



# Psychosocial Risk Assessment Guide

To meet your duty of care under WHS laws, it is essential to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks as far as is reasonably practicable. Like any other health and safety hazard, psychosocial risks should be managed through a structured risk management approach, as outlined in Safe Work Australia's [Code of Practice: How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks](#).

The psychosocial risk management process involves 4 key steps:



The risk management 4 step process includes:

**Step 1: Identify hazards** — Determine what psychosocial hazards may be present or could cause harm. These could include:

- Job control,
- Job demands,
- Support,
- Organisational change,
- Organisational justice,
- Recognition and reward,
- Role clarity,
- Workplace relationships,
- Environmental conditions,
- Remote and isolated work,
- Exposure to traumatic content or events,
- Violence and aggression,
- Bullying,
- Sexual harassment.

**Step 2: Assess risks** — To help prioritise which hazards require urgent attention and informs your control strategies understand the nature of the harm the hazard could cause, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening.

**Step 3: Control risks** — Implement the most effective control measures that are reasonably practicable in the circumstances and ensure they remain effective over time. This means:

- you must eliminate risks, if reasonably practicable to do so
- if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks, implement the most effective control measures to minimise the risks so far as is reasonably practicable in the circumstances, and
- ensure those control measures remain effective over time.

**Step 4: Review control measures** — Regularly check if your controls are working as intended and make changes as required.

### Consultation

All of these steps must be supported by consultation. Risk management should be an ongoing part of your operations—not a one-off activity. The earlier you identify and manage psychosocial hazards (e.g. during organisational changes), the more effective and cost-efficient your controls will be. The size and nature of your organisation will shape how the process is implemented. Larger or higher-risk workplaces may need more sophisticated systems and tools, but the four-step process remains the same. Before you start the process:

- explain the process
- get commitment and engagement from senior leaders and managers
- identify who needs to be involved, for example managers, workers, HSRs and subject matter experts
- and decide how the process and its outcomes will be recorded and communicated.

The next page provides a sample risk assessment template to prepare a risk register identifying the hazards, what action needs to be taken, who will be responsible for taking the action and by when. It is set out in line with the risk management 4 step process.



# Risk Assessment Template

Assessors Name:		Date of Assessment:	
Occupation:		Location of Assessment:	
Department:		Others Present:	Name/Occupation:
Job/Task/Operation Description:		Name/Occupation:	
		Name/Occupation:	
		Name/Occupation:	

Step 1: Identify psychosocial hazards		Step 2: Assess the risk			Step 3: Control the risk		Step 4: Review control measures			
Hazard/Situation	Risk associated to the hazard	Assessment of risk (likelihood/severity)	Priority	Existing control measures	Further control measures	Action plan	Status	Person responsible	Review date	Reason for review
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			



# Risk Assessment Template

Step 1: Identify psychosocial hazards		Step 2: Assess the risk			Step 3: Control the risk		Step 4: Review control measures			
Hazard/ Situation	Risk associated to the hazard	Assessment of risk (likelihood/severity)	Priority	Existing control measures	Further control measures	Action plan	Status	Person responsible	Review date	Reason for review
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			
							<input type="checkbox"/> completed <input type="checkbox"/> in progress <input type="checkbox"/> not started			

# Risk Matrix

	<b>Almost Certain</b> Expected to occur in most circumstances	<b>Likely</b> Will probably occur in most circumstances	<b>Moderate</b> Given time, likely to occur	<b>Unlikely</b> More likely not to occur under normal conditions	<b>Rare</b> May only occur in exceptional circumstances	<b>Action Priority</b>
<b>Catastrophic</b> Multiple fatalities	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Severe</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>1 = Severe Risk</b> Stop activity and rectify immediately
<b>Major</b> A fatality or total and permanent physical or psychological disability	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Severe</b>	<b>Severe</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>2 = High Risk</b> Rectify with urgency
<b>Moderate</b> Any physical or psychological injury likely to result in a person being incapacitated from normal activity for 7 or more days	<b>Severe</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>3 = Medium Risk</b> Actively look for opportunities to further reduce risk
<b>Minor</b> Any physical or psychological injury likely to result in a person being incapacitated from normal activity for up to 7 days	<b>High</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>4 = Low Risk</b> Consider if anything simple can be done to reduce the risk. If not, manage as part of a continuous improvement program
<b>Insignificant</b> Any physical or psychological injury that needs first aid treatment only	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	