



**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Event Risk Assessment Guidance Note

What is a risk assessment?

'Risk assessment' means nothing more than examining carefully what might cause harm and subsequently deciding on the precautions that are in place, or need to be. The aim of any risk assessment is to identify risks and take suitable and sufficient measures to minimise the likelihood of any harm or damage occurring.

Why carry out risk assessments?

Everyone who organises events need to have a health and safety management system to anticipate, monitor and control potential risks. This is a legal requirement, and the following are some guidelines which should help you in carrying out your risk assessments. However, please note that it is entirely your responsibility to carry out all necessary risk assessments and you must ensure that your assessments fully take into account the specific facts and circumstances of your event.

Identifying the hazards

All hazards should be identified including those relating to individual activities and any equipment. A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm. The following are some examples of the types of hazards that should be addressed:

- Any slipping, tripping or falling hazards
- Manual handling and or mechanical lifting activities
- Any vehicles on site
- Electrical safety e.g. use of any portable electrical appliances (including generators)
- Moving parts of machinery
- Crowd intensity and pinch points

This list is by no means exhaustive and care should be taken to identify any other hazards associated with the activities for your event.

Identifying those at risk

For each hazard identified, list all those who may be affected. Do not list individuals by name, just list groups of people (stewards, general public, participants, contractors etc)

Assessing the risk

The extent of the risk arising from the hazards identified must be evaluated and existing control measures taken into account. The risk is the likelihood of the harm arising from the hazard. You should list the existing controls and assess whether or not any further controls are required. The following should be taken into account:

- Whether or not the existing controls have reduced the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.
- Any information, instruction and training that might be required in respect of the event and the activities involved.

- Compliance with legislative standards, codes of good practice and British Standards.

Further action necessary to control the risk

Classify risks into high, medium and low. Examples of risks falling into these categories are as follows:

High	Canoes being used in winter in adverse weather conditions by young children on a river.
Medium	Animal display in a roped off arena.
Low	A mime artist performing amongst the crowd.

For each risk, consider whether or not it can be eliminated completely. If it cannot, then decide what must be done to reduce it to an acceptable level. Only use personal protective equipment (PPE), eg. hard hats, high viz vests, as a last resort when there is nothing else you can reasonably do. Please be aware that PPE only protects those wearing it not all those who could be affected.

Consider the following:

- Removal of the hazard.
- Restricting access to the hazard
- Implementing procedures to reduce exposure to the hazard.
- Find a substitute for that activity/machine etc.
- The use of personal protective equipment as a last resort.

The above list is not exhaustive and care should be taken to identify other measures.

Record the risk assessment findings and inform your volunteers, participants and staff

You may wish to use the downloadable blank risk assessment form to record all significant hazards, the nature and extent of the risks, and the action required to control them. We have also provided a completed example which you may use to build your risk assessment for your convenience; we ask that you identify the level of risk associated for e.g. high, med, or low. Once completed all those affected by a risk assessment must be made aware of its content and the document retained for future reference.

Review your assessment and revise if necessary

If the nature of the risks change prior to or during the event, the risk assessment will need to be reviewed and updated.

In the case of an accident?

Record all incidents and notify your insurer and the Canal & River Trust as soon as possible.