



# RISK ASSESSMENT & COMPLIANCE

ISSUE 17 | NOVEMBER 2024

**EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING TIPS TO PUT WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY FIRST**

## **Your 5-step Guide to Assessing New Seasonal Risks**

Discover the risk assessments you need to review and measures to implement to keep everyone physically and mentally healthy and safe.

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## **How to Engage and Support Your Older Workers to Reduce Workplace Risk**

With statistics showing older workers are at a higher risk of fatal injury, we explore why and suggest ways to manage the risks.

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## **Use Our Winter CDM Checklist to Ensure Your Projects Remain Compliant**

Check that what was set up in the summer months is still current, as the winter weather looms.

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# 'Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail'

Dear Reader,

The Covid Inquiry has published its first report examining the state of the UK's central structures and procedures for emergency preparedness, resilience and response. It does not make happy reading for the government of the day.

The Inquiry found multiple systemic failures which contributed to the massive financial, economic and human cost of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report recommends improvements in key areas to simplify emergency planning, adopt a new approach to risk assessment to identify a wider range of risks, have a flexible response strategy, learn lessons from the past and run test exercises regularly.

The Chair of the Inquiry, Baroness Hallett, said *'It is not a question of 'if' another pandemic will strike but 'when'. The evidence is overwhelmingly to the effect that another pandemic... is likely to occur in the near to medium future.'* So why not **complete your own 'Inquiry'**, or review, to examine **your organisation's response to the pandemic** with the benefit of hindsight? Ask yourself the key question: Could you be better prepared for a future emergency?

Yours Sincerely,



**Carolyn Dukes CMIOSH  
& Linda Crossland-Mead CFIOSH  
Editors-in-Chief, Risk Assessment & Compliance**

## About the Editors

Carolyn is a registered OSHCR consultant. Her occupational health and safety management experience is wide-ranging and includes time spent working in the education sector, healthcare and law enforcement.

Linda is an occupational health and safety consultant, specialising in risk assessment and health and safety training.

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## Online Resource Centre

You can download and customise all of the tools found in this issue at:

[www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources](http://www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources)

Access hundreds of risk assessment documents, Toolbox Talks, checklists and records covering the core risk assessment areas and stakeholder training. You can download these immediately, edit and customise these to your organisation's needs.

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# How the Latest Fatal Injury Statistics Can Help Improve Your Risk Profile

The latest fatal injury statistics covering 2023/24 have been published by the HSE. The headline figure is that 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents during 2023/24, an increase of two fatalities from 2022/23. However, below the headline figure are some interesting trends which can help inform the risk profiles of all organisations. We highlight 4 essential risk factors to consider when developing your risk profile.

## Risk Factor 1. Industry Sector

The HSE report includes not only the absolute count of number of deaths by industry but more useful for risk assessors, the **fatal injury rate** in terms of the number of fatalities per 100,000 workers. This shows the highest risk industries are: agriculture, forestry and fishing 7.51; waste and recycling 3.88; and construction 2.43. This is compared with an all industry average of 0.42 fatal injuries per 100,000 workers. Even if your organisation is not in these higher risk industry sectors, your risk profile may need to reflect the increased risk if your staff **work at, or visit**, relevant workplaces such as farms, recycling plants or construction sites.

## Risk Factor 2. Type of Accident

In 2023/24 the top causes of fatal accidents were: falls from height (50); struck by a moving vehicle (25); struck by a moving object (20); trapped by something collapsing or overturning (15) and contact with moving machinery (8). If your workers undertake work activities where these hazards are present, then you should review the risk rating you have given these activities to ensure they reflect the potential severity of harm.

## Risk Factor 3. Gender and Age

There are two significant trends in the 2023/24 fatal injury statistics related to gender and age:

- 1 Fatal injuries to workers are predominantly to **males**. In 2023/24, 131 (95%) of all worker fatalities were to male workers, a similar proportion to previous years.

- 2 In terms of age, 34% of fatal injuries in 2023/24 were to workers **aged 60 or over**, even though this group of workers made up only 11% of the workforce.

Over the last 5 years, statistics show that the rate of fatal injury increases with age. Workers aged 60-64 have a rate around twice the all-ages rate and workers aged 65 and over, a rate that is four times as high as the all-ages rate. We recommend that you review the demographic characteristics of your workforce to determine if either of these trends are relevant to the risk profile of your organisation.

To do this meaningfully, you should take a holistic view which also takes account of the type of work being done.

## Risk Factor 4. Employment Status

**Self-employed workers** have a higher risk of fatal injury than employees. Just over a third of fatal injuries to workers were to the self-employed, even though such workers only made up around 15% of the workforce.

