

Risk Assessment

IMPORTANT: Read the following carefully before attempting to complete the forms.

The object of carrying out the risk assessment is to help you, as owner/operator, to identify any areas or activities that may place the health and safety of others at risk. It will help you decide if improvements or precautions can reasonably be made. **It is not a test of 'How Safe is your Vessel'**

It is a requirement, under the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations, 1997, that you carry out risk assessments and consult and inform your crewmembers of the findings.

No inspection will be made, other than to check that risk assessments have been carried out. Hence, you should not try to make the risks on your vessel appear less than they truly are. If serious risks do exist, you need to be aware because in the event of an accident, you will be held responsible. Your risk assessments, or lack of them, will be questioned in court and you will have to justify your actions.

Completing the following pages of risk assessment may take a few hours, but having done it once, thereafter you will only need to review it every year or if situations change. Perhaps the easiest approach, is to involve your crewmembers and to complete a section at a time, discussing the various points between you.

The object is to ensure that the work situation is safe for all persons involved **'so far as is reasonably practicable'**.

'Reasonably practicable' means what the average 'reasonable person' would consider to be sensible when considering the risk involved, balanced against the cost (whether in money, time or trouble) to avoid the risk.

These Standard Risk Assessment forms have been produced by Seafish to assist vessel operators to carry out risk assessment. They are general forms, to cover a wide range of vessels and it is important to remember that, whilst many of the hazards listed may not apply on your vessel, there may also be hazards that do exist on your vessel, that are not listed. You must consider all possible risks and include them in the assessment.

Seafish has made every effort to ensure the accuracy and suitability of these risk assessment procedures. However, no responsibility or liability will be accepted for their subsequent implementation.

Risk Assessment

In order to make work situations safe it is necessary to think of the dangers or hazards that are possible and to try to prevent or protect against them. This is known as 'risk assessment' and people are doing it informally all the time, making judgements, 'weighing the job up'.

The following sheets give risk assessments with most of the expected 'hazards' and possible 'consequences' listed. To complete the assessment you need to consider how likely it is that harm will actually occur from the possible hazard and how harmful the consequences could be. From the table you will be able to obtain the level of risk. Having established a 'risk factor' you then need to consider the 'control measures' that you feel are appropriate on your vessel.

Terms Used

'Hazard'	An object or situation which may cause harm.
'How Likely' (L)	How likely it is that harm will actually occur considering how often involvement with the hazard occurs, the existing safeguards, the experience and training of persons and the number of persons involved and other factors such as weather and working conditions.
'Consequences'	The possible outcome of the hazard.
'How Harmful (H)'	How harmful the consequences may be.
'Risk'	A combination of 'how likely' and 'how harmful'

Obviously, something that is very likely to happen is a greater risk than something which is highly unlikely. However, in assessing the risk, the severity of the possible consequences is of major importance. Something that is unlikely but could result in the loss of life is a bigger risk than something that is likely to happen but has only minor consequences.

'Control Measure' What you intend to do about the risk

The following tables give numerical values to determine risk.

How likely that harm may occur (L)		How harmful (H)	
1	Very unlikely	1	Slightly harmful
2	Unlikely	2	Harmful
3	Likely	3	Very harmful

Definitions of 'How harmful' (H)

'Slightly harmful'	- minor injuries, nuisance, temporary ill-health
'Harmful'	- serious injuries, permanent minor disability
'Very harmful'	- amputations, major fractures, fatal injuries, drownings, life shortening diseases

Risk Factors (L x H)	
1	- No action is needed.
2	- Can be tolerated, but make sure that it does not become worse.
3/4	- Take action but subject to it being reasonable and sensibly possible.
6	- Must be attended to, you must reduce the risk.
9	- Cannot be accepted and work/activity must not continue.

The risk assessment sheets are designed to help you carry out risk assessment but, in using these sheets it is important to remember that **it is the situation on your vessel that is to be assessed and if hazards exist which are not on the standard sheets you must add them.** The spaces headed 'other' are intended for this. There will be many hazards listed that do not apply to your vessel. Simply mark these N/A (not applicable) in the L x H column.

Carrying Out Risk Assessment

Carrying out the risk assessment is straight forward, in the sections labelled 'All Vessels' and those that relate to your fishing methods, simply consider each of the listed hazards as they exist now on your vessel:

- Does it exist with respect to your vessel? If not, write **N/A** (not applicable) in the **L x H** column and perhaps add a brief note to say why it is not applicable in the control measures column. If the hazard does exist, continue with the following:
- How likely is it to cause harm? Is it; **1 - very unlikely, 2 - unlikely, 3 - likely.** Enter the appropriate number in the **L** column.
- Consider the how harmful the consequences may be: **1 - slightly harmful, 2 - harmful, 3 - very harmful.** Enter the appropriate number in the **H** column.
- Multiply **L x H** to obtain a risk factor and then refer to the risk factor table to see if you need to take action.
- Decide on the action you will take and note it briefly in the control measures column. If no action is necessary, briefly note why.
- If hazards exist on your vessel, that are not on the forms, you should add them in the spaces marked 'other'. If these are insufficient, blank forms are available at the back of each section.
- Enter the actions you are to take on the 'Action List' to remind you to do them without delay.

Note: It is the situation on your vessel, as it is now, that you should assess. Not as you intend it to be. Any future assessment would consider the control measures that you have put in place at this assessment.

Who Should Carry Out Risk Assessments?

As operator, you are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are carried out by a 'competent person'. A competent person is one who has had sufficient training and has experience or knowledge and other qualities to enable him/her to properly assist the operator in undertaking the protective and preventative measures. The competent person may well be yourself. Skipper owners obviously have knowledge and experience of work activities in fishing and the necessary information on risk assessment is given here. **You do not have to employ a consultant.**

Ideally, it should not be just one individual who does the assessment. A team made up of:

- someone who knows about the fishing operations
- the skipper/owner
- an independent person

should work together to look at all aspects of the vessel and its operation. On most vessels it is probably sensible to involve all the crewmembers in the assessment process. It is a requirement that they must be consulted and informed but also their involvement will be helpful and will promote an awareness of health and safety on the vessel.

You must carry out risk assessments for:

- **All operations involving your vessel**

Also specific assessments are required for:

- **Young Workers**

A specific risk assessment is required when a person below the age of 18 is employed. This must consider the work which the person is being requested to do and ensure that the person's training, experience, physical and psychological development are sufficient to enable them to carry out the work safely.

- **Pregnant Workers**

A pregnant worker, or one who has recently given birth or who is breast feeding must have a risk assessment to ensure that their health and safety will not be placed at risk by the work that they are required to do.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Where personal protective equipment has been provided to protect against a hazard that cannot be avoided by other means, i.e. a buoyancy aid to protect against drowning, an assessment must be made to ensure that:

- it fits the worker properly
- it does not pose other risks
- it effectively protects against the hazard for which it is intended

Action Lists, Blank Assessment Forms are included for use as required.

IMPORTANT Having completed the risk assessment and stated the control measures that are required, you must then put them in place without delay. Fill in the ACTION LIST to remind you.

Review of Risk Assessments

The risk assessments shall be reviewed if:

- there is reason to suspect that it is no longer valid,
- there has been a significant change in the matters to which it relates.
- If the vessel changes ownership or mode of fishing

Even if changes have not occurred, it is usual to review risk assessments every year and boxes are provided on each form for two reviews.

Any changes identified as a result of review must be put in place.