Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

RISK ASSESSMENT & METHOD STATEMENTS (RAMS)

Introduction:

Marisco has a moral and legal obligation to keep everyone who is affected by the work we undertake safe and free from harm.

One of the ways we meet these obligations is to require written risk assessments and method statements (RAMS) to be prepared for each place of work we control before starting work there. The RAMS will be continuously reviewed and revised to ensure they always identify the specific hazards and risks that exist on each site, and what safe-working practices (or controls) must be observed to keep employees, contractors, visitors, and members of the public safe affected by each site safe and free from harm.

Abbreviations

We use the following abbreviations in the following document:

H&S: Health and Safety
RAMS: A combined risk assessment and method statement
HSE: Health and Safety Executive

Course objectives

By the end of this self-study course you will understand:

1. The special significance we attach to the words *hazards*, *risks* and safe-working practices (or controls) in respect of health and safety planning;
2. How you should approach the completion of a RAMS form;
3. Why all workers on site must read and sign the relevant RAMS;
4. The legal and moral reasons why all the above is necessary.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

1. 0 Back to Basics

1.1 The foundation of all health and safety regulation in the UK.

The ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*** states in **Section 2(1)** it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.

Enforcing authorities, academics, professional trade bodies and the courts have spent decades considering the legal ramifications of this single sentence and how best to apply them in practise.

As far as Marisco is concerned, Section 2(1) can be summed up as placing an onerous legal obligation upon all levels of management within the Company to demonstrate they have taken all steps necessary to eliminate the risks of harm to anyone who may visit or be affected by any workplace we control.

One way we can demonstrate we are complying with the law is to record and retain written risk assessments for the tasks our workers carry out in all work places that identify the hazards and risks that may cause them to suffer harm and introduce control measures to manage those risks to ensure all persons affected by our undertakings remain safe while at work.

1.2 Risk Assessments

Regulation 3 of the ***Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*** requires Marisco to carry out a *suitable* and *sufficient* **assessment** of:

a. the risks to the health and safety of our employees to which they are exposed whilst at work;

b. and the risks to the health and safety of persons not in our employment arising out of or in connection with our conduct or undertakings.

As Marisco has more than five employees, all risk assessments must be **recorded**. The term ‘recorded’ is taken to mean all risk assessments are written and retained for future review to demonstrate the law has been complied with.

A **risk assessment** should identify the **hazards** and record the significant **risks** that exist in that work place.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

A **hazard** is anything that has the potential to cause harm.

The **risk** is a measure of the **likelihood** a hazard could cause harm and the **severity** of the harm that would result should such an event come to pass.

1.3 Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS)

Having identified the hazards and risks that exist on a site, the next step is to devise and document a **safe system of working** to eliminate the risks someone could be harmed in the work place. These **controls** should be recorded as part of the risk assessment to demonstrate how any identified risks that cannot be eliminated will be managed by introducing safe working practices to ensure the continuing welfare, health and safety of all persons affected by the activities carried out in each work place.

Our approach is to combine the **R**isk **A**ssessments and **M**ethod **S**tatements into **RAMS** that will be made available on site to provide the information every worker or visitor will need to understand the safe system of working they must comply with to keep themselves and everyone else safe and free from harm.

1.4 The importance of RAMS to Marisco's H&S Management System

Marisco's Health and Safety Policy and its primary objective of creating a safe working environment relies heavily upon the RAMS being produced at each of the many short-lived construction sites we operate from each day.

Although most of our time is engaged in relatively low-risk refurbishment work in domestic homes, they are still classified as *construction sites* in law whenever the property is owned or managed by a private landlord, council or housing association. As such, our work falls within the scope of all the UK's construction site regulations.

To remain compliant, it follows:

1. Marisco senior management must prepare and continuously review the company's H&S Policy to ensure it achieves its objectives and all workers comply with the Policy when going about their duties in the workplace;
2. Managers must be able to competently prepare RAMS and be given the authority to enforce the rules on site; and
3. Every worker must read and understand the RAMS prepared for the site they are working on and comply with the safe working methods and controls put in place to protect everyone's health and safety.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

1.5 Why bother? H&S compliance is just a pain in the butt!

Whatever personal views you may hold on the relevance and value of H&S compliance in the work place, be under no illusion that Marisco management is fully committed to promoting a positive health and safety culture within the work place that puts safety considerations before those of profits and productivity. We accept that adopting safe working practices often involves incurring extra time, trouble and money for everyone involved, but they are insignificant to the personal costs and potential corporate losses a serious accident would incur should there be a serious accident or death in the workplace because the H&S measures failed.

We can understand why it is tempting to think H&S is a waste of time. It is easy to be lulled into a false sense of security because most of us have been in work for decades and suffered nothing more serious than a few cuts and sprains in that time.

