

Fact Sheet No 5

Risk Management

in
Workplace Health and Safety

What is Risk Management?

In simple terms, risk management is an approach used by organisations to control losses. It involves identifying hazardous situations in the work environment and assessing the associated risks; then taking action to minimise the possible consequences of these situations.

A *hazard* may be defined as a situation that is potentially damaging, for example fire, smoke or near-miss incidents.

A *risk* may be seen as the negative consequences of a situation. For instance, fire poses the risk of injury or damage to property although the risk can be reduced by installing fire alarms.

Principles

Risk management is based on the same principles of problem solving and decision making that managers have used for many years. They are:

- recognising that a problem exists;
- defining the nature of the problem;
- identifying alternative solutions;
- assessing alternatives;
- implementing the chosen action;
- evaluating the effectiveness of the action taken.

The University is adopting a risk management approach to workplace health and safety.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments are a key activity in effective management of workplace health and safety. Risk assessment is an ongoing process and should be carried out particularly when changes to equipment, layout or procedures occur in a work area.

The process of risk assessment involves six basic steps.

- Step 1 Identify hazards
(source of risk or danger)
- Step 2 Analyse consequences
(potential injury, property damage, etc)
- Step 3 Assess risk
(probability, frequency, severity of risk)
- Step 4 Determine action
(methods of removing or reducing risk)
- Step 5 Implement Controls
(redesign, removal, new methods, audit)
- Step 6 Evaluate Controls

Risk management is a part of the University's approach to meeting its workplace health and safety obligations. This approach is forward looking, preventative and contributes to the effectiveness of the University.



Reference

USQSafe, (1997) "Hazard or Incident Reporting", *Workplace Health and Safety Procedures Manual*.

National Safety Council of Australia, Queensland Division, (1993) *Fire Wardens Course*.



USQSafe Contact: Safety Coordinator, ext 2520.

Disclaimer

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