The increased rate for self-employed workers is particularly evident in the **agriculture, forestry and fishery sector** and **administrative and support service** activities. In these sectors, the fatal injury rate to self-employed workers is around two and three times the employee rate respectively.

If you engage the services of self-employed workers, you must ensure they are competent and work to the same compliant health and safety standards as your employees.

# Support Men's Mental Health this November

**N**ovember is Men's Mental Health Awareness Month. As well as being involved with high-profile events such as 'Movember', it is a good opportunity to review and improve your support for the men in your organisation.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) advises that societal pressures surrounding masculinity often hinders men from addressing their emotional struggles. The World Health Organization has found that men are particularly reluctant to seek help for mental health issues and are **four times more likely to die from suicide**. The WEF proposes 5 ways to support men's mental health:

- 1 **Make help-seeking behaviours commonplace:** Encourage open communication in your organisation supported by senior management role-modelling.
- 2 **Re-imagine masculinity:** Break stereotypes and motivate men to prioritise their mental health. Challenge behaviours such as inappropriate banter e.g. 'man up'.

- 3 **Early intervention and accessible resources:** Ensure line managers are trained to spot the early signs of mental ill health and know how to start a mental health conversation with their staff.
- 4 **Embrace interconnectedness:** Review the mental health support your organisation provides to employees and remove barriers to encourage men to seek help if they need it.
- 5 **Take a complex approach:** Ensure your mental health and wellbeing strategy is multi-dimensional and actively reduces the stigma of mental ill health for men to create a supportive and safe environment for seeking help without fear of judgement or disadvantage.

# Manage the Risks of Volunteers to Protect them and Meet Your Duty of Care

**W**hile risk management of volunteer activities predominantly affects the charity, education, health and social care sectors, businesses may also work with volunteers for non-core activities such as part of a community engagement initiative. It is a legal requirement to protect employees and others from any risks arising from your work activities and this includes volunteers. We review the key employer requirements for the management of volunteer risks and examine a recent case where management failures resulted in the tragic death of a volunteer.

In the recent case, a charitable trust, Wilts & Berks Canal Trust, was fined after a volunteer lost his life during restoration work on a canal. Peter Konitzer, aged 62, was fatally crushed when a section of a wall collapsed onto him in an excavation at Pewsham Locks. Mr Konitzer had been inside the excavation removing temporary propping that was supporting the wall when the section collapsed.

A joint investigation by the HSE and Wiltshire Police found:

- The Trust failed to ensure the safety of volunteers working within the excavation.
- The temporary propping was inadequate.
- There was no clear method for the safe installation or removal of props during the renovation work.
- The Trust had increasingly begun using volunteers for light construction works which are higher risk.

Wilts & Berks Canal Trust pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**. The Trust was fined **£30,000** and ordered to pay **£10,822** in costs. The relatively low fine reflects the Trust's charitable status and financial structure.

## 7 Employer Actions to Manage Volunteer Risks

- 1 Include volunteers as well as employees in your **risk assessment** to identify significant risks and implement effective control measures.
- 2 Provide the **same level of protection** to volunteers where they carry out similar activities and are exposed to the same level of risk as employees.
- 3 **Consult volunteers** as well as employees in a two-way process to allow them to raise concerns and influence decisions on managing health and safety.
- 4 If volunteers are involved in **higher risk activities** such as work at height, construction and demolition, using machinery or lone working, then you must consider the **additional hazards** involved and ensure there are sufficient control measures in place to protect all the people working under your control and direction.
- 5 Provide volunteers with the **right information, instruction and training** to ensure they can carry out their activities safely. This should include a full induction with information on the hazards they may be exposed to.
- 6 Provide appropriate **tools and equipment** (including PPE if required) and ensure volunteers are trained to use them safely.
- 7 Before using volunteers in your organisation:

- **Plan and prepare** your activity to determine how volunteers will be used.
- Check that volunteers are fully covered by your **insurance policy**.
- Match the allocated task to the individual and check they have the **capability and competence** to do the activity. You will note that Mr Konitzer in our case study above was 62-years-old. Given the age-related risk factors highlighted by the HSE in our news article, this may be a relevant factor to consider when using volunteers.
- Ensure effective **supervision and monitoring** arrangements are in place.
- Make sure **accidents and near misses** involving volunteers are recorded, investigated and followed up.

## Know the RIDDOR Reporting Requirements for Volunteer Incidents

Under the **Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)**, the responsible person (the employer or people in control of the premises) is required to report certain incidents involving employees or those affected by their work activity, and this includes volunteers and members of the public.

Incidents involving volunteers are only reportable where the accident arose for a work-related activity and:

- The incident resulted in a **fatality**, or
- The injured person was taken directly from the scene of the incident to hospital for **treatment**. Examinations and tests do not qualify as 'treatment' and there is no need to report incidents where people are only taken to hospital as a precaution.