The argument that H&S is pointless, however, falls flat on its face as soon as you try and justify why it does not matter to the 144 families who lost a loved one because 144 employers didn't do enough to prevent them from being killed in the work place last year (2016/17).

Notwithstanding the personal tragedies the deaths of those 144 workers represent, it also means 144 employers are currently undergoing an in-depth enforcement agency investigation to determine who, if anybody, is to blame for the accidents.

It is a given those 144 employers will face significant fines when the case is brought to trial over the next three years. Many of those employers will also go out of business as employees, clients, bankers and insurers desert a 'sinking' ship.

It is realistic to surmise that amongst those 144 employers, are more than a few directors, senior managers and site supervisors who will have already been charged with various breaches under H&S law or perhaps even face criminal charges for negligent manslaughter.

Deserving or not, those people and their families are going through a living hell as they wait for their cases to come to trial.

It is therefore worth remembering as a Marisco employee that the most useful written evidence likely to be available to help you defend against an accusation by the HSE or Crown Prosecution Service that is was your negligence that contributed to the death of a colleague at work … are the RAMS we insist should be completed for each site we are discussing here.

If our site's H&S paperwork is all up to together, and everyone who works on the site has read and understood what safe working practices they should be observing to create a safe working environment, then the risk of accidents is much reduced. Furthermore, in the event of a serious injury, any subsequent HSE inquiry is unlikely to take a hard line on prosecuting individuals if they are satisfied every reasonably practicable step was taken to create a safe site. Some accidents just happen because of unforeseen events no one can protect against.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

If a serious accident happens on a Marisco site where the H&S paperwork is incomplete or absent, and/or the responsible site managers and workers present at the time of the accident were only playing lip-service to the operation of normal safe systems of working that everyone present knew should be in place … then the HSE will be fully justified in taking action against those individuals responsible for the accident.

2. Completing the risk assessment

2.0 The role of the manager and what they must complete on the RAMS form

For our proposes, the term *site manger* could be applied to any *competent* person authorised by Marisco's senior management to prepare a set of RAMS for a job they, or others, are about to undertake at any location.

Competency is measured by skill, knowledge, aptitude, training and experience and Marisco is fully committed to provide whatever training individuals require to remain competent to do their job.

There is an overriding presumption that each manager must visit a site before they can write up and sign-off on a risk assessment. Although it is reasonable to assume that many sites will share common hazards, each site is different and must be treated as such.

There is no reason why a set of RAMS cannot be completed on site immediately before work commences, but work should never start until the RAMS has been prepared, read and signed off by all the workers first.

The RAMS should be constantly reviewed to ensure they reflect the actual working conditions that exist on that site. If there is a change in arrangements, new equipment introduced, or new hazards discovered, then the RAMS must be updated immediately to reflect the change in circumstances.

2.1 Preparing the RAMS schedule

The manger must complete the first section at the top of the form to confirm they have visited the site and carried out a suitable and enough risk assessment.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001

Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

Refurbishment Site
RISK ASSESSMENT

Prepared by project Site Manager: Alan Nother
Please print full name: ALAN NOTHER
Date risk assessment carried out on site: 05-08-2018

Location: 44 Willow Way, Christchurch, BH23 1LA
Job Ref: J.3658

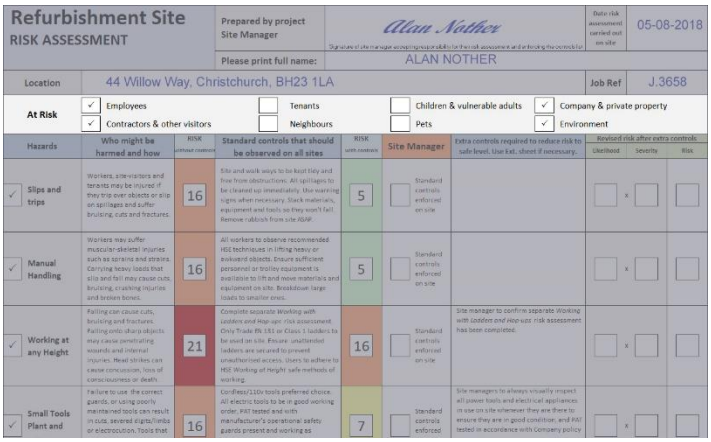
At Risk: ✓ Employees; ✓ Contractors & other visitors; Tenants; Neighbours; Children & vulnerable adults; Pets; ✓ Company & private property; ✓ Environment

