



Basic Risk Management Guidelines for Motor Sports Clubs

Prepared by Risk Group Pty Ltd
for

Motor Sports NT

August 2013



MANAGING OPERATIONAL RISK

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1. INTRODUCTION

This basic guide is intended to help motor sports clubs to conduct simple risk assessments at their workplaces.

An assessment of risk is nothing more than a careful and structured examination of what in the workplace could cause loss or harm to people or the organisation itself, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent loss, damage or harm. The aim is to identify and prevent incidents whereby losses occur or people are injured. Injuries, theft, reputational damage and legal claims, for example, can affect the safe and effective operation of a club, with the potential for increased insurance costs, loss of patronage and possible legal action.

You all engage in risk management at times without really knowing it. For example, you routinely wear a seat belt to mitigate the risk of injury in the event of a crash, which is basic risk management. Similarly, you contribute to a superannuation scheme to manage the risk of having sufficient income during retirement. The most effective approach in business or in managing a sporting organisation or sporting event, requires a structured approach to understanding what the risks are ('risk identification'), what the impact might be if a risk event occurred ('risk likelihood and consequence'), and developing strategies to manage those risks ('risk controls').

Don't be put off by some of the words used in this guide.

- 'Hazard' (or threat) means anything that can cause harm to your employees and others.
- 'Risk' is the chance, great or small, that an event will occur and impact on someone or the organisation.

The important things you need to decide are whether a hazard is significant and whether you have it covered by taking satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. You need to check this when you assess the risks. For example, while electricity can kill, the risk of it happening is remote provided that appropriate safety precautions are taken with electrical equipment. Similarly, whilst the risk of personal injury in motorcycle racing may be high, the range of safety systems, policies and procedures employed by a club; the skill level, training, supervision and protective gear worn by individual riders can reduce this to an acceptable level.

If you want more in-depth explanations of the process of risk management you should consult the Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 31000: 2009.

2. HOW TO ASSESS RISKS IN THE WORKPLACE

2.1 Keep it Simple

In most organisations, the hazards are few and simple. Checking them is common sense, but necessary.

You may have already informally assessed some of them. For example, if you have machinery, you may already have made an assessment of the safety risks and precautions you need to take. If so, you can consider them 'checked', and write that down when you are making a written assessment.

In motor sport, there will undoubtedly be risks associated with the safe operation of vehicles and tracks, for example. Consider the risks of personal injury to participants, support staff and the public, as well as any others risks that might arise in your specific context.

2.2 Work Collaboratively

In small clubs it's best that you form a small working group to conduct the risk assessment. It's very important that there is a shared understanding of the risks and the control measures that the club puts in place. If you are a larger organisation, you could ask a safety officer or external consultant to help you.

If you are not confident, get help from a competent source like Motor Sports NT. But remember, you are responsible for ensuring that it is done; indeed one of the risks for virtually all organisations is the failure to complete a proper risk assessment, thus leaving office bearers and other stakeholders exposed.

2.3 Structured Approach

Adopting a structured approach is important to ensure that you address all of the risks, not just the obvious ones. You should consider the range of areas where risks might arise, many of which are listed in the checklist at section 5 of this guide. The working group should "brainstorm" each area to flesh out all of the risks of relevance to your club activities. Sometimes it's useful to have an independent person run this workshop process to keep the group on track and cover all of the relevant areas. Whatever approach you take, the aim must be to *identify* the risks, *analyse* them (determining the likelihood and consequences of a particular risk), *evaluate* each risk (what can we do about it?); assess whether you have sufficient controls in place to manage each risk and finally develop action plans to deal with each risk.

3. FIVE STEPS TO SIMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT

Step 1: Look for the hazards

If you are doing the assessment yourself, walk around your workplace and look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to create a hazard. Ignore the trivial and concentrate only on significant hazards that could result in serious harm or affect several people.

Ask your employees, volunteers or club members what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious.

Use the process in Appendix 1 to stimulate your thoughts. Try to use this with a team to 'brainstorm' and come up with a list of issues.

Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Think about people who may not be in the workplace all the time, e.g. Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance personnel, etc. Include members of the public or people you share your workplace with, if there is a chance they could be hurt by your activities. But don't just focus on Occupational Health and Safety. Think about the business/financial risks too, some of which are canvassed in the checklist.

Step 3: Evaluate the risks

You need to consider whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done. Even after all precautions have been taken, usually some risk remains. What you have to decide for each significant hazard is whether this remaining risk is high, medium or low.

First, ask yourself whether you have done all things that the law says you have got to do. For example, there are legal requirements relating to the storage and use of flammable liquids and provision of material safety data sheets.

Next, ask yourself whether generally accepted industry standards are in place. But don't stop there - think for yourself, because the law also says that you must do what is reasonably practicable to ensure flammable liquids are safely used. Your real aim is to make all risks small by adding to your precautions if necessary.