Incidents involving volunteers where there is no work activity are not normally reportable. The requirement to report **over-7-day injuries only applies to employees**, not volunteers.

Volunteering plays an essential role in supporting the good work of many charities and health and safety should not be a barrier to that continuing. However, poor management of the health and safety of well-intentioned volunteers can have tragic consequences and result in lasting reputational damage for the organisations involved.

### Download

Read your **Volunteers: Health & Safety Management Guide** to help you understand your responsibilities towards managing volunteers in your workplace. You can download this from your **Online Resource Centre** at:  
[www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources](http://www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources)

# Warehouse Delivery Areas: Update Your Risk Assessments for the Coming Winter

**E**mployers have a legal duty of care to regularly assess the hazards in their organisation to ensure that staff and contractors are not exposed to harm. This is particularly true when the weather and seasons change. Delivery areas, such as loading bays in warehouses, can be particularly challenging during the winter months due to doors being open to the elements which increases the risk of slips and trips, through to crush injuries from vehicles due to reduced visibility caused by staff wearing hoodies! Follow our 5 steps to implement new controls during the winter months to keep everyone safe and your business legally compliant.

## Step 1. Identify the Hazards

If the **delivery doors** are left open, this can reduce the workplace temperature and let in rain and pooling water. This can cause **wet floors** which then become **slippery**, especially if the floors are contaminated with fuel, oil or ice in freezing temperatures.

### Warehouse Temperatures

One of my clients said that every time their delivery bay doors were opened, the temperature dropped by 3-4 degrees. Although there's no legal minimum temperature for a workplace, employers are required to keep heat levels 'reasonable'. The HSE guidance document L24, *Workplace health, safety and welfare* suggests this should be **13°C where the job involves manual labour**.

## Step 2. Consider Who May be Harmed and How

Your employees, agency workers and contract drivers are those normally at risk when working in delivery areas. For example, a drop in temperature can lead to **lethargy** and wearing a hoodie to keep warm can **reduce peripheral awareness**, leading to isolation, **poor mental health and demotivation**. Reduced vision can result in a **crush injury** from a vehicle and preventable mistakes.

Wet floors created by rainwater ingress, especially when mixed with fuels, oils or in freezing temperatures, increase the risk of **slips, trips and falls** as well as pose an **environmental hazard** from contaminated run off into the drainage system. Standing water can also become stagnant and increases the growth of *Leptospira* from rodents which can cause **Weil's disease**.

Drivers who are regularly unwilling to get out of their warm vehicle cabs can damage their health through **poor posture**. Stiff limbs and lack of exercise can also contribute to **manual handling injuries** when securing their load. Remaining in a cab with access to the ignition key means that lorries could drive away before authorisation is given. So a forklift truck loading a lorry could still be moving as the lorry pulls away, making the forklift unstable, resulting in a potential **fall from height injury**.

### Tip

The HSE is reviewing their guidance to duty holders regarding access to welfare facilities for visiting delivery drivers. For now, ensure the welfare provision in your delivery areas is the **same for all** – regardless of whether they are employed by you or not.

## Step 3. Identify the Risk Controls

Reduce the risks to your workforce by:

- Checking with your facilities department or caretaker to ensure that **heating systems are serviced**, cleaned and tested prior to winter. Also ensure that all **drainage systems and gutters are cleared** to prevent pooling rainwater.
- Co-ordinating with the cleaner so that **surfaces are regularly mopped, cleaned** and are safe for all to walk on.

**Isolate** your workers from the winter weather by ensuring:

- That the drivers' waiting room or welfare area is **accessible** via the delivery bays/warehouse.
- That the rooms are **heated** and the **windows/doors close**.

**Control** the part of the workplace that isn't affected by the weather:

- Ensure **hot drinks** are available both in the welfare area as well as the drivers' waiting room. Supplying a **hot water dispenser and microwave** will also help by providing warm food.
- Or consider speaking to a **hot food van** who may do the rounds to provide your workers with warm cooked food.

Ensure that **PPE** is provided by:

- Checking with your **HR team** to ensure that all employees have received a full set of winter clothing and PPE that allows layering.
- Ensuring that all warehouse staff have **sturdy safety shoes** that are polished to increase their water resistance and that they wear **clean and fastened up hi-vis** clothing so they can be seen by moving vehicles.
- Consult with your workforce to see if **warm hats** are needed – wearing these are safer than wearing a hoodie which results in tunnel vision. Consult with both HR and your agency provider to look into winter clothing for temporary staff to ensure that everyone is treated equally.