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	RISK without controls	Standard controls that should be observed on all sites	RISK with controls	Site Manager	Extra controls required to reduce risk to safe level. Use Ext. sheet if necessary.	Revised risk after extra controls: Likelihood	Severity	Risk
✓ Slips and trips	Workers, site-visitors and tenants may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages and suffer bruising, cuts and fractures.	16	Site and walk ways to be kept tidy and free from obstructions. All spillages to be cleaned up immediately. Use warning signs when necessary. Stack materials, equipment and tools so they won't fall. Remove rubbish from site ASAP.	5	Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Manual Handling	Workers may suffer muscular-skeletal injuries such as sprains and strains. Carrying heavy loads that slip and fall may cause cuts, bruising, crushing injuries and broken bones.	16	All workers to observe recommended HSE techniques in lifting heavy or awkward objects. Ensure sufficient personnel or trolley equipment is available to lift and move materials and equipment on site. Breakdown large loads to smaller ones.	5	Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Working at any Height	Falling can cause cuts, bruising and fractures. Falling onto sharp objects may cause penetrating wounds and internal injuries. Head strikes can cause concussion, loss of consciousness or death.	21	Complete separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment. Only Trade EN 131 or Class 1 ladders to be used on site. Ensure unattended ladders are secured to prevent unauthorised access. Users to adhere to HSE *Working at Height* safe methods of working.	16	Standard controls enforced on site	Site manager to confirm separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment has been completed.			
✓ Small Tools Plant and	Failure to use the correct guards, or using poorly maintained tools can result in cuts, severed digits/limbs or electrocution. Tools that	16	Cordless/110v tools preferred choice. All electric tools to be in good working order, PAT tested and with manufacturer's operational safety guards present and working as	7	Standard controls enforced	Site managers to always visually inspect all power tools and electrical appliances in use on site wherever they are there to ensure they are in good condition, and PAT tested in accordance with Company policy			

By signing the top, they are assuming legal responsibility for confirming, in their 'competent' opinion, that they have taken all reasonable and practicable steps to identify all the hazards and risks that might exist on that site addressed by that form, and they have recommended suitable safe working practices and controls have been put in place to keep the work place safe and free from potential harm of any person affected by the work to be carried out.

The manager should identify who is at risk from the proposed work to be carried out on site.

Working on an empty, single-storey void property will involve far less hazards and risks than carrying out the same work on the top floor of an occupied block of flats with young children and vulnerable adults present.



Refurbishment Site
RISK ASSESSMENT

Prepared by project Site Manager: Alan Nother
Please print full name: ALAN NOTHER
Date risk assessment carried out on site: 05-08-2018

Location: 44 Willow Way, Christchurch, BH23 1LA
Job Ref: J.3658

At Risk: ✓ Employees; ✓ Contractors & other visitors; Tenants; Neighbours; Children & vulnerable adults; Pets; ✓ Company & private property; ✓ Environment

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	RISK without controls	Standard controls that should be observed on all sites	RISK with controls	Site Manager	Extra controls required to reduce risk to safe level. Use Ext. sheet if necessary.	Revised risk after extra controls: Likelihood	Severity	Risk
✓ Slips and trips	Workers, site-visitors and tenants may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages and suffer bruising, cuts and fractures.	16	Site and walk ways to be kept tidy and free from obstructions. All spillages to be cleaned up immediately. Use warning signs when necessary. Stack materials, equipment and tools so they won't fall. Remove rubbish from site ASAP.	5	Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Manual Handling	Workers may suffer muscular-skeletal injuries such as sprains and strains. Carrying heavy loads that slip and fall may cause cuts, bruising, crushing injuries and broken bones.	16	All workers to observe recommended HSE techniques in lifting heavy or awkward objects. Ensure sufficient personnel or trolley equipment is available to lift and move materials and equipment on site. Breakdown large loads to smaller ones.	5	Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Working at any Height	Falling can cause cuts, bruising and fractures. Falling onto sharp objects may cause penetrating wounds and internal injuries. Head strikes can cause concussion, loss of consciousness or death.	21	Complete separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment. Only Trade EN 131 or Class 1 ladders to be used on site. Ensure unattended ladders are secured to prevent unauthorised access. Users to adhere to HSE *Working at Height* safe methods of working.	16	Standard controls enforced on site	Site manager to confirm separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment has been completed.			
✓ Small Tools Plant and	Failure to use the correct guards, or using poorly maintained tools can result in cuts, severed digits/limbs or electrocution. Tools that	16	Cordless/110v tools preferred choice. All electric tools to be in good working order, PAT tested and with manufacturer's operational safety guards present and working as	7	Standard controls enforced	Site managers to always visually inspect all power tools and electrical appliances in use on site wherever they are there to ensure they are in good condition, and PAT tested in accordance with Company policy			

If the manager is using one of our part-completed 'generic' RAMS, they must consider which of the listed hazards are relevant to the site they are reviewing. They can cross out entries that do not apply. They must add new hazards, risks and controls as required, using the blank extension sheet if space on the original form is insufficient. It is important to ignore the trivia and highlight the significant risks that represent a real threat to the safety of people on site.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001

Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

In the generic forms, consideration has already been given by the firm's health and safety team to the nature of the hazards found at most sites, the people who are likely to put at risk of harm, and the perceived level of risks workers will face in the absence of any controls.

