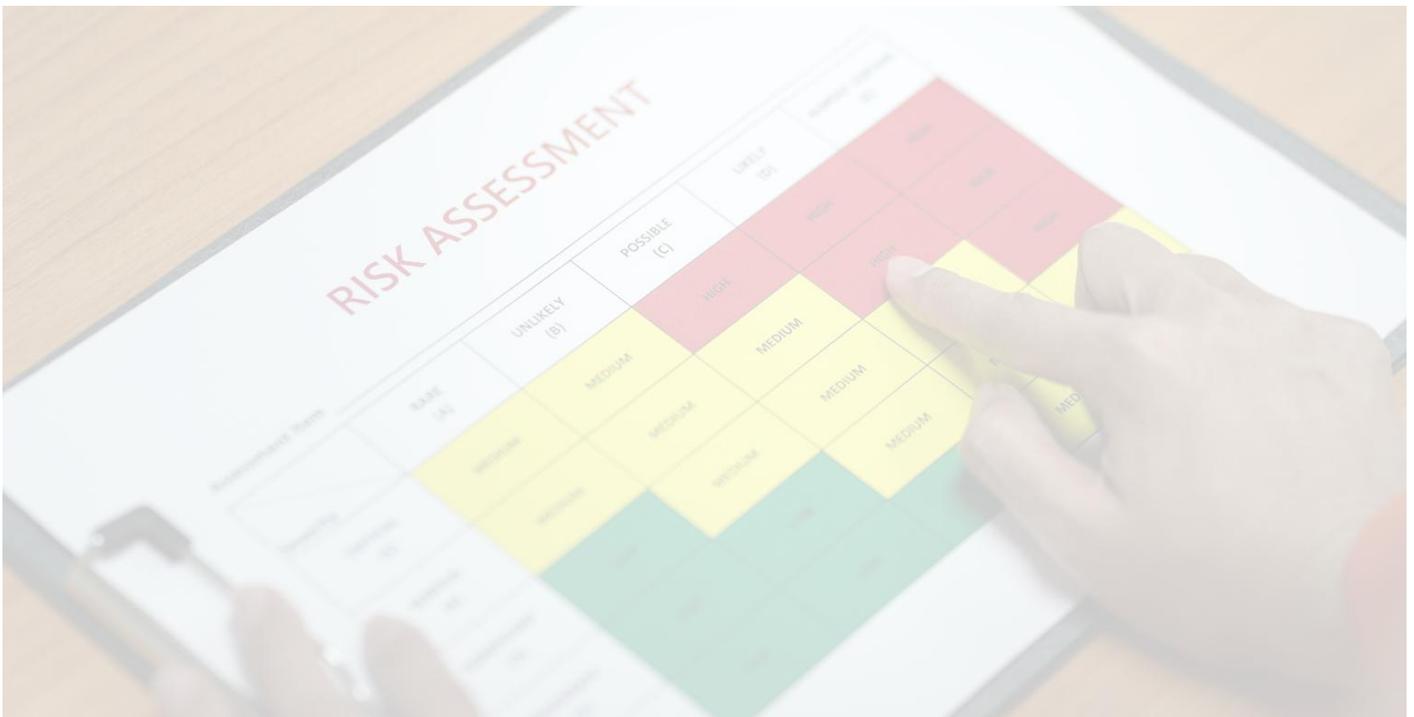


# Guide to Risk Assessment: 5 Steps for Businesses



*Created by Foresight Safety Ltd – Supporting Guernsey Businesses  
in Health & Safety Compliance.*

# Guide to Risk Assessment: 5 Steps for Businesses

## Introduction

Risk assessments are essential to identify hazards, evaluate risks, and put controls in place to protect your staff and visitors. Following the **5-step approach**, your business can meet compliance obligations while creating a safer workplace.

### Disclaimer:

This document is intended for general guidance on the risk assessment process. It does not replace legal requirements, professional advice, or the specific health and safety policies of an organisation. Users of this document are responsible for ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and workplace standards. Foresight Safety Ltd accept no liability for any loss, injury, or damage arising from the use of this document.

## Summary Table: 5-Step Risk Assessment

Step	Action	Key Tip
1. Identify hazards	Look for anything that can cause harm	Consult employees
2. Decide who might be harmed	Identify affected people	Include vulnerable groups
3. Evaluate risks & precautions	Assess likelihood & severity, apply controls	Follow hierarchy of control
4. Record findings	Document hazards, risks, and actions	Keep it simple & clear
5. Review & update	Reassess regularly or after changes	Make it a living document

## Practical Tips for Businesses

- Involve employees in hazard identification; they know their tasks best.
- Use checklists for common hazards in your industry.
- Train staff to follow safe procedures consistently.
- Keep your assessment accessible and visible to all relevant personnel.
- Combine this with regular audits and safety inspections.

## Step 1: Identify the Hazards

### What to do:

- Walk around your workplace and look for anything that could cause harm.
- Consult employees and safety representatives.
- Consider different types of hazards:
  - **Safety:** arising from unsafe workplace conditions, such as inadequate machine guards, or unsafe work practices, including failure to follow safe systems of work.
  - **Biological:** caused by organisms like viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites.

- **Chemical:** including exposure to acids, alkalis, carcinogens, and sensitizers.
- **Ergonomic:** resulting from physical and psychological demands on workers, such as repetitive or forceful movements, awkward postures due to poor working methods, and poorly designed workstations, tools, or equipment.
- **Physical:** stemming from noise, vibration, energy, weather conditions, heat, cold, electricity, radiation, and pressure.
- **Wellbeing and mental health:** such as overwork, stress, bullying, or violence.
- **Temporary or intermittent:** for example, occasional machinery failures like sticking safety valve on a boiler.
- **Environmental:** such as liquid spills or improperly stored items obstructing walkways.

**Tip:** Keep a log of all hazards and where they occur.

## Step 2: Decide Who Might Be Harmed and How

### What to do:

- Identify who may be affected by each hazard:
  - Employees (full-time, part-time, contractors)
  - Visitors, clients, or members of the public
  - Vulnerable groups (young workers, pregnant employees, elderly)
- Describe how they might be harmed (injuries, illness, long-term effects).

**Tip:** Understanding who is at risk helps prioritize control measures.

## Step 3: Evaluate the Risks and Decide on Precautions

### What to do:

- Assess how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm and how severe the outcome might be.
- Decide what measures are already in place and whether they are sufficient.
- Consider control options using the **hierarchy of control:**
  1. **Eliminate:** the hazard if possible
  2. **Substitute:** with something safer
  3. **Engineering controls:** (guards, barriers, ventilation)
  4. **Administrative controls:** (training, procedures, signage)
  5. **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** (Ensure suitable PPE is available for the task)

**Tip:** Focus on the most significant risks first.

## Step 4: Record Your Findings

### What to do:

- Document:
  - Identified hazards
  - Who might be harmed
  - Control measures in place and actions required
- Keep the record simple and clear; it doesn't have to be complicated.

**Tip:** Written records are legally required for organisations with **5 or more employees** in the UK.

## Step 5: Review and Update Your Assessment

### What to do:

- Review your risk assessment regularly or when:
  - A significant change occurs (new equipment, new process, new staff)
  - An accident or near miss happens
  - Laws or guidance are updated
- Update control measures accordingly.

**Tip:** Treat your risk assessment as a **living document** — safety is ongoing, not a one-time exercise.

## Need help with your risk assessment?

Contact Foresight Safety for a free consultation:

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- W: [www.Foresightsafety.co.uk](http://www.Foresightsafety.co.uk)