Risk Assessment Meeting Kit

Risk assessment is a process that identifies possible hazards to people, product and property—and what to do about it. There are four main areas where hazards exist:

- **People:** improper training, poor supervision, not paying attention, not working safely, etc.
- **Equipment:** poorly maintained, no guards, using the wrong equipment for the task.
- **Materials:** flammable or dangerous substances, handling hazards, special storage, etc.
- **Environment:** wet floor, poor lighting, loud noise, inclement weather, etc.

When Should a Risk Assessment be Conducted?

- Before new processes or activities are introduced.
- Before changes are introduced to existing processes or activities, including when products, machinery, tools, equipment change or new information concerning harm becomes available.
- When hazards are identified.

How to Plan for Risk Assessment

Find out:

- What the scope of your risk assessment will be.
- The resources needed.
- What type of risk analysis measures will be used (e.g., how exact the scale or parameters needed).
- Who are the stakeholders involved (e.g., manager, supervisors, workers, worker representatives, etc.).
- What relevant laws, regulations, codes, or standards may apply in your jurisdiction.

The Importance of Risk Assessment

- Create awareness of hazards and risk.
- Identify who may be at risk (e.g., employees, cleaners, visitors, contractors, the public, etc.).
- Determine whether a control program is required for a particular hazard.
- Determine if existing control measures are adequate or if more should be done.
- Prevent injuries or illnesses, especially when done at the design or planning stage.
- Prioritize hazards and control measures.
- Meet legal requirements where applicable.

The Goal of Risk Assessment

The goal is to try to answer the following questions:

1. What can happen and under what circumstances?
2. What are the possible consequences?
3. How likely are the possible consequences to occur?
4. Is the risk controlled effectively, or is further action required?

STEPS IN CONDUCTING A RISK ASSESSMENT

Step 1: The Identification Process

Employers have a duty to assess the health and safety risks faced by their workers. Your employer must systematically check for possible physical, mental, chemical and biological hazards.

Step 2: Decide Who May Be Harmed, and How

Identifying who is at risk starts with your organization’s own full- and part-time employees. Employers must also assess risks faced by agency and contract staff, visitors, clients and other members of the public on their premises.

Step 3: Assess the Risks and Take Action

This means employers must consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. This will determine whether or not your employer should reduce the level of risk. Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. Employers must decide for each remaining hazard whether the risk remains high, medium or low.

Step 4: Make A Record of The Findings

Employers with five or more staff are required to record in writing the main findings of the risk assessment. This record should include details of any hazards noted in the risk assessment, and action taken to reduce or eliminate risk.

Step 5: Review the Risk Assessment

Ensure that agreed safe working practices continue to be applied (e.g. that management's safety instructions are respected by supervisors and line managers). Take account of any new working practices, new machinery or more demanding work targets.

It is important to know if your risk assessment was complete and accurate. It is also essential to be sure that any changes in the workplace have not introduced new hazards or changed hazards that were once ranked as lower priority to a higher priority.

COMMUNICATE THE RISKS

The final step is to communicate the risks that you identify to everyone. They need to have a comprehensive understanding of the existing risks and how to prevent or mitigate them to achieve your organizational objectives.

FINAL WORD

For every task or job you perform a risk assessment for, think about how it is usually completed, and how a hazard may be caused by people, equipment, materials, or environment.