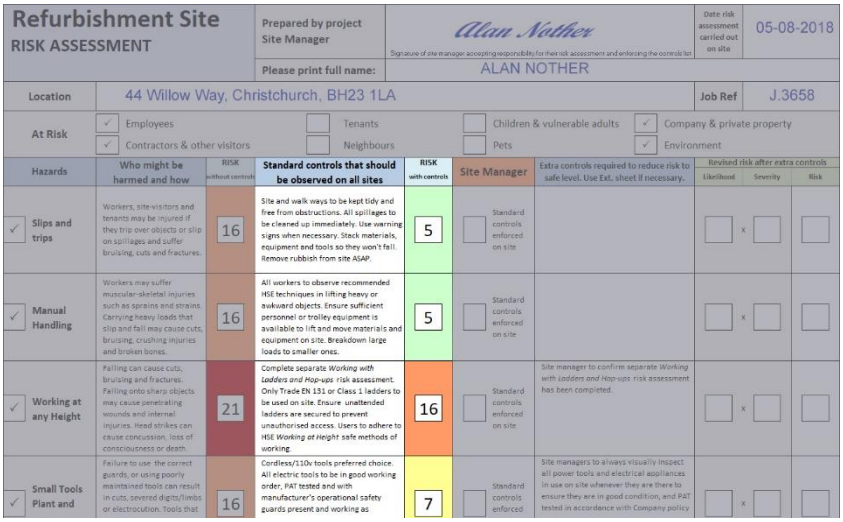
Refurbishment Site
RISK ASSESSMENT

Prepared by project Site Manager	Alan Nother	Date risk assessment carried out on site	05-08-2018
Please print full name:	ALAN NOTHER		
Location	44 Willow Way, Christchurch, BH23 1LA	Job Ref	J.3658

At Risk: ✓ Employees; ☐ Tenants; ☐ Children & vulnerable adults; ✓ Company & private property; ✓ Contractors & other visitors; ☐ Neighbours; ☐ Pets; ✓ Environment

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	RISK without controls	Standard controls that should be observed on all sites	RISK with controls	Site Manager	Extra controls required to reduce risk to safe level. Use Ext. sheet if necessary.	Revised risk after extra controls: Likelihood	Severity	Risk
✓ Slips and trips	Workers, site-visitors and tenants may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages and suffer bruising, cuts and fractures.	16	Site and walk ways to be kept tidy and free from obstructions. All spillages to be cleaned up immediately. Use warning signs when necessary. Stack materials, equipment and tools so they won't fall. Remove rubbish from site ASAP.	5	☐ Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Manual Handling	Workers may suffer muscular-skeletal injuries such as sprains and strains. Carrying heavy loads that slip and fall may cause cuts, bruising, crushing injuries and broken bones.	16	All workers to observe recommended HSE techniques in lifting heavy or awkward objects. Ensure sufficient personnel or trolley equipment is available to lift and move materials and equipment on site. Breakdown large loads to smaller ones.	5	☐ Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Working at any Height	Falling can cause cuts, bruising and fractures. Falling onto sharp objects may cause penetrating wounds and internal injuries. Head strikes can cause concussion, loss of consciousness or death.	21	Complete separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment. Only Trade EN 131 or Class 1 ladders to be used on site. Ensure unattended ladders are secured to prevent unauthorised access. Users to adhere to HSE *Working at Height* safe methods of working.	16	☐ Standard controls enforced on site	Site manager to confirm separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment has been completed.			
✓ Small Tools Plant and	Failure to use the correct guards, or using poorly maintained tools can result in cuts, severed digits/limbs or electrocution. Tools that	16	Cordless/110v tools preferred choice. All electric tools to be in good working order, PAT tested and with manufacturer's operational safety guards present and working as	7	☐ Standard controls enforced	Site managers to always visually inspect all power tools and electrical appliances in use on site whenever they are there to ensure they are in good condition, and PAT tested in accordance with Company policy			

If **all** the listed standard controls are to be observed and enforced on site, the generic RAMS indicate a revised level of risk to either a 'proceed' level (green), or one that still needs additional controls to be considered before it would be safe to allow work to commence.



