

Example risk assessment for a convenience store/newsagent

Setting the scene

The shop manager carried out the risk assessment in the convenience store, which is located on a busy high street and has a weekly turnover of about £15 000. It sells newspapers and magazines (but does not do deliveries), alcohol, tobacco, greetings cards, household essentials and tinned, frozen and other pre-packed foods. Twelve staff are employed, most of them part-time, working a variety of morning, afternoon and evening shifts. One member of staff is four months pregnant.

At the rear of the shop there is a staff toilet and bathroom, staff rest room, where drinks etc can be made, and a stockroom. The store is open from 7.00 am to 10.00 pm, seven days a week.

How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the guidance in *Five steps to risk assessment* (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf).

1 To identify the hazards, the manager:

- looked at HSE's website, to learn where hazards can occur, including the pages for small businesses, the work-related violence case study for shop workers and those for new and expectant mothers;
- walked around the shop, the stockroom and all other areas, noting what might pose a risk and taking HSE's guidance into consideration. Occasional activities, such as changing promotional displays or changing light bulbs, were also taken into account;
- talked to staff to learn from their knowledge and experience, and listen to their concerns and opinions about health and safety issues in the shop;

- looked at the accident book, to understand what previous problems there have been; and
 - decided that when the risk assessment was complete, the manager would go over the findings with the pregnant employee, to see if there were any particular risks to her that needed to be removed, reduced or controlled.
- 2** The manager wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.
- 3** For each hazard, the manager wrote down what controls, if any, were in place to manage these hazards. These controls were then compared to the good practice guidance on HSE's website. Where existing controls were not considered good enough, the manager wrote down what else needed to be done to control the risk.
- 4** The manager discussed the findings with staff and displayed the risk assessment in the staffroom. The manager outlined when the actions needed to be done, and who would do them, and decided to tick the actions off as each one was completed.
- 5** The manager decided to review and update the risk assessment every year, or straightaway if major changes in the workplace happened.

Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business might take. It can be used as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your business and the steps you need to take to control the risks. Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards and controls required in your business for yourself.

Company name: Smith's Convenience Store

Date of risk assessment: 1/7/07

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Manual handling Examples: Deliveries, stacking shelves.	Staff may suffer strains or bruising injuries, to their back or elsewhere, from handling heavy/ bulky objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All staff are trained how to lift properly. ■ High shelves are for light goods only. ■ Trolley available for moving stock such as newspaper deliveries, and staff trained how to use it safely. ■ Stairs and corridors kept clear. ■ Newspaper returns bundles kept to manageable sizes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff that deliveries (except for stock that can be very easily carried) should always be moved using the trolley. 	Manager and staff	7/7/07	6/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regular checks to make sure that high shelves are not used to store heavy stock. 	Manager	7/7/07	6/7/07
Slips, trips and falls Examples: Doorways (rain), spillages, stock on floor, uneven surfaces.	Staff and customers may suffer sprains, fractures or bruising if they trip over objects, such as stock, or slip on spillages and fall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff 'clean as they go'. ■ Wet floor warning signs always used. ■ Shop floor is only mopped when shop is closed. ■ Door mats at entrance in wet weather. ■ Floor in good condition. ■ Good lighting in all areas. ■ Staff wear sensible shoes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff to keep an eye on the area around the freezer and immediately clear away any meltwater. 	All staff	20/7/07	19/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff stocking shelves not to leave boxes of stock in aisles, if suddenly called to help on the till. 	Manager	20/7/07	19/7/07
Violence and threatening behaviour Examples: Verbal abuse, shoplifting.	Staff may suffer assaults, threats and abuse from members of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained not to resist a robbery. ■ CCTV installed and clearly visible. ■ Usually always two staff on duty. ■ Panic alarm located out of sight of customers near the till. ■ Staff provide good, polite service and are told not to confront customers. ■ Staff report incidents of abuse etc and manager discusses with them (on a no-blame basis!). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contact local police station to get advice on what else can be done, eg safe procedures for opening up and closing. 	Manager	20/7/07	18/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to talk to staff about coping with disputes, eg shoplifting and age-restricted sales. 	Manager	20/7/07	All staff spoken to by 17/7/07

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Working at height, changing light bulbs and promo displays	Falls from any height can cause bruising and fractures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong stepladder, in good condition, provided. ■ Staff shown by the manager how to use stepladder safely, eg not to overreach, not to work on uneven floor etc. ■ Staff wear sensible shoes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff to always use the stepladder when working at height and not to stand on chairs. 	Manager	20/7/07	All staff spoken to by 17/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to regularly check the condition of the stepladder. 	Manager	20/7/07	All staff spoken to by 17/7/07
Deliveries Example: Deliveries, visits to cash and carry.	Staff or members of the public could be injured by being struck by a vehicle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Most deliveries tend to arrive either very early, eg papers, or between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm, when road is less busy. ■ Trips to cash and carry not made at busy times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Monitor deliveries to ensure they continue to arrive at less busy times. 	All staff	20/7/07	2/7/07
Contact with bleach and other cleaning chemicals	Staff doing cleaning risk skin irritation or eye damage from direct contact with cleaning chemicals. Vapour may cause breathing problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mops, brushes and strong rubber gloves are provided and used. ■ Staff shown how to use cleaning products safely, eg follow instructions on the label, dilute properly and never transfer to an unmarked container. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Replace 'irritant' chemicals with milder alternatives, where possible. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to check for dry, red or itchy skin on their hands. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff reminded to wash gloves before taking them off carefully and storing in a clean place. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07
Electrical Examples: Faulty building wiring, faulty electrical appliances.	Staff could get electrical shocks or burns from faulty electrics, including portable electrical equipment – heaters, fans etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff trained to spot and report to manager any defective plugs, discoloured sockets, damaged cable and on/off switches, and to take any defective equipment out of use. ■ Staff know where the fuse box is and how to safely turn the electricity off in an emergency. ■ Clear access to the fuse box. ■ Qualified electrician does safety check of building electrics every five years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to do visual check of plugs, sockets, cables and on/off switches every three months. 	Manager and all staff	20/7/07	First check done on 18/7/07 (next due 18/10/07)

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Fire Examples: Smoking, faulty electrics, arson.	If trapped, staff could suffer from smoke inhalation/burns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fire risk assessment done, see www.communities.gov.uk/fire and necessary action taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind staff to keep backyard gate locked out of hours to stop intruders getting in. 	Manager	20/7/07	20/7/07
Cold temperatures, freezer work	Staff may suffer discomfort when restocking freezer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Freezer gloves provided for use when restocking freezer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Replace gloves when they are showing signs of wear and tear. 	Manager	7/7/07	5/7/07

Assessment review date: 1/7/08