

PURPOSE

This document provides guidance on when to complete a Health and Safety risk assessment via CHARM at Curtin University. It applies to all workers and students conducting work or related activities across all university sites and supports the Health and Safety Policy and Health and Safety Management Standards at the University.

The guideline will:

- Outline the types of workplace Health and Safety Risk Assessments that must be captured in the CHARM system.
- Outline the H&S Risk Assessment Matrix and its use.
- Define the process for reviewing High/Extreme Risks and their review process.
- Define the process for designating an incident or hazard as High Potential (HiPo).
- Explain the process for selecting additional controls if existing controls are deemed insufficient.
- Define the review and archiving requirements for CHARM Risk Assessments.

DEFINITIONS

Current Risk Rating	The level of risk, based on the University Health and Safety Risk Matrix, with existing controls in place but prior to proposed controls being implemented.
Existing Control	An action or measure that is in place to reduce the potential of exposure to the hazard, or to remove the hazard, or to reduce the likelihood of the risk of the exposure to that hazard being realised that is in place at the time of the risk assessment.
Hazard	A situation that has the potential to harm a person, interrupt business or cause damage to the environment, business reputation or property.
Hierarchy of Control	A range of control measures used to control risk to as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP). In most cases a combination of elimination (most effective), substitution, isolation, engineering controls, administrative controls and Personal Protective Equipment (least effective) are chosen to control risks.
High Potential Hazard or Incident (HiPo)	A hazard or incident (‘Dangerous Incident’ as defined by WorkSafe WA in <i>Incident Notification – Interpretive guideline</i> (Released February 2023) that did not cause a fatality, significant injury or damage but had the potential to do so. Alternative definition: An event that, under different circumstances, might easily have resulted in a catastrophic loss.
High Risk Work	Activities as defined under Schedule 3 of the <i>Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022</i> .

Proposed Control	An action or measure proposed to reduce the potential of exposure to the hazard, or to remove the hazard, or to reduce the likelihood of the risk of the exposure to that hazard being realised that is not in place at the time of the risk assessment and if accepted will further reduce the current risk rating.
Residual Risk Rating	The level of risk, based on the University Health and Safety Risk Matrix, after proposed controls have been implemented.
Risk	The likelihood and consequence of injury or harm occurring.
Risk Approver	The Manager/Supervisor responsible for the approval of the risk assessment activity. The Risk Approver is responsible for ensuring the risk owner has adequately identified, assessed and controlled the hazards associated with the activity.
Risk Assessment	The overall process of risk identification, analysis and evaluation.
Risk Control	The method used to eliminate or reduce the level of risk. Health and safety risk controls should be implemented considering the hierarchy of controls.
Risk Matrix	A tool used during risk assessment to define the level of risk by considering the category of likelihood against the category of consequence severity as defined in the Curtin Risk Rating and Acceptance Tables - Health and Safety Risk Matrix.
Risk Owner	The person proposing the activity and seeking approval of the risk assessed activity. The Risk Owner is responsible for ensuring they have accurately and adequately identified, assessed and controlled the hazards associated with the activity and used the Risk Matrix to assign an accurate rating reflecting the status of the activity proposed (current risk rating) and the change achieved by adding further controls (residual risk rating). The Risk Owner cannot also be the Risk Approver.
Worker	Under the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2020</i> a worker is any person who carries out work for a PCBU, including work as an employee, contractor, subcontractor, self-employed person, outworker, apprentice or trainee, work experience student, employee of a labour hire company placed with a 'host employer' and volunteers.

1. RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

A risk assessment is used to systematically identify, as far as is reasonably practicable, the risks associated with a task, activity or process. Appropriate controls and responsibilities for implementing those controls are identified within the risk assessment, with the completed assessment being made available to all stakeholders involved, to ensure the information is effectively and appropriately communicated.