Refurbishment Site
RISK ASSESSMENT

Prepared by project Site Manager	Alan Nother	Date risk assessment carried out on site	05-08-2018
Please print full name:	ALAN NOTHER		
Location	44 Willow Way, Christchurch, BH23 1LA	Job Ref	J.3658

At Risk: ✓ Employees; ☐ Tenants; ☐ Children & vulnerable adults; ✓ Company & private property; ✓ Contractors & other visitors; ☐ Neighbours; ☐ Pets; ✓ Environment

Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	RISK without controls	Standard controls that should be observed on all sites	RISK with controls	Site Manager	Extra controls required to reduce risk to safe level. Use Ext. sheet if necessary.	Revised risk after extra controls: Likelihood	Severity	Risk
✓ Slips and trips	Workers, site-visitors and tenants may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages and suffer bruising, cuts and fractures.	16	Site and walk ways to be kept tidy and free from obstructions. All spillages to be cleaned up immediately. Use warning signs when necessary. Stack materials, equipment and tools so they won't fall. Remove rubbish from site ASAP.	5	☐ Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Manual Handling	Workers may suffer muscular-skeletal injuries such as sprains and strains. Carrying heavy loads that slip and fall may cause cuts, bruising, crushing injuries and broken bones.	16	All workers to observe recommended HSE techniques in lifting heavy or awkward objects. Ensure sufficient personnel or trolley equipment is available to lift and move materials and equipment on site. Breakdown large loads to smaller ones.	5	☐ Standard controls enforced on site				
✓ Working at any Height	Falling can cause cuts, bruising and fractures. Falling onto sharp objects may cause penetrating wounds and internal injuries. Head strikes can cause concussion, loss of consciousness or death.	21	Complete separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment. Only Trade EN 131 or Class 1 ladders to be used on site. Ensure unattended ladders are secured to prevent unauthorised access. Users to adhere to HSE *Working at Height* safe methods of working.	16	☐ Standard controls enforced on site	Site manager to confirm separate *Working with Ladders and Hop-ups* risk assessment has been completed.			
✓ Small Tools Plant and	Failure to use the correct guards, or using poorly maintained tools can result in cuts, severed digits/limbs or electrocution. Tools that	16	Cordless/110v tools preferred choice. All electric tools to be in good working order, PAT tested and with manufacturer's operational safety guards present and working as	7	☐ Standard controls enforced	Site managers to always visually inspect all power tools and electrical appliances in use on site whenever they are there to ensure they are in good condition, and PAT tested in accordance with Company policy			

The assessor can use their judgement to add or dispense with standard controls as they see fit. Our RAMS will only work as intended, however, if the site manager accepts responsibility for enforcing the chosen controls in the work place, hence why we require the box to be ticked.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

The final step for the risk assessor is to add the extra controls to the selected standard controls to resolve any residual risks that remain with a score of 6 or more points on the schedule.

We explain how to go about scoring the assessment below.

Refurbishment Site
RISK ASSESSMENT

Prepared by project Site Manager: Alan Nother
Please print full name: ALAN NOTHER
Date risk assessment carried out on site: 05-08-2018

Location: 44 Willow Way, Christchurch, BH23 1LA
Job Ref: J.3658

At Risk: ✓ Employees; Tenants; Children & vulnerable adults; ✓ Company & private property; ✓ Contractors & other visitors; Neighbours; Pets; ✓ Environment

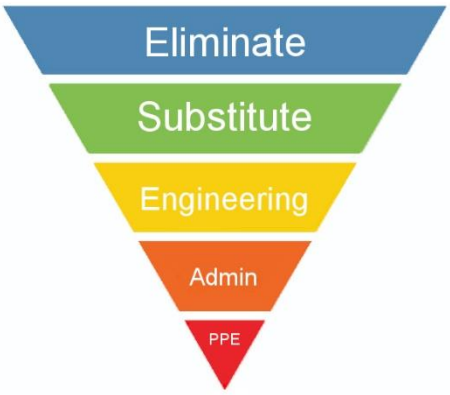
Hazards	Who might be harmed and how	RISK (without controls)	Standard controls that should be observed on all sites	RISK (with controls)	Site Manager	Extra controls required to reduce risk to safe level. Use Ext. sheet if necessary.	Revised risk after extra controls: Likelihood	Severity	Risk
✓ Slips and trips	Workers, site-visitors and tenants may be injured if they trip over objects or slip on spillages and suffer bruising, cuts and fractures.	16	Site and walk ways to be kept tidy and free from obstructions. All spillages to be cleared up immediately. Use warning signs when necessary. Stack materials, equipment and tools so they won't fall. Remove rubbish from site ASAP.	5	✓ Standard controls enforced on site			x	
✓ Manual Handling	Workers may suffer muscular-skeletal injuries such as sprains and strains. Carrying heavy loads that slip and fall may cause cuts, bruising, crushing injuries and broken bones.	16	All workers to observe recommended HSE techniques in lifting heavy or awkward objects. Ensure sufficient personnel or trolley equipment is available to lift and move materials and equipment on site. Breakdown large loads to smaller ones.	5	✓ Standard controls enforced on site			x	
✓ Working at any Height	Falling can cause cuts, bruising and fractures. Falling onto sharp objects may cause penetrating wounds and internal injuries. Head strikes can cause concussion, loss of consciousness or death.	21	Complete separate Working with Ladders and Hop-ups risk assessment. Only Trade EN 131 or Class 1 ladders to be used on site. Ensure unattended ladders are secured to prevent unauthorised access. Users to achere to HSE Working at Height safe methods of working.	16	✓ Standard controls enforced on site	Site manager to confirm separate Working with Ladders and Hop-ups risk assessment has been completed. *Only minimal work on hop-ups required on this job*	2	x 2	4
✓ Small Tools Plant and	Failure to use the correct guards, or using poorly maintained tools can result in cuts, severed digits/limbs or electrocution. Tools that	16	Cordless/110v tools preferred choice. All electric tools to be in good working order, PAT tested and with manufacturer's operational safety guards present and working as	7	Standard controls enforced	Site managers to always visually inspect all power tools and electrical appliances in use on site whenever they are there to ensure they are in good condition, and PAT tested in accordance with Company policy		x	