Improvements need not cost a lot. For instance, regularly checking electrical cables or safely storing ladders, are inexpensive precautions considering the risks.

If you find that something needs to be done, ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

Only use personal protective equipment as a control measure when there is nothing else that you can reasonably do.

If the nature of your activities tends to vary a lot, or if you or your employees/volunteers move from one location to another, select those hazards that you can reasonably foresee and assess the risks from them. After that, if you spot any unusual hazard when you get to a location, get information from others onsite and take what action seems necessary.

If you share a workplace or event location, tell the other users of the space, employers and self-employed people there, about safety and what precautions you are taking. Also, think about the safety risks from those who share your workplace or event location.

A good source of risk identification is evidence from previous incidents. For example, have there been any instances in the past such as break-ins at club premises, fires, criminal damage, floods or other natural disasters, or serious injuries however arising?

Step 4: Record your findings

You should record the significant findings of your assessment. This means:

- writing down the more significant hazards; and
- recording your most important conclusions.

For example, *“Electric leads checked and insulation found to be OK”*, or *“An independent expert has conducted an asbestos audit – no further action required”*. You should also inform your employees and their representatives about your findings.

You need to be able to show that:

- a proper check was made;
- you asked anyone who may be involved;
- you dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved; and
- the precautions are reasonable and the remaining risk is minimal in the circumstances.

Assessments need to be suitable and sufficient, not perfect. The real points are:

- Are the precautions reasonable?
- Is there evidence to show that a proper check was made?

Keep the written document for future reference or use. It can help you if an inspector questions your precautions, or if you become involved in any action for civil liability. It can also remind you to keep an eye on particular matters, and it helps to show that you have done what the law and good governance requires.

There is a form with this guide that you may find helpful (refer Appendix 1), but by all means, produce your own form if it suits you better. Some users find it useful to recreate the form in Excel for example, as it enables you to expand the fields and keep track of changes.

To make things simpler, you can refer to other documents, such as manuals, the arrangements in your safety policy statement, MSNT or government policy, manufacturers' instructions, and your safe work procedures. These may already list hazards and precautions. You don't need to repeat all that, and it is up to you whether you combine all the documents or keep them separately.

Step 5: Regularly review and revise your assessment

When you have finished documenting the risks in this way, it becomes your Risk Register. You need to keep this document current and it's a good idea to refer to it at each general meeting of the committee.

Sooner or later you will bring in new equipment, processes and procedures, or change existing approaches to work that could lead to new hazards. If there is any significant change, you should add to the assessment to take account of the new hazard. In any case, it is good practice to review your assessment from time to time.

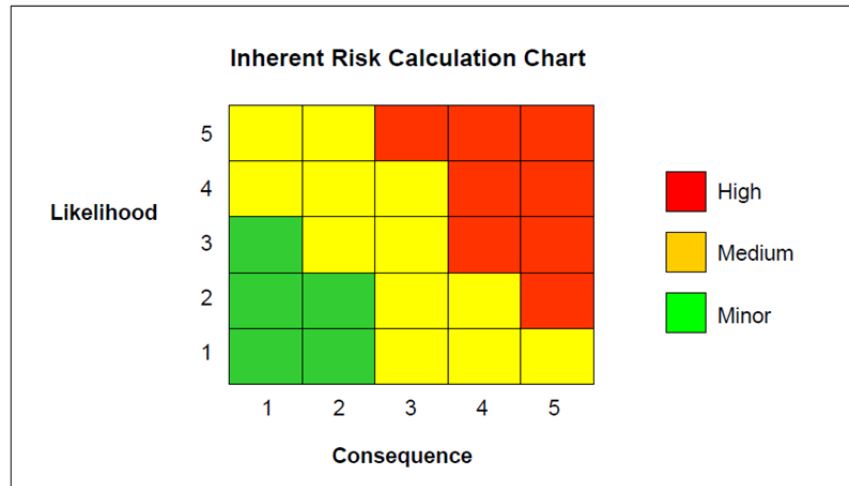


4. IDENTIFYING THE RISKS

The following breaks down the steps involved in identifying the risks in your workplace or event location.

1. Draw a diagram or plan of the place you are reviewing. Split it into 'chunks' and tackle each 'chunk' one by one. If you are looking at the risks for a particular event, say a major race or similar public event, think about the various stages (planning, preparation, setup, etc.) and work through the key elements at each step of the process.
2. Find out about critical incidents that may have occurred in that process in the past (or at similar events or clubs).
3. Assemble a team to look at each 'chunk' of the process.
4. All members of the team should consider the past incidents, visit the area and watch the process, if possible. If the process has not started or the area is still to be built, try to see another process or area that is similar.
5. Get the team to always consider the following:
 - What would happen if...?
 - Is it possible...?
 - Could somebody...?
 - Has anybody...?
6. Use a checklist to stimulate the team and make sure you do not miss anything out.
7. Use the sample form at Appendix 1 to record your discussions. Write down the following:
 - What is the issue you have considered (based on the checklist)?
 - What would be the cause of the problem?
 - What would be the consequences if it were to occur (how many people could be affected and how severely)?
 - What are the present safeguards (controls) in place, and are they adequate (be honest)?
 - What needs to be done, if anything, to improve the safety and reduce the risk?