The Health and Safety website has a number of tools and resources to assist those completing risk assessment activities: [Health and Safety Risk Assessment Resources](#)

1.1. WHEN TO COMPLETE A HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT IN CHARM

CHARM is Curtin's electronic Health and Safety hazard and incident management system, with a focus on Work Health and Safety hazards and risks. Although risk assessments can and should be integrated into daily work activities, not all risk assessment activities need to be recorded in CHARM.

A health and safety risk assessment is a pre-emptive tool aimed at preventing harm to people, property and the environment and it **must be completed and approved BEFORE the work is undertaken**. Although health and safety risk assessments should be integrated into daily work activities, not all risk assessment activities need to be recorded in CHARM.

Only the following activities require a health and safety risk assessment to be recorded in CHARM

- a) Events – held both on and off campus;
- b) When a new (the activity has never been done before) or novel (the activity or method is a one off), process is being undertaken;
- c) High Risk Works (as defined by Schedule 3, *Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022*);
- d) As part of responding to a workplace incident, even when an injury has not occurred;
- e) When new information about a hazard becomes available or concerns about a hazard are raised by workers;
- f) If directed as part of another, larger assessment process (i.e. Work Integrated Learning, Fieldwork Risk Assessment process).

1.2. Health and safety risk assessment responsibilities

The person/s carrying out the work, or their supervisor, is responsible for completing the risk assessment. Consultation shall occur between workers including students, managers, supervisors and the Health and Safety Representative (HSR) regarding the process/es being risk assessed.

Technical expertise can be sought from Health and Safety (H&S) or external parties if necessary. Approvals will be automatically sent to the line manager/supervisors of the person completing the risk assessment in CHARM. The person completing the risk assessment cannot be the same person that approves the risk assessment.

2. CHARM HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT MODULE

If a Risk Assessment is required to be completed via CHARM as outlined in 1.1, the completed risk assessments should be entered via the CHARM WHS Risk Register, including those under review. Please refer to the [CHARM Risk Assessment Guide](#) for a practical step-by-step guide to successfully completing your risk assessment in CHARM.

All risk assessments require you to complete steps 2.1 – 2.6 below.

2.1. Identify Hazards

Step 1: Risk Factor and Risk Description: The first step in a risk assessment is to accurately describe tasks being undertaken and each step in the process. The more information and detail that is included in this section, the better chance there is that all potential sources of harm are considered. Once the task(s) has/have been clearly documented, review each step to identify any hazard that is associated with the activity.

Consideration should be given to both physical and psychological hazards, both seen and unseen. Hazards may be identified by:

- a) Reviewing past incidents to learn from past experience
- b) Consulting with Workers to identify what they consider are safety issues
- c) Reviewing the findings/action items from Workplace inspections
- d) Referencing user manual or operating guides as applicable
- e) Reviewing Safety Data Sheets where applicable
- f) Observing task or activity

Clearly describe the hazard to avoid mis-interpretations or subjectivity. Each hazard statement should be clear so that effective risk treatments can be applied (i.e. 'risk of manual handling injury' is not as useful as 'risk of shoulder injury when lifting the heavy box from the shelf if stored at over shoulder height').

2.2. Assess the Risk

Once all the risks have been described against each task step, review the existing controls that are in place to prevent harm. Curtin uses the hierarchy of control when selecting risk treatments:

