

# What is a Risk Assessment?

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 a person conducting a business or undertaking must “ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the health and safety of other persons is not put at risk from work carried out as part of the conduct of the business or undertaking.”

In assessing what is “reasonably practicable” to reduce that risk, the following matters need to be taken into account:

- (a) the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring; and
- (b) the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk; and
- (c) what the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about—
  - (i) the hazard or the risk; and
  - (ii) ways of eliminating or minimising the risk; and
- (d) the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk; and
- (e) after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.”

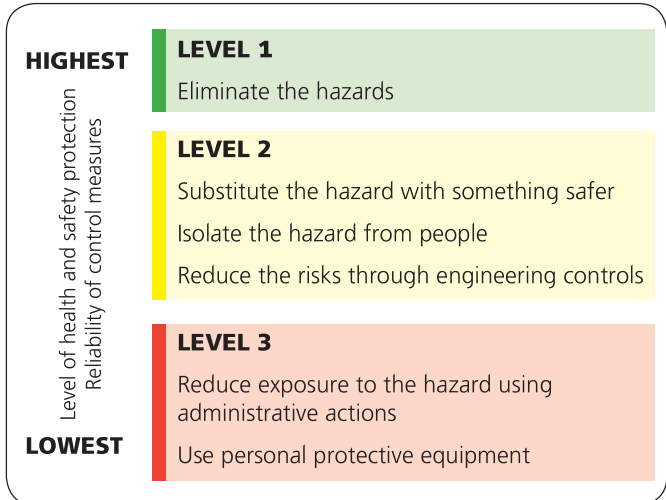
A risk assessment is the tool that is generally used to consider those things.

## What does a Risk Assessment look like?

There is no set format for a Risk Assessment, but they generally are in the form of a spreadsheet that have a series of columns that describe particular risks, the likelihood of them occurring and how severe the consequences could be. The assessment then looks at what existing controls are in place to either prevent the risk, or lessen the consequences, and considers whether additional controls are needed to reduce the risk to “as low as reasonably practicable.”

## What are Control Measures?

A control is any measure that reduces a risk. Sometimes, a single control might be enough to eliminate a risk, like removing a tripping hazard from the work environment. Other risks might need several control measures. Some controls are better than others, for example, it’s better to eliminate the risk completely than it is to reduce it with procedures of protective equipment. The most effective control should be used. This is the Hierarchy of Controls. The diagram at top right is copied from the Worksafe Queensland website.



## Consultation

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 a person conducting a business or undertaking must “so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, as required under in this division and any regulation, with workers who carry out work for the business or undertaking who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a matter relating to work health or safety.”

This consultation requires that:

- (a) that relevant information about the matter is shared with workers; and
- (b) that workers be given a reasonable opportunity—
  - (i) to express their views and to raise work health or safety issues in relation to the matter; and
  - (ii) to contribute to the decision-making process relating to the matter; and
- (c) that the views of workers are taken into account by the person conducting the business or undertaking; and
- (d) that the workers consulted are advised of the outcome of the consultation in a timely way.”

The employer must consult when identifying hazards and assessing risks to health and safety arising from the work carried out or to be carried out by the business or undertaking and when making decisions about ways to eliminate or minimise those risks

Further, under your collective agreement, the Department of Education Certified Agreement 2019, the Department is required to consult about decisions which may affect your employment or welfare.