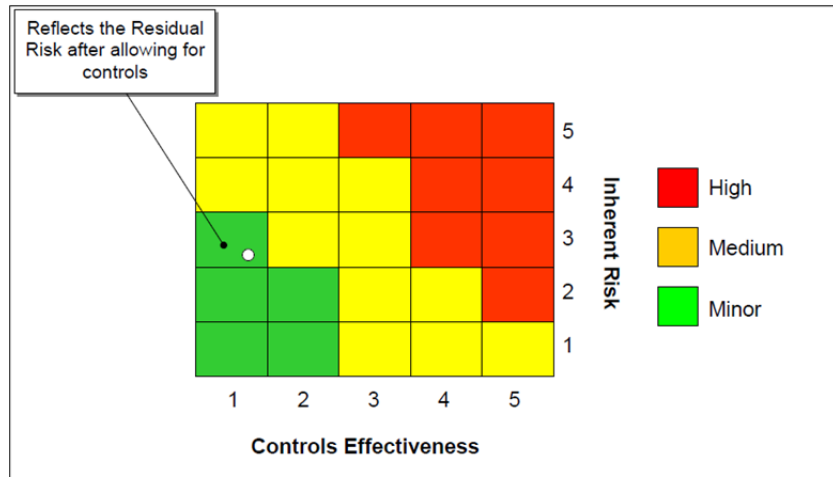
8. Use the risk tables below to help the team rate the risk. Select one factor for severity and one for likelihood to come up with the initial (inherent) risk rating of High, Medium or Low.



9. Assign the initial risk rating and then consider the range of existing controls that may already be in place. If you conclude that they are adequate (see the following table for assessing control measures), then you can change the risk rating to reflect that.

Level	Control Effectiveness	Description
1	Effectively managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All risk control measures that are practicable (practical and cost effective) are in place. No further practicable measures can be implemented.
2	Adequately managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of practicable measures are in place. Further measures, if implemented, would only marginally increase the degree of risk control.
3	Borderline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some risk control measures in place. Compliance with codes/standards. Further measures, if implemented would improve the degree of risk control.
4	Inadequate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some risk control measures are in place. Some compliance with codes but not complete. Further measures could be implemented that would greatly improve the degree of risk control.
5	Not effective at all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures in place at all. Reliance on chance to ensure that risk doesn't occur.

10. For example, you might initially think that the risk of a fire in a building is High, but on taking account of the fire safety systems in place, lack of any history of fire events, good security and trained staff, you conclude that the residual risk is actually Low. You should document this thought process to show how you arrived at these conclusions.



11. Write down a programme to tackle the issues by implementing the actions. Start with the biggest risk first, and indicate who will be responsible for completing it and by when.
12. Set up a plan to check the programme, and sign off the actions once they are completed.

5. WORKPLACE CONSIDERATIONS CHECKLIST

Here are some of the areas that may have relevance to your organisation.

- Falls from height.
- Working in confined spaces.
- Obstructions – pathways, entrances, roads.
- Surfaces – slips and falls.
- Access – safety and security for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Sunburn, fatigue and stress for workers.
- Electrical hazards.
- Radiant heat.
- Excessive noise.
- Toxic substances or irritants (fuel, oil, additives).
- Risk of inhalation, skin exposure or ingestion.
- Biological hazards (blood).
- Flammable liquids – vapour, ignition sources, stored combustibles.
- Explosive or corrosive materials storage and handling.
- Processes and procedures.
- Use of machinery, such as power tools.
- Safe work methods for specific activities.
- Safe lifting techniques.
- Access to controlled areas by unauthorised persons.
- Projectiles – ejection, explosion or disintegration resulting from an impact, for example.
- Business risks – insufficient funds to maintain club activities, or no insurance or inadequate insurance coverage, including office bearers' liability.
- Crime – burglary, theft of club property, and malicious damage.
- Natural disasters – flood, fire, windstorm.
- Event-specific risks – personal injury to staff, club members, volunteers and spectators.

Appendix 1

Sample Risk Register

A sample Risk Register is provided on the following page.

You may want to reproduce this in Excel or Word so that you can keep it in an electronic format and maintain it as the Risk Register.

NAME OF ORGANISATION		
ADDRESS		
DATE OF ASSESSMENT		DATE/S REVIEWED [<input style="width: 200px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>]
PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN ASSESSMENT		
APPROVED BY		

Risk Description	Existing Controls <i>(Note where the information may be found eg an operating procedure or other source)</i>	Actions Needed <i>(To control the risks to an adequate level)</i>	Risk Rating	Responsible Person	Due Date

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