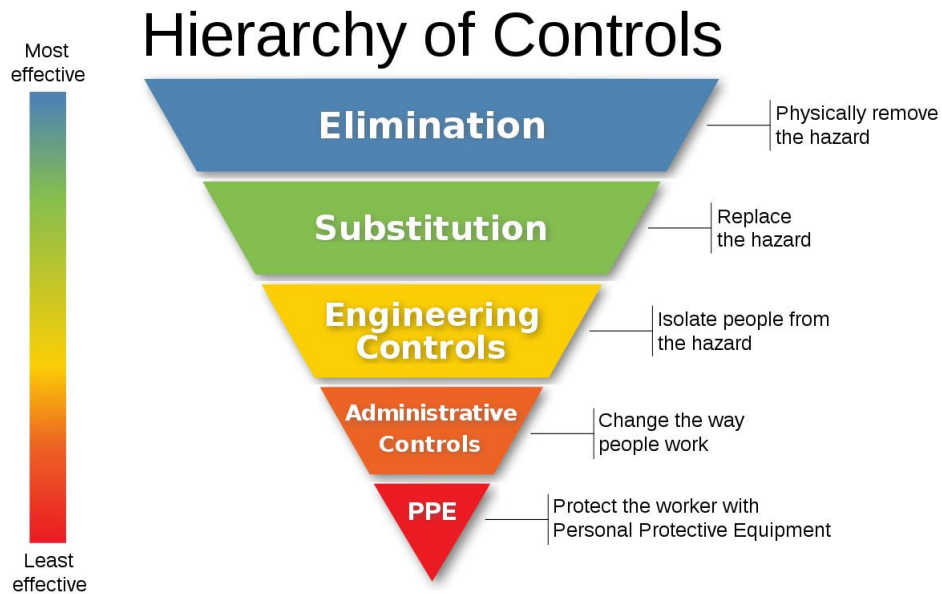
Elimination - physically remove the hazard so no exposure can occur.

Substitution – replace the hazard with a non-hazardous alternative.

Engineering – isolate the people from the hazard through use of guards, interlocks etc.

Administrative – change the way people work to avoid the hazard – such as not scheduling outside work in the middle of the day in summer.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - the hazard remains in place, but the worker uses equipment to act as a barrier between them and the hazard.



Using the [Health and Safety Risk Matrix](#), establish the level of risk of the hazard, keeping in mind the controls already in place. When determining the risk, you must consider both the likelihood and consequences of the hazard occurring.

Start by using the “Consequence Description’ column to select the most serious, likely outcome if you were exposed to the hazard while performing this task. Use the Descriptors in the Injury and Damage columns to guide you. The aim is to accurately describe the most likely outcome of exposure, not the worst-case scenario. A slip/trip or fall risk for a task performed on a flat ground-level surface should not be rated as having the same consequence as a slip/trip or fall risk for a task performed on a roof or edge, for example.

Once you have identified the most likely harm outcome, move to the Likelihood Description column. The likelihood that needs to be assessed is a realistic estimate of the event happening, given what we know about the activity and hazard history described in 2.1. Consider factors such as how often the task is performed, the number of people at risk and the history of incidents from others doing this task.

Match the Consequence and Likelihood intersection on the risk matrix table to find the risk rating for the activity. The risk matrix assigns a value of 1 (insignificant, rare) through to 25 (extreme, almost certain), with risks ranked as low, medium, high or extreme.

Risks rated as high or extreme Refer to section 2.4 below.

Once additional controls have been identified, assigned to a responsible person and a task due date set, repeat the risk rating process to determine the residual risk rating.

2.3. Control the Risk

Step Four – Proposed new controls : Once you have assessed all the hazards and their existing controls, you may still require additional controls to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable. This is carried out by again using the hierarchy of control to place an extra safety layer between the hazard and the person undertaking the task..

If the treatment proposed does not reduce the risk rating, you should reassess the control - is there something else you can do that is more effective? What is the value of the extra step that doesn't impact on the risk rating? Does this control introduce any new hazards?

Consultation, representation and cooperation with those who are potentially exposed to the hazards is required in the selection and implementation of control measures in the workplace. Your Health and Safety Representative and the Health and Safety team will be able to assist you.

Once additional controls have been proposed, you will need to review to ensure that no additional hazards have been introduced.

Step Five - Responsible persons: The Risk Owner must assign all controls to a responsible person who has the ability/authority to ensure that they are carried out in a timely manner. In many instances, this will be the Risk Owner. A due date must be included that is in keeping with the planned risk activity - in other words, the control must be in place at the time that the risk activity is being carried out.