**Supervise and observe** adherence to training by ensuring that:

- Vehicles **speed limits** are enforced.
- Headlights, windows and mirrors are all **clean**.
- Staff are briefed on how to safely refill the **water boiler** if you have one of these rather than a kettle.

## Steps 4 and 5. Record Your Risk Controls and Review when Necessary

Implement your new measures into the workplace through your line managers who can support with staff briefings. Then review your risk assessment: upon a change of circumstances; if the risk controls aren't working, and; at the start of the next winter season.

# Your 5-step Guide to Assessing and Managing the New Seasonal Risks

**N**ovember can be the start of a couple of busy months: with the run up to a potential Christmas shutdown, increased staff absence, travelling to and from work in the dark and out-of-work demands on people's time – they all can leave your employees feeling frazzled! Follow our advice on which risk assessments you need to review and some potential risk controls to keep your employees' morale high and everyone physically and mentally healthy and safe.

## Step 1. Update Your Workplace Risk Assessments

Are your workers still adhering to the risk controls that were put in place previously? If your answer is 'no' and you decide to remove some risk controls as they weren't suitable to the task or area of work, amend your risk assessment to reflect this.

Some important pointers to consider are:

- **Social distancing and personal hygiene risk controls:** Although our personal hygiene measures have lapsed since the Covid epidemic (e.g. handwashing), Covid is still with us and winter bugs and flu are always on the rise during the winter. So now is the time to remind your staff to tighten up on their hand washing, the correct use of handkerchiefs, the importance of air circulation by opening windows or even working from home or taking sick leave if they are contagious.
- **Ensuring an adequate working temperature:** Whilst there's no legal minimum room temperature required in a workplace, HSE guidance suggests that this should be **13°C for manual labour work and 16° for static office-based work**. However, insufficient heating can affect the dexterity of the hands and accuracy when using tools. So by providing heating as a risk control, you can potentially reduce hand injuries.
- **Provide adequate lighting:** As well as good lighting **reducing the risk of injury**, it's also important for **personal safety** (e.g. in your staff car park) and **building security**. Check whether your lighting is still effective. If you have moved where you store your stock and equipment since your last review, your lighting may not be sufficient. Some bulbs may also need cleaning or replacing if they haven't been used during the summer months.

As your workers' eyesight can deteriorate, good lighting **reduces shadows**, so reducing your organisation's risk of **slip, trips and falls**. It can also aid close-up, intricate work. During your workplace risk assessment review, discuss the subject of lighting and eyesight with your staff.

## Step 2. Monitor Your Workers for SAD Symptoms and Winter Depression

During winter, lighting levels and the type of lighting used can be extremely important to those suffering from **Seasonal Affective Disorder** (or SAD syndrome). It's also widely known as '**winter depression**' because the symptoms are usually more apparent and severe during the winter. You may not have a specific risk assessment for SAD for employees who suffer from any type of depression but the risk controls suggested here can be incorporated

into your other risk assessments – from your workplace risk assessment to your mental health risk assessment.

SAD sufferers may find it harder to wake up on a winter's morning and feel sleepy during the day with cravings for high carbohydrate foods such as white bread, or sugary foods such as chocolate. If you have employees who know they suffer from SAD, HR may be aware and may already be working to help but by consulting with your workforce, you may find that some individuals may be susceptible to SAD – but are not actually aware of it.

Symptoms of SAD can include:

- Persistent low mood.
- Loss of pleasure or interest in normal everyday activities.
- Irritability.
- Feelings of despair, guilt and worthlessness.
- Feeling lethargic (lacking in energy) and sleepy during the day.
- Sleeping for longer than normal and finding it hard to get up in the morning.
- Craving carbohydrates and gaining weight.
- Difficulty concentrating.

The use of '**full spectrum light**' bulbs that mimic sunlight can help to alleviate the symptoms. Providing **good welfare provision** and **strong teamwork** are risk controls that can help sufferers of any type of depression. Also consider ensuring that the vending and drinks machines are regularly stocked up for those that need a sugar hit and that the communal area is warm and clean enough for everyone to access and eat in.

Your staff should be encouraged and enabled to **take breaks** to prevent them from 'working through'. They should also be allowed enough time to get some **fresh air** at lunchtime so that they can get away from their PC screens, as people who spend a lot of time in electrically-lit rooms with few windows can experience SAD symptoms more frequently. Include all that you do in terms of your welfare provision as risk controls during your risk assessment reviews.

### Tip

Sir Cary Cooper, writing in the IOSH magazine in 2023, suggests that **three people in every 100** have significant winter depression, with it being three times **more common in women than men**. Try increasing team inclusion by banning same-premises emails and encouraging staff to get up and talk to their colleagues.

### Step 3. Review Your External Premises Risk Assessments

Your premises risk assessments may need to be reviewed to take account of the effect of the weather on your building structure, walkways, waste storage, any construction works, etc. Points to consider include:

- Ensuring your risk controls include **planned maintenance** of PIR lighting, cleaning fallen leaves to reduce blocked drains and slip hazards, as well as servicing the heating to ensure that staff are kept warm and that pipes don't freeze over the holiday period.
- Liaising with your facilities or **procurement department** to buy rock salt used to prevent icy walkways and absorbent door mats which will help prevent tracking water into the building.
- Document any **contractor communications** to bring hazards to their attention so they can action and report back to yourself. This could include an increase in trespass, as well as predicted bad weather that could affect their work equipment, such as fencing and scaffold.
- If waste **bins and skips** can't be emptied by your contractor over the holiday period, ensure that your risk controls include locking lids and storing them away from building walls (where they could assist burglars) or cause fire to spread to your property if they are set alight.



#### Download

Undertake a review of your premises and use your **Winter Workplace Inspection Form** to help identify and address any areas of concern. You can download this form from your **Online Resource Centre** at: [www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources](http://www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources)

### Step 4. Revisit Your Fire Marshall, First Aid and Mental Health First Aid Risk Assessments

These risk assessments need to be reviewed for staff changes over the year, as well as anticipated holiday absence and coverage in the event of someone being off work sick. Points to consider include:

- A high demand for **holiday requests** can often result in overlooking the emergency support that internal staff offer and can cause internal pressure amongst colleagues who have to cover.
- Bringing in cakes, plants, flowers and putting up the fairy lights can add a mental lift and increase team spirit, so bring in the Christmas poinsettia flowers and red holly berry and ivy sprigs. Don't be afraid of decorating your premises to liven the place up! You should document this in your **mental health risk assessment** review, too.

#### Download

You can find a template **First Aid Risk Assessment** and a **Stress and Mental Health Risk Assessment**, which you can adapt to your organisation's needs during the winter months. You can download these, from your **Online Resource Centre** at: [www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources](http://www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources)

### Step 5. Risk Assess Your Christmas Party to Ensure a Fun (and Safe) Time for Everyone

Christmas parties and social events are a great way of pulling teams together and thanking them for their hard work. However, if this is a work party, funded by work, rather than a few drinks down the pub with the first round on the boss, the event needs to be **risk assessed** and everyone needs to be included, ensuring **equal access** to the event. This will mean assessing your workforce, for example, do your employees' working hours and rota mean that everyone has the ability to attend the party? Some people could have carer responsibilities, others working from home may not be able to do an impromptu event.

Remember also that people who have driven to the event won't be able to drink and some people may not drink at all, so make sure that you provide alcohol-free or zero percent alternatives. Specific diets and allergies also need to be considered.

Although this sounds a bit of a minefield, it can be fairly easily managed if you **consult with your employees**. This can give your workers' morale a boost and help you work out what risk controls should be in place.

Also consult with your HR function as they may be able to input on team dynamics. For instance, if a complaint against a member of staff is in progress, then having a fun-fuelled all-night party may not be as manageable as it should be and could result in spilling over into the following day with potential further HR actions forthcoming! Whereas a sit-down dinner, with named place settings, means that you could better manage employee behaviour, reduce any anxiety as well as meet individuals' dietary requirements and behavioural expectations all in go.

#### Tip

When documenting your **social event risk assessment review**, ensure that your risk controls for a staff party are clear about expected behaviours and safe travelling arrangements. Back this up by providing a staff briefing as part of your party invitation.

#### RISK ASSESSMENT & COMPLIANCE

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**We help you achieve through information you can trust.**

# Engage and Support Your Older Workers to Reduce Workplace Risk

The latest 2023/24 workplace fatal injury figures published by the HSE show that statistically, from the age of 35, the older the worker the higher the risk of fatal injury at work. With an ageing population globally and, in the UK, around 20% of working age adults falling in the 55-64 years age bracket, this is a headline risk which warrants further understanding by employers. We explore the underlying risk factors and recommend ways to manage older worker risks.

## Discover what the Statistics for Age-related Risk Reveal

The most recent workplace fatal injury figures reveal that 34% of injuries in 2023/24 were to workers aged 60 or over, even though such workers made up only 11% of the workforce. The statistics for the period 2019/20-2023/24 clearly show how the rate of fatal injury increases with age, with workers aged 60-64 having a rate around twice the all-ages rate and workers aged 65 and over a rate that is four times as high as the all-ages rate.

## Understand the Benefits of Employing and Retaining Older Workers

Older workers can bring a wealth of experience and skills to the workplace which help create an inclusive and diverse workforce. They can provide valuable mentoring support to less experienced workers.

Employing older workers is mutually beneficial for employers and employees. It's widely recognised that 'good work' is good for you – it helps maintain **functional capacity**, meaning that a person's ability to perform daily tasks and activities remains optimal as they get older. It can also support **social inclusion**, maintain a sense of **self-worth** and mitigate the risk of **loneliness**.

## The Underlying Risk Factors Related to Older Workers

It is important that you avoid reinforcing stereotypes related to ageing. However, the WHO highlights 4 risk factors which can affect older workers:

- 1 **Impacts of earlier life experiences:** The world of work has changed significantly over recent decades, including risk management. Older workers may have been influenced by a negative cultural view of health and safety in the past or be more complacent about risk. This can lead to risk-taking behaviour.
- 2 **Loss of intrinsic capacity and a decline in functional ability:** As we age there's a natural impact on physical and mental health which can result in a reduction of physical capacity and slower reaction times. The Health Foundation recently reported that nearly 20% of people in the 55-64 years age bracket have work-limiting health conditions, particularly musculoskeletal and chronic diseases.
- 3 **Exposure to adversity:** Older adults are more likely to experience adverse events such as bereavement and divorce.
- 4 **Exposure to ageism and age discrimination at work:** The WHO found in 2021 that 50% of people were ageist

against older people. Assumptions made about physical and mental capability and exclusion from opportunities or social communication at work can all contribute to older people feeling 'written off'. Age-related discrimination in the workplace is illegal and can be direct (e.g. not recruiting or promoting someone on the basis of their age) or indirect (e.g. where the way of working puts people at a disadvantage because of their age).

## Take the Right Approach to Age-related Risk Management

HSE guidance explains that a **separate risk assessment is not specifically required** for the health and safety of older workers. It also advises employers to avoid assumptions by consulting and involving older workers when considering control measures to put in place.

There are 5 key actions employers can take to achieve a balanced approach to age-related risk management which reduces risk and avoids ageism:

- 1 **Adopt a person-centred approach to risk management:** Encourage workers to tell you if they experience age-related issues which affect their work. This involves creating a workplace culture where open and honest conversations are encouraged and supported.
- 2 **Be prepared to make reasonable adjustments to reduce risk where required:** In consultation with workers, agree whether reasonable adjustments are needed to enable them to perform their jobs effectively and safely. For example, a worker who uses ladders may not be able to do so safely if they experience age-related osteoarthritis. Work closely with your HR department to identify what these are.
- 3 **Engage older workers by offering development and training opportunities:** Don't assume that older workers are counting down the days to retirement! It is essential that all workers are given the opportunity to progress and develop in their roles.
- 4 **Ensure communication and technological advances are accessible to all workers:** Older workers have not been brought up with access to the same technology as younger workers and can be less confident when using it. Supplement training and methods of communication where required to ensure that all your employees can access organisational resources.
- 5 **Consult with your employees regularly, review your risk assessments and implement changes to control measures if and when required.**



# Discover the Power of Having a Simple Accident Model to Help Design Out Foreseeable Hazards



Conor Crowley, Chief Process Safety Engineer, Kent Engineering, Aberdeen.

**T**echnology is not only responsible for new and emerging risks, it also offers more opportunities to safeguard workers than ever before. As a risk assessment tool, HAZOP (Hazard and Operability Analysis) is often described as a qualitative risk assessment tool that considers risk from the bottom up. Senior safety expert, Conor Crowley, explains to *Risk Assessment & Compliance* how he uses the method to lower exposure to risk.

*Kellie Mundell, Case Study Editor*

## Background: the Challenge of Managing Risks Remotely

*'It can be strange being an engineer in the energy sector,'* notes Conor, who leads safety engineering at the integrated energy services consultancy. *'We sit in our nice warm office, or air conditioned meeting room depending on the time of year, often separated by many kilometres of land and sea, even multiple time-zones, from the places where the risks we influence are located.'*

A safety engineer for almost three decades, Conor specialises in **process risk assessment and analysis** and currently provides process safety support to clients in the oil and gas and low-carbon energy industries.

## Getting Serious About Risk Management is Essential

Models, drawings, and computer programmes can often feel removed from the engineering reality, observes Conor. As the computers become more sophisticated and the modelling more realistic, it can seem from the outside that we are playing with the risks, rather than influencing them. *'I've had more than one person dismiss detailed modelling of items as 'PlayStation for engineers','* he adds. *'But we do influence the risks, even from our remote locations.'*

Conor was fortunate to once find himself in a group conversation with Dame Judith Hackitt, who at the time was head of the UK Health and Safety Executive and president of the Institution of Chemical Engineers. Her contention was that, while the events that caused the Piper Alpha disaster may have taken place on that fateful day in July 1988, the engineering decision to upgrade the facility with compression facilities directly beside the accommodation module without managing the explosion risk was what made the disaster possible. *'Those decisions were made by engineers, probably like me, trying to deliver the value that their client wanted,'* he explains.

## Why HAZOP is Critical for Risk Management in Complex Processes

Conor is currently working on a revalidation HAZOP for a major offshore company. This **structured and systematic examination** aims to identify **hazards to personnel, equipment or the environment, as well as operability problems** that could affect operational efficiency.

HAZOP is often described as a **qualitative risk assessment tool** that looks at risk from the bottom up. It includes a risk identification approach, where success relies on the ability of subject matter experts to **predict deviations based on past experiences**.

The facility is one of the UK's top five oil producers, has hundreds of people on board, and the organisation is looking at the risks now that the plant has been up and running for 5 years. *'In line with most company HAZOP procedures, we have an experienced operator in the room, helping us to understand the differences between the plant as envisaged (and shown on the drawings) and how it actually performs.'*

It's a relatively new facility, built to modern engineering standards, and to date they haven't found much that would cause great concern, says Conor. *'We'll probably end up raising some engineering query actions, tweak some test intervals for critical safety equipment, emphasise some things and deemphasise some others based on our current understanding of the risk.'*

HAZOP, when you're immersed in it, is not the most exciting of tasks, admits Conor. But its power lies in the ability to use an easily understood accident model to help design out foreseeable hazards. *'With 21st century control and shutdown systems, we can do more than ever before, react to more complicated situations reliably, and expose people to lower and lower levels of risk. But as I continue to think about how I can influence risk, I spend more time thinking about what we might be missing, than what it is we are finding.'*

## The Real World Implications of Effectively Predicting Risk

Conor quotes the words of Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw: *'Some look at the world as it is and say 'why'? I dream of things that never were and think 'why not?'*

*'The next accident we have will never be the same as any one before. It might be obvious in hindsight, but how obvious is it in foresight? And how do we use our creativity and imagination to help remove the risks that are to be faced?'* he asks.

*'Put simply, I don't face those risks myself. It's the operators in the room with us on the HAZOP, and the people on the plant, that face those risks. And it might feel like a game or an academic exercise. But for them, it's real risk, and that's our responsibility to remember. It's all fun and games until someone loses an eye.'*

# Engage Your Staff from the Start with an Effective Induction

A simple but effective health and safety induction for your workers at the start of their employment with you is a must. It clearly communicates that health and safety is a priority for your organisation and sets out your approach to ensuring the safety of your site. First impressions count so it's important to keep your initial induction relevant and practical. Our new online training platform, TeachtoProtect, provides you with a basic health and safety induction awareness training product suitable for all businesses which can be adapted to meet your needs and activities. We summarise the key components of basic induction training and show how you can customise it to meet the needs of your business.

You can use the TeachtoProtect induction training tool as a solid foundation to introduce your new starters to your workplace health and safety. You should **follow it up with specific job-related induction training**. Below we highlight some key safety messages you need to communicate from the outset to all new starters.

## 1. Understand the Basic Health and Safety Duties of the Employer and Employees

Perhaps the most important message you will want to get across from the outset is that **health and safety is the responsibility of everybody** in your organisation. This is a legal requirement with basic duties laid out for both employers and employees in the **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**. At initial induction you can refer your new employees to the **Health and Safety Law Poster** displayed around your site for further details and points of contact in the company.

## 2. Ensure New Employees Know what Health and Safety Signs Mean

We believe a key point to cover as early as possible is the meaning of the health and safety signage displayed around your site. It is easy (and dangerous!) to assume that the signs are self-explanatory as they feature pictograms. **Safety signage provides essential information** for your employees and is particularly important for new employees who are unfamiliar with your site and activities.

The TeachtoProtect training platform enables you to increase awareness of widely used basic safety signage. You can customise the content to ensure that additional signs relevant to your site(s) are also taught to your new starters. Teaching and checking the understanding of site safety signage is essential for safe working.

## 3. Communicate Ergonomic Ways of Working with Computers

Most work roles involve an element of work with display screen equipment (DSE), so tips received early on about ergonomic working with computers and other DSE have wide application and can easily be overlooked. This is a good topic to cover if, like many businesses, your initial training programme is largely delivered by e-learning and requires long periods of computer use at the start of employment.

The TeachtoProtect induction training includes advice on how to set up your computer to **enable ergonomic working and reduce future ill health effects**.

## 4. Raise Awareness of Common Workplace Hazards

Basic induction should make new staff aware of common workplace hazards and their role in reducing the risk of them leading to harm. Common hazards include **slips, trips and falls, housekeeping, work at height and manual handling**.

## 5. Communicate Key Health and Safety Controls in Operational Areas

Induction training is an opportunity to highlight additional hazards within the operational areas of your business such as hazardous substances and work machinery/equipment.

For employees who will be working in these areas, you can draw their attention to the specific **operating procedures and risk assessments** which tell them how the risks are controlled.

## 6. Explain the Provision and Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

If your new starters will be required to use PPE for their job role, induction training is a good point to introduce your organisation approach to the provision and use of PPE. You must supplement this with relevant **job-related training**.

## 7. Know What to Do in an Emergency and How to Report Accidents

All your staff must know what to do in an emergency or if they have an accident. This must be communicated **as soon as they start work**. Remember to include fire and evacuation procedures, first aid provision and how to report accidents.

### TeachToProtect

Use TeachToProtect to provide your workers with the basic health and safety awareness training they need by law to understand the risks and safe practices which are relevant to your site. You can **customise** the training for your business and **follow it up with more specific role-related health and safety training** to ensure you fully meet your general health and safety duties as an employer and regulatory duties relating to specific work activities.

We're offering our readers a free TeachToProtect demo, so register your interest here: [www.skillsforwork.com/offer](http://www.skillsforwork.com/offer)

# Use Our Winter CDM Checklist to Ensure Your Projects Remain Compliant

If your company is having maintenance or construction work undertaken that falls under the Construction Design Management Regulations 2015, how do you ensure what was set up in the summer months is still current as the winter weather looms? Use our checklist to ensure that critical items have not been overlooked and that your employees and contractors remain healthy and safe. You can download this checklist from your Online Resource Centre at: [www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources](http://www.risk-compliance.co.uk/resources)

## Winter CDM Compliance Checklist

[Download](#)



Are your construction site or maintenance works ready for the season ahead? Use this checklist to find out. A 'yes' answer confirms the correct measures are in place whilst a 'no' indicates a need for further action.

Construction Phase Plan	Yes	No
Do your emergency procedures take into account the winter and adverse weather conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are personnel contact details up to date and correct, including out of hours emergency contacts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are contact details up to date for contractors who may provide winter services to keep your site safe?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a shut down procedure for the site during the holiday period?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Assessments		
Are your risk assessments suitable and sufficient for this season?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your risk assessments will specify a certain level of first aiders, fire marshals/wardens, etc. Do you have enough people trained up to provide cover due to staff absence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside Workplace Conditions		
Is the site fencing and hoarding stable and able to withstand increased wind loading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your contractor reviewed their design to take into account wind loading on the structure and scaffold sheeting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are vehicles able to clean their windows, mirrors and lights to comply with the road traffic requirements, even when moving around site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are skips and bins covered to prevent the wind from blowing the contents out?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pedestrian routes and car parking areas free from standing water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the site noticeboard able to stand up to winter weather conditions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you provided rock salt for icy paths?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Signage		
On external fencing, are notices in place stating which companies are the duty holders on the project and their contact details?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On external fencing, are notices in place stating the site rules on entry?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excavations		
Are excavations inspected daily to ensure their integrity, with no risk of collapse due to waterlogged land?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are excavations pumped out prior to work taking place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are excavations barriered off from unauthorised access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indoor Workplace Conditions		
Is suitable matting placed in doorways to prevent mud and water being tracked into the building?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the rooms sufficiently protected from the weather?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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# Health & Safety Training Made Simple!

Introducing the cutting-edge **TeachToProtect** training platform designed to transform the way you manage your organisation's Health & Safety training.

Whether it's e-learning, face-to-face sessions or online training, with **TeachToProtect** you can be confident you're not only meeting your legal training requirements but providing high-quality training content you can trust.

Your benefits:

- ✓ **Ready-to-Use Content:** Jumpstart your training with our comprehensive library, covering all core areas of Health & Safety.
- ✓ **Expert-Created:** Our courses are created by industry experts, ensuring you meet your legal duties.
- ✓ **CPD Certified:** Our training content has been assessed to ensure it meets the required Continuing Personal Development standards.
- ✓ **User-Friendly System:** Easily schedule, monitor and review staff training with our intuitive dashboard, saving you time and hassle.
- ✓ **Simple Learning Management System:** Create and add your own organisation's branded training.

Seeing is believing, so we'd love to show you how **TeachToProtect** can streamline your training processes.

For your **free demo** and **exclusive subscriber offer**, just go to:

**[skillsforwork.com/offer](https://skillsforwork.com/offer)**



## What's in the Next Issue:

- **New Year, New Start: Plan Your H&S Priorities for 2025**
- **Tyre Safety: Discover the Essential Controls Required to Keep Drivers and Pedestrians Safe**
- **Improve Support for Your Workers with Mental Health Problems**

