facilities are available to deal with contamination and provide adequate first aid.

4. Record your findings

You must record the significant findings of the risk assessment – that is - keep a written record.

You must inform people who could be affected by the task about the findings of the risk assessment.

The people involved in the task should assist with **producing the risk assessment.**

The risk assessment must be suitable and sufficient, but it does not have to be perfect. The risk assessment must show that:

- a proper check was made
- you asked who might be affected
- you dealt with the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who might be involved
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risks are low.

5. Review the assessment and revise it if necessary

Sooner or later you will bring in new machines, substances and procedures which could lead to new hazards.

If there is any significant change, add to the assessment to take account of the new hazard. Don't amend your assessment for every trivial change, or still more, for each new job; but if a new job introduces significant new hazards of its own, you will want to consider them in their own right and do whatever you need to keep the risks down.

In any case, it is good practice to review your assessment from time to time to make sure that the precautions are still working effectively.

QUESTIONS – (there may be more than one correct answer)

		A	B	C
1	**What is the purpose of a risk assessment?**	To identify risks	To create unnecessary paperwork	To assess and control risks to an acceptable level
2	**How many stages are usually followed when risk assessing?**	4	5	6
3	**What is reasonably practicable?**	No level of risk is acceptable	High risk ignored, even though it can be eliminated at relatively low cost	A balance of risk versus the cost, time and trouble needed to control risk to an acceptable level
4	**What needs to be recorded?**	Insignificant risks	Significant risks	Both
5	**When does it need reviewing?**	After a certain time period	Never	Following any significant change

Names of those who attended this Toolbox Talk	
Name (Print)	**Signature**
Carried out by Name (Print):	Carried out by (Signature):
Unit:	Date: