

## Risk Assessment for an Office Environment

Date: (1) 30/10/2019	Assessed by: (2) James Fields	Checked / Validated* by: (3) Tony McDonald	Location: (4) General offices in Kilburn and IT Buildings.  University of Manchester	Assessment ref no (5)	Review date: (6) 30/10/2020
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Task / premises: (7)

**Risk assessment for the activities associated with work in an office environment**

**Please refer to guidance notes below.**

**Lone Working – Please refer to Lone Working risk assessment**

**Young persons – Please refer to young person risk assessment**

**Expectant/new mothers – Please refer to Expectant and New Mothers risk assessment**

**For further information please contact the Department Safety Advisor Tony Mcdonald [Tony.Mcdonald@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Tony.Mcdonald@manchester.ac.uk)**

Activity (8)	Hazard (9)	Who might be harmed and how (10)	Existing measures to control risk (11)	Risk rating (12)	Result (13)
Work in an office environment	Slips, trips	Staff, Visitors, Cleaners - could suffer injury e.g. sprains or fractures if they fall	Reasonable standards of housekeeping maintained Trailing cables positioned neatly away from walkways Damage to floor coverings and other repairs and maintenance reported immediately to the person responsible for the area whereby appropriate steps will be taken (repair/replacement as necessary). Floors kept clear of items, e.g. papers, bags Cabinet drawers and doors kept closed when not in use Floor cleaned regularly Adequate lighting provided	Low	A

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*Result : T = trivial, A = adequately controlled, N = not adequately controlled, action required, U = unknown risk*

Activity (8)	Hazard (9)	Who might be harmed and how (10)	Existing measures to control risk (11)	Risk rating (12)	Result (13)
Work in an office environment	Manual Handling – carrying, lifting, pulling, pushing heavy loads e.g. furniture, PCs, stationary	Staff - could suffer from back pain if heavy/bulky objects carried incorrectly	Contact portering staff to arrange for heavy items to be moved  Trolley used to transport boxes of paper etc Top shelves used for storage of light objects only	Low	A
	Regular computer use	Staff - may suffer from upper limb disorders (associated with repetitive actions) from regular PC use or suffer from eyestrain/headache if lighting/screen image is poor	DSE assessment to be undertaken : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by all new members of staff</li> <li>• When your working environment undergoes significant changes, and</li> <li>• If you suffer discomfort whilst performing usual desk based activities.</li> </ul> Work scheduled so that staff have regular breaks from the computer necessary	Low	A
	Electrical e.g. PC, printer, lamp, fan, heater, kettle, photocopier, shredder, extension leads	Staff and others - could suffer electrical shock or burns if equipment is faulty	All office equipment used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and staff trained in its use. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) is carried out in accordance with the University Code of Practice on the Maintenance of Electrical Equipment Defective plugs, cables equipment etc reported to Division Office Manager for repair/replacement Sufficient power sockets provided to reduce need for extension cables Staff discouraged from bringing in own electrical equipment as maintenance cannot be assured Kettle/water heater positioned so water spills cannot contact electricity supply or equipment Liquid spills mopped up immediately	Low	A

Activity (8)	Hazard (9)	Who might be harmed and how (10)	Existing measures to control risk (11)	Risk rating (12)	Result (13)
	Fire	Staff and other building users - could suffer from smoke inhalation or burns if trapped in office	All University of Manchester buildings have a weekly fire alarm test to ensure SFARP the integrity of the fire detection system. Staff induction includes fire evacuation procedures and means of raising the alarm Annual fire evacuation practice carried out Access to fire exits are kept clear at all times. Regular removal of combustible waste is carried out. Heaters located away from combustible materials and switched off when office is left unattended. Fan heaters are not permitted for use in an environment where combustible type 1 materials are present.	Low	A
	Falls from height	Staff - retrieving items stored at height	Appropriate access equipment to be used where necessary.	Low	A
	Environmental hazards a) thermal comfort	Staff – may feel too hot/cold or suffer other general discomfort	Building temperatures kept as reasonable as possible with supplementary heating/cooling available via Estates or Department. Office is adequately ventilated via the central building heating/vent system/opening lights.	Low	A
	b) space	Staff and others – contact with furniture if insufficient space to move around	Space regulation guidelines are adopted to ensure adequate space is afforded for each individual. Space provided is sufficient to enable free movement around the office, and for carrying out tasks Individual space requirements are re-considered when additional equipment furniture is acquired	Low	A

Activity (8)	Hazard (9)	Who might be harmed and how (10)	Existing measures to control risk (11)	Risk rating (12)	Result (13)
	c) lighting	Staff and others – may suffer eyestrain if lighting is insufficient or of the wrong type	Lighting levels sufficient for the room, tasks undertaken and glare is minimised Window blinds fitted where necessary to adjust lighting levels Local lighting (e.g. lamps) is provided for close work where necessary Light switches are easily accessible	Low	A
	Hygiene & welfare	All staff & others could experience general discomfort	Toilets supplied with hot/cold water, soap and towels, any deficiencies are reported to House Services. Refreshment area available with drinking water and other facilities. No smoking policy implemented.	Low	A
	Chemical e.g. photocopier toner/ ozone production, cleaning materials	Staff	Printer cartridges changed by trained personnel only. All spills are cleared up immediately and waste appropriately disposed of Heavily used photocopiers situated in well ventilated areas.	Low	A
	First Aid	Staff	Qualified First Aiders are available in all buildings and via security. All new staff members are given an induction tour of the building and briefing about First Aid procedures.	Low	
	Use of shredder	Staff could cut fingers	Hazardous equipment used by trained personnel only Equipment is fitted with automatic switch off to allow for safe operation. Equipment will be checked prior to use to ensure safety features are in place. Reminder to switch off if there are any difficulties.	Low	A
	Use of guillotine	Staff could cut fingers	Hazardous equipment used by trained personnel only Equipment is fitted with plastic guard to protect fingers to allow for safe operation. Equipment will be checked prior to use to ensure safety features are in place.	Low	A

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Result : T = trivial, A = adequately controlled, N = not adequately controlled, action required, U = unknown risk

<b>Action plan (14)</b>				
<b>Ref No</b>	<b>Further action required</b>	<b>Action by whom</b>	<b>Action by when</b>	<b>Done</b>
	All new members of staff to be given an induction to the Building on arrival to include first aid and fire evacuation provision.	<i>Office Manager</i>		

## Notes to accompany Example Risk Assessment Form

This assessment is recommended for use by Health & Safety Services to control the risks from hazards associated with single occupancy offices.

### **Important!**

**If you wish to use this assessment the identified hazards will only be adequately controlled if measures listed under 'Existing measures to control risk' are available and implemented, or where existing measures are equivalent to these or better.**

Action must be taken to address any deficiencies before this assessment can be regarded as suitable and sufficient for use (see 13 & 14 below).

### **How to use the form for your situation**

- (1) **Date** : Insert date that assessment form is completed. It must be valid on that day
- (2) **Assessed by** : Insert the name and signature of the assessor. (Name is sufficient if done electronically)
- (3) **Checked / Validated\* by** : delete one.

**Checked by** : Insert the name and signature of someone in a position to check that the assessment has been carried out by a competent person who can identify hazards and assess risk, and that the control measures are reasonable and in place. The checker will normally be a line manager, supervisor, principal investigator, etc. Checking will be appropriate for most risk assessments.

**Validated by** : Use this for higher risk scenarios, eg where complex calculations have to be validated by another "independent" person who is competent to do so, or where the control measure is a strict permit-to-work procedure requiring thorough preparation of a workplace. The validator should also have attended the University's risk assessment course or equivalent, and will probably be a chartered engineer or professional with expertise in the task being considered. Examples of where validation is required include designs for pressure vessels, load-bearing equipment, lifting equipment carrying personnel or items over populated areas, and similar situations.

- (4) **Location** : insert details of where the assessment is intended to cover, e.g. building, floor, room, School, Directorate etc
- (5) **Assessment ref no** : insert any local tracking references used
- (6) **Review date** : insert details of when the assessment will be reviewed as a matter of routine. This might be in 1 year's time, or a longer period if risks are known to be stable. Note that any assessment must be reviewed if there are any significant changes – to the work activity, the vicinity, the people exposed to the risk, etc
- (7) **Task / premises** :. This is a specific risk assessment for typical activities associated with work in an office environment

- (8) **Activity** : The rows in this column have been merged to indicate that all the hazards relate to the day to day work of the office environment being assessed.
- (9) **Hazard** : list all the hazards associated with the areas/tasks you want to use this assessment for. Remember to look at hazards that are not immediately obvious. Remove any from and add others to the example assessment as necessary
- (10) **Persons in danger** : insert everyone who might be affected by the activity. Remember those who are not immediately involved in the work, including cleaners and maintenance contractors, Estates personnel carrying out routine maintenance and other work. Remember also that the risks for different groups will vary e.g. new and nursing mothers, disabled, young persons on work experience.
- (11) **Existing measures to control the risk** : The measures listed are those that are necessary to control the risks. Some specific hazards may require detailed assessments in accordance with specific legislation (eg, manual handling, DSE work,). Where this is the case, and a detailed assessment has already been done it is acceptable to cross reference this example risk assessment to the other documentation. Controls might also include use of qualified and/or experienced staff who are competent to carry out certain tasks; an action plan might include training requirements for other people who will be carrying out those tasks.
- (12) **Risk Rating** : this is a rating of the **remaining risk with the listed existing control measures in place** and is given as high, medium or low, depending on how likely the activity is to cause harm and how serious that harm might be.

The risk is **LOW** - if it is most unlikely that harm would arise under the controlled conditions listed, and even if exposure occurred, the injury would be relatively slight.  
The risk is **MEDIUM** - if it is more likely that harm might actually occur and the outcome could be more serious (eg some time off work, or a minor physical injury).  
The risk is **HIGH** - if injury is likely to arise (eg there have been previous incidents, the situation looks like an accident waiting to happen) and that injury might be serious (broken bones, trip to the hospital, loss of consciousness), or even a fatality.

**Important!** If this assessment is modified in any way users will need to check whether the given Risk Rating and Result are affected in any way and are still appropriate.

- (13) **Result** : this stage of assessment is often overlooked, but is probably the most important. Assigning a rating to a risk does not necessarily mean that the risk is adequately controlled. The options for this column are:

**T = trivial risk.** Use for very low risk activities to show that you have correctly identified a hazard, but that in the particular circumstances, the risk is insignificant.

**A = adequately controlled, no further action necessary.** If your control measures lead you to conclude that the risk is low, and that all legislative requirements have been met (and University policies complied with), then insert A in this column.

**N = not adequately controlled, actions required.** Sometimes, particularly when setting up new or adapting existing arrangements, the risk assessment might identify that the risk is high or medium when it is capable of being reduced by methods that are reasonably practicable. In these cases, the **action plan** must be completed.

**U = unable to decide. Further information required.** Use this designation if the assessor is unable to complete any of the boxes, for any reason. Often additional information can be obtained readily eg from your School Safety Advisor, equipment/chemicals suppliers, University Safety Coordinator

**For T and A results**, the assessment is complete.

**For N or U results**, more work is required before the assessment can be signed off.

- (14) **Action Plan.** (To Be completed by the Safety Advisor.) Include details of any actions necessary in order to meet the requirements of the information in Section 11 'Existing measures to control the risk'. Identify someone who will be responsible for ensuring the action is taken and the date by which this should be completed. Put the date when the action has been completed in the final column.