If the assessment scores for all the hazards are reduced to a score of 5 points or less, and the risk assessor has applied the **hierarchy of risk controls** in arriving at his or her scores (see below), then the process is complete.

Normally a risk assessment would require a review date and name the person responsible for carrying it out. As our jobs tend to be of short duration, often measured in days rather than weeks, we look to the site manager to monitor the situation and amend the risk assessment over the course of the job as necessary.

2.2 Hierarchy of Risk Control

The risk assessor should consider how they can apply the **hierarchy of risk control** advocated by HSE as they consider what controls should be put in place.



It is safer to eliminate hazards in the work place instead of using other methods to control risk.

Can you subsitute a task with a safer aletrnative?

Collective *engineering* controls (e.g. guards) that seek to prevent potentially harmful exposure to hazards are safer than *administrative* (safe-working methods, training) controls.

Personal protection equipment (PPE) is the least effective and should be the method of last resort.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

The assessor should look at every hazard they identify and consider first if they can avoid a potentially dangerous task or replace a dangerous substance with one that is safer to use. It is all too easy to conveniently rely upon the weaker administrative and PPE controls and miss the opportunity to eliminate or substitute a risk with a far safer option just by thinking outside the box.

Why use such small print?

Whilst we agree the forms would be far easier to read with larger text, the content would end up printing out over dozens of pages instead of just one or two. We believe it is far easy for individuals to assimilate the important information they need to understand about safe working on each site if it is concentrated into one of two sheets on each key process they are likely to undertake.

If you have trouble reading the small print, then let us know and we will provide a larger text version.

How do I score a risk assessment?

We accept that quantitative approach we take to assessing risk is a highly subjective exercise open to wide interpretation.

It is also open to abuse by a manager who just goes down the line of boxes putting in low numbers to achieve a green score without giving any real consideration to the risks that exist on site. Such an irresponsible approach is criminal negligence and is often the underlying cause in many a serious accident or death in the work place

It is worth mentioning at this stage that the alternative to the *quantitative* method to risk assessment is the *qualitative* approach that requires the risk assessor to start with a template of hazards that might exist on a site and select the ones they consider represent the significant risks to workers and others for each site. They would then write up all the controls in their judgement need to be implemented to demonstrate how they eliminate the risk of harm from each hazard. If one starts with a blank page, then this approach has the advantage that the risk assessment will focus on the hazards and risks that have the most potential to cause harm on each site, as well as forcing the assessor to consider specific controls to manage those risks.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

We believe we have designed a set of RAMS that includes the best of both quantitative and qualitative methods of assessing risks in the refurbishment and repair work we often undertake within Marisco.

The health and safety team have first taken a qualitative approach to record the hazards that will probably exist on most of the work we undertake. We have recorded who may be at risk and the consequences and severity of harm should those hazards go unmanaged. We have then suggested a set of 'standard' controls we believe would manage the risks in most anticipated circumstances.

As each job comes up, the manager can apply both a qualitative and quantitative approach to completing the partially pre-filled RAMS schedule. All they must do is apply their knowledge, training and experience to decide if the standard controls are sufficient to manage the risks they have identified on site. If they feel it is appropriate they can add other safe working practices until they conclude the work place has become a safe environment free from the risk of harm.

Scoring is nothing more than a judgemental weighting exercise

We believe the managers authorised to complete a risk assessment have more than enough professional knowledge, experience and training to competently complete the risk scoring exercise.