2.4. High or Extreme Rated Risks

Risks rated as High or Extreme require additional controls to be implemented and cannot proceed without review by the Health and Safety team, the relevant Executive (and Senior Executive Team (SET) for extreme rated risks). The aim of the review is to put in place sufficient controls to reduce the risk rating to as low as possible (i.e. Low or Medium, where possible) within the University's risk tolerance levels shown in the Health and Safety Risk Matrix_Risk Acceptance Criteria Table. This feedback is captured in CHARM and can be used to inform future risk assessments as lessons learned.

Once submitted, a CHARM risk assessment rated High or Extreme will automatically notify the Health and Safety team, who will consult with the risk owner and risk approver to reduce the risk to within the University's risk tolerance levels shown in the Health and Safety Risk Matrix_Risk Acceptance Criteria Table. This feedback is captured in CHARM and can be used to inform future risk assessments as lessons learned.

Using the Peer Review function in CHARM, feedback, suggested amendments and any additional controls will be discussed with the risk owner for revision, resubmission and ultimate approval/rejection of the planned risk activity.

If a risk rating remains 'Extreme' after consultation and the application of any additional controls, the risk will need to be reported to the relevant Executive and SET as the risk is out of the acceptable risk appetite for the university.

The activity may not proceed unless expressly approved by the relevant Executive, reviewed at least monthly and reported on to SET until the risk is closed. The Formal review process in CHARM is required to capture lessons learned and decisions made during the review process for such risks.

2.5. High Potential Hazards (HiPo)

High Potential (HiPo) hazards and risks are those rated as High or Extreme, commonly defined as high-risk events where, if a control was not identified or fails, or the hazard was not adequately assessed, may result in a serious or fatal injury.

The types of risks that may be considered HiPo are any of those listed as a 'Dangerous Incident' as defined by WorkSafe WA in *Incident Notification – Interpretive guideline* (Released February 2023), or where based on the detailed risk rating **and** with the application of additional controls remain rated as high or extreme. **These ratings mean the activity is likely outside of Curtin's Risk Appetite and cannot proceed without review by the Health and Safety team, relevant executives and or SET.**

For high potential hazards, in order to determine a safe way forward review of the planned works and the strength of the processes in place to control the recognised hazards is required. If the controls rely heavily on the bottom tiers of the hierarchy of controls (single barriers, PPE or administrative controls) the review is an opportunity to identify and implement higher level controls to reduce the risk to a more acceptable level.

2.6. Risk Assessment Approval, Monitoring and Review

Once the risk assessment has been completed, an email is sent via CHARM to the Risk Approver, requesting that they review and approve the risk assessment.

Monitoring of the risk assessment controls must be conducted to ensure the measures:

- a) Are appropriate to control the identified hazard;
- b) Do not introduce new hazards to the process or workplace;
- c) Are able to be properly implemented and workers have the skills to do so effectively; and
- d) Meet any legal/regulatory requirements.

All health and safety risk assessments should be reviewed as per the [Health and Safety Risk Matrix](#) requirements. Risk assessments entered into CHARM are to be reviewed by the person/s carrying out the work, or their supervisor, via the CHARM system.

While a Risk Assessment is active in CHARM, regular reviews are required by the risk owner and approver depending on the rating assigned:

For High/Extreme level risk assessments -	1 monthly review is required in CHARM
For Medium level risk assessments –	3 monthly review is required in CHARM
For Low level risk assessments –	6 monthly review is required in CHARM

Please note that if the risk assessment is no longer active, it should be archived in the CHARM system. Archived risk assessments can still be accessed at any time from the WHS Risk Register. An archived risk assessment can be unarchived if it is required to return to an active status and updated (such as an event that is run annually).

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

All levels of workers at Curtin University have responsibilities in relation to Health and Safety risk assessment, please refer to the [Health and Safety Responsibilities Procedures](#) for more information.

EXEMPTIONS

These guidelines are intended to provide guidance on how to complete a health and safety risk assessment in for those WHS risks that are captured in CHARM. Information and guidance relating to operational and strategic risk is available via the Risk Management [webpage](#).

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS/LINKS

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Health and Safety Management Standards](#)

[Health and Safety Risk Matrix](#)

[Health and Safety Responsibilities Procedures](#)

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