

Risk Assessment Matrix - likelihood of incident occurring versus severity of risk

	Slightly harmful	Harmful	Extremely harmful
Highly unlikely	Trivial Risk	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk
Unlikely	Tolerable risk	Moderate risk	Substantial Risk
Likely	Moderate risk	Substantial Risk	Substantial Risk

Guidance

Description of Severity

Extremely harmful

Harmful

Slightly harmful

Interpretation

serious injury or death is possible

there could be significant damage or injury

damage or injury would be local and superficial at worst

Description of Likelihood

Likely

Unlikely

Highly unlikely

Interpretation

incident is certain or near certain to occur

incident may occur

incident is highly unlikely to occur

Risk Level

Action and Timescale

TRIVIAL

No action is required and no documentary records need to be kept.

TOLERABLE

No additional controls are required. Consideration may be given to a more cost-effective solution or improvement that imposes no additional cost burden. Monitoring is required to ensure that controls are maintained.

MODERATE

Efforts should be made to reduce the risk, but the costs of prevention should be carefully measured and limited. Risk reduction measures should be implemented within a defined time period.

Where the moderate risk is associated with extremely harmful consequences, further assessment may be necessary to establish precisely the likelihood of harm as a basis for determining the need for improved control measures.

SUBSTANTIAL

Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may have to be allocated to reduce the risk. Where the premises are already in use, urgent action should be taken.

INTOLERABLE

Work should not be started or continued until the risk has been reduced. If it is not possible to reduce risk even with unlimited resources, work has to remain prohibited.