By way of an example, consider this first scenario. The **likelihood** that someone could suffer a *working at height* injury by walking across a wide and stable plank of wood placed over a small, shallow muddy puddle at ground level is arguably as low as 1 out of possible score of up to 5.

The **severity** of a resulting injury should they fall into the mud could also be viewed as very low, but it could also prove fatal if they struck their head on a sharp object such as a kerb stone. As it happens 4 people *were* killed last year by a slip and trip fall on level ground. The severity score could therefore arguably lay anywhere between '1' and '5'.

Assuming the specific circumstances of the site involved no other hazards such as kerb stones, it would be surprising if anyone scored the overall risk (*likelihood* x *severity*) to be over 5 … indicating no more controls would need to be considered. Naturally, one would apply the principles of the hierarchy of risk controls to consider if you could find an alternative route of access and egress to avoid having to cross the puddle in the first place… or perhaps it might be possible to dry up the muddle puddle by some mechanical means by improving drainage.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

Now move the plank 5m up in the air to provide a walkway between two structures and all the risk factors move off the scale. If anyone assigned anything other than 5 for **likelihood** and 5 for **severity,** they have as no business writing a risk assessment and arguably shouldn't be allowed anywhere near a construction site.

Are the controls you introduce sensible and proportional?

This question arises from the concept in law that the benefit of improving safety must be matched with a reasonable and proportional control in terms of the ***time***, **money** and ***trouble*** it takes to put the safe working method in place.

For example, one would be hard pressed to convince an HSE inspector it is safe to continue using an electric band saw with a missing blade-guard. The cost of replacing the guard or scrapping and replacing the tool is a reasonable and proportional cost compared to the risk of the user suffering a serious injury from the unguarded blade.

In contrast, many would agree it to be unreasonable and disproportionate to install plastic guards to prevent trapped fingers in every door we fit in … say in an office … because most adults have long since leant to avoid such injuries. The position would be entirely different, however, if the doors we were fitting were in a day nursery for young children. The cost of fitting door guards to prevent toddlers from suffering very severe injuries if their fingers were to be jammed in closing doors becomes a sensible and proportionate cost that should be met.

Assessing risks is all about the perception of the hazards **that exist in each site**, because the factors that might contribute to an injury and how serious the resulting harm might be, will always be different.

3. Why all workers must read and sign the risk assessment

Having gone to all the trouble of identifying the hazards and deciding how the risks should be managed to ensure a safe working environment, it would all be for nothing unless everyone who subsequently comes onto that site is **fully informed** and **understands** what they must do to keep themselves, and the other people affected by their actions, safe and free from harm.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

One way we can ensure everyone is **informed** of the risks to their continuing welfare, safety and health at work is to ask them to sign they have read the RAMS we put on site and confirm they will observe the safe working practices stipulated therein.

The other requirement of **understanding** is met by making sure every worker or visitor to the site receives comprehensible written or verbal information or instruction, which allows them:

a) To identify the hazards and risks to their continuing welfare, health and safety that exist in that work place;

b) To understand the safe-working procedures they are always expected to observe to control the hazards and risks identified;

c) To understand when and where PPE must be worn in accordance with the safe-working procedures stipulated by the RAMS; and

d) To understand *safety is always prioritised over productivity* A worker must always refuse to undertake any task they feel represents a risk to the continuing welfare, health and safety.

4. The Legal Background

Introduction:

Anyone in the construction sector who ignores health and safety and still believes *rules are there to be broken* is another misguided person who hasn't yet managed to cause a serious accident or be caught by the HSE.

The emphasis should be on the word 'yet' because the HSE have announced they will now concentrate more on driving up compliance in the SME construction sector where it is generally accepted compliance is often poor or non-existent.

The carrot and stick policy wielded by the HSE is unlikely to be the main reason why smaller construction firms will be forced into embracing a higher standard of H&S compliance. More insurance under-writers are demanding evidence from their clients that they are H&S compliant and arranging for independent audits to confirm the arrangements. It follows that no insurance cover means no business.

This is a more detailed look at the legal reasons why risk assessments must be completed for every site.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

The ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*** states in **S.2(1)** it shall be the duty of every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees.

Regulation 3(1) of the ***Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999*** states every employer shall make a suitable and sufficient assessment of:

a) the risks to the health and safety of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work; and

b) the risks to the health and safety of persons not in his employment arising out of or in connection with the conduct by him of his undertaking.

Regulation 10 of the ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*** states employees must be given comprehensible and relevant information on risks identified by the assessment and the preventative and protective measures introduced to control those risks.

Arguably the only way we, as the employer, can conclusively demonstrate we are meeting the legal obligations above, is to:

1. Have our trained and 'competent' managers prepare a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for every workplace and record the controls and safe working methods to be used on each site to eliminate the risk of harm from the hazards identified;

   and

2. Ask everyone who enters each workplace to confirm, by signing a statement, they have been read the information on the risks identified and they will comply with the controls and safe working methods … as they are legally obliged to do under **S.7** of the ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*** and Regulation 14 of the ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.***

Why can't we use a single generic risk assessment we all sign once?

A. As convenient as it would be, signing one risk assessment to cover all eventualities across all possible sites is a non-starter. The HSE and the courts continue to insist risk assessments and the method statements must be prepared to reflect the specific hazards and risks present at each location.

Furthermore, it is apparent from the growing number of scathing HSE and court press releases that employers are suffering severe financial penalties for misguidedly believing they are meeting their legal obligations by relying on a single catch-all risk assessment, that only sees the light of day once a year to have the review date

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

amended, which is then circulated to staff or perhaps posted to a website along with a library of generic method statements … that no one ever reads accept the author.

As the employer, we have no choice. We must risk assess every site, record our findings and demonstrate we have effectively communicated the relevant information to allow those working or visiting the site to remain free from harm.

It is a fact, however, that much of the work we undertake at different sites does share common hazards and risk profiles. So, we can justify anticipating certain safe-working practices that will always be universally relevant to most sites we will work on. Rather than starting with a blank form, we provide a framework of predictable hazards, risks and suggested safe working practises that can be adapted to fit the specific requirements of each location.

It is important to strike a balance between sensibly anticipating and pre-recording *common* and *relevant* safe-working information and avoiding the temptation to include all possibilities and creating another meaningless 'generic' RAM, which everyone signs and does not bother to read.

Q. Why do we ask every worker to sign each RAM on site?

A. For our health and safety system to work as intended, it requires every worker and visitor to know what hazards exist on the site, and what safe working practices they must personally observe to keep everyone on site safe. We cannot demonstrate we are meeting our legal duty to inform … unless we ask workers and visitors to affirm by signing to the effect we have given them the required information?

Employees have a strong moral and legal obligation to co-operate

We should not have to quote the legislation above to convince workers why it is necessary to buy into a safe-working at work.

Common-sense and a regard for self-preservation should be motivation enough for individuals to look after their own health and safety while engaged in work.

If you still believe H&S is a joke, consider what the families of the 38 construction workers who died last year in 2017/18 would tell you about how they feel about the failure in H&S compliance that killed their loves ones.

It is worth remembering four of those workers tragically died from nothing more complicated than a slip and trip injury sustained on level ground. That means somewhere in the UK are at least four individuals who try to go to sleep every night with the death of four colleagues on their conscience just because they couldn't be bothered to clear up after them.

The author has worked with people haunted by the memory that they were responsible for the accidental death of another person. The psychological damage caused by the guilt never really goes away … they just learn to live with it as best they can.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

For the record, **S.7** of the ***Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974*** states it shall be the duty of every employee while at work:

a) to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and

b) as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with.

5. In Conclusion

Course objectives achieved

1. We have explained the special significance we attach to the words *hazards*, *risks* and safe-working practices (or controls) and shown why it is important for everyone to understand how they contribute to the operation of the health and safety system designed to make the workplace a safe environment to work in.

2. We have explained why a competent and trained site manger must carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and determine what safe working methods must be applied to control the risks that cannot be eliminated to keep individuals who come to work or visit that site safe and free from harm.
3. We have explained why it is necessary to have a separate set of RAMS for each site. It is simply a case that although sites will share many common H&S hazards and risk-profiles, there will be other factors that are unique to each site. This requires a risk assessor to give due consideration to the specific hazards and risk at each site.
4. We have explained why individuals must read and acknowledge they understand the information contained in the RAMS on every site. The law demands it of us and we obliged to prove we are compliant in this respect.
5. Promoting a safe working culture where everyone buys into the keeping the work place safe is a sensible policy to pursue at so many levels. Firstly, it achieves the primary objective of reducing accidents in the work place. Being seen to be compliant avoids the unwanted attention of the HSE, and it is certainly good for business because our clients can trust the professional standards we work to.

If there is one thing you should take away from reading this document, it should be this. Whilst it is accepted that the chances of anyone being seriously injured or killed in any of our workplaces is very … very low, it did happen to 144 people last year in the UK.

Marisco Group
Unit 5, West Howe Industrial Estate
Elliott Rd, Bournemouth, BH11 8JY
Tel: 01202 474001
Email: HealthandSafety@mariscosouth.com

It is a sobering thought to think that a similar number of workers, just like you, will suffer a fatal accident at work in the next 12 months.

It takes so little effort on your part to work with the H&S policies we put in place. Complying with the RAMS will greatly reduce the chances you, or a colleague, do not become a sad statistic.