

Example risk assessment for a warehouse

Setting the scene

The warehouse manager carried out a risk assessment of the warehouse. The warehouse employed 12 staff, some were part of a union.

How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the guidance in *Five steps to risk assessment* (www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf).

- 1 To identify the hazards, the manager:
 - read the *Essentials of health and safety at work* publication to learn where hazards can occur (www.hsebooks.com – ISBN 978 0 7176 6179 4);
 - walked around the warehouse, noting activities that might pose a risk and taking into consideration what she learnt from HSE's guidance;
 - talked through the issues with the union safety representative and asked about concerns that staff had on health and safety;
 - talked to supervisors to learn from their detailed knowledge of particular jobs and areas; and
 - looked at the accident book to gather information on past problems.
- 2 The manager then wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.
- 3 For each hazard identified, the manager recorded what controls, if any, were in place to manage these. She then compared these controls to the good practice guidance laid out in *Warehousing and storage: A guide to health and safety* (www.hsebooks.com – ISBN 978 0 7176 6225 8) and *Essentials of health and safety at work* publications. Where existing controls did not meet good practice, the manager wrote down what further actions were needed to manage the risk.
- 4 Putting the findings of the risk assessment into practice, the warehouse manager decided who was responsible for implementing the further actions and when it should be done. She wrote this down and when each action was completed it was ticked off and the date recorded.
- 5 The warehouse manager discussed the findings with the safety representative. They decided to review and update the assessment at least annually, or at any time when major changes to the workplace occurred. The warehouse manager gave out copies of the risk assessment to all members of staff.

Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business can take. Use it as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your business and the steps you need to take to control the risks. Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards and controls required in your business for yourself.

Company name: GHI Warehouse

Date of risk assessment: 10/1/06

| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed and how? | What are you already doing? | What further action is necessary? | Action by who? | Action by when? | Done |
|---|--|---|---|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| Falls from height | Staff could suffer severe or even fatal injuries if they fell whilst climbing racking. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are given strict instructions never to climb racking – monitored by supervisors. | | | | |
| | Staff could suffer severe or even fatal injuries if they fell whilst changing light bulbs etc in the high ceiling. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proprietary forklift cage used by maintenance worker for changing bulbs. Cage supplier's information shows it is manufactured to standard. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train maintenance worker to check cage is in good condition and properly secured before each use. | RB | 17/1/06 | 20/1/06 |
| | Staff or contractor could suffer severe or fatal injuries falling through fragile roof lights when looking for/ repairing leaks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No controls in place. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put up 'fragile roof' signs, one on each side of the building and at access points to roof. Agree with maintenance worker that a contractor will be used for any access to the roof. Require contractor to provide an assessment before access is allowed if any roof work is required. | RB SP SP | 13/1/06 28/2/06 15/3/06 | 14/1/006 28/2/06 |
| | Worker falling from roof of internal warehouse office used for storage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The internal warehouse roof is load bearing, has full rails and boards around its edge. It has adequate lighting and access is by permanent steps with a handrail. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action required. | | | |
| Manual handling Regular movement of cartons to pallets. Rolls of stretch-wrap and flat pallets | All warehouse staff could suffer from back pain if regularly lifting/carrying heavy or awkward objects. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conveyor system used to reduce manual handling materials in and out of delivery trucks. Lift trucks used for most manual handling. A range of manual handling tasks still required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual handling training to be given to all warehouse staff. Remaining manual handling tasks to be risk assessed using HSE's <i>Manual handling assessment charts</i> INDG383. | SP | 6/2/06 | 1/2/06 |
| | | | | JB | 20/1/06 | 20/1/06 |

| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed and how? | What are you already doing? | What further action is necessary? | Action by who? | Action by when? | Done |
|--|--|---|---|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Slips, trips and falls | All staff may suffer sprains or fractures if they trip over debris or slip on spillages. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Flooring kept dry and quality maintained. ■ All staff trained to maintain good housekeeping standards and ensure stock does not project into gangways. ■ Cleaner empties bins and removes loose debris daily. ■ Pallets stored safely in designated area. ■ Protective non-slip footwear supplied and worn. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Suitable absorber to be made available for liquid spills. ■ Staff to be trained to clean and dry any spillages immediately. ■ Extra bins to be provided for waste material near loading bays. | RB JB RB | 18/1/06 11/1/06 12/1/06 | 16/1/06 11/1/06 12/1/06 |
| Falling objects From racking and during movement | A member of staff or any other person in the warehouse may suffer serious injury if struck by a falling object. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Racking is designed to be suitable for the loads carried and has not been modified. ■ Staff report any damage to racking immediately. ■ System in place to make sure defective pallets withdrawn from use immediately. ■ Protective footwear used by all entering warehouse. ■ Protective gloves provided to handle pallets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sign fixed to racking stating maximum loads/configuration. | RB | 14/7/06 | |
| Operation of lift trucks | <p>Injuries such as fractures or, at worst, fatalities can be caused as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the vehicle crashing into other vehicles and/or other objects; ■ staff and visitors being hit by lift trucks; ■ objects falling from lift trucks onto staff and visitors; ■ lift trucks toppling over; ■ people falling from the vehicle or parts of the vehicle; and ■ being crushed by the mast. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All operators trained and competent for use of the lift truck. ■ Trucks serviced regularly and examined by suppliers every six months. ■ Drivers instructed to keep keys with them at all times. ■ System in place for refresher training of drivers. ■ Gangways and aisles of sufficient space to enable lift trucks to load and unload from the racking safely. ■ System in place to keep vehicles and pedestrians separated. ■ Access to warehouse restricted to staff. ■ Floor condition maintained on a regular basis, housekeeping standards maintained by cleaner and workforce. ■ Warning signs located around the traffic route. ■ Trucks have seat belts and roll cages. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supervisor to ensure truck drivers check trucks each day before starting. ■ Separate pedestrian entrance(s) with protective barrier rail to be provided next to roller-shutter doors. ■ Housekeeping standards and floor condition to be covered by a monthly inspection by manager and brief record kept. ■ Strict requirement that only competent drivers may operate lift trucks to be explained to all staff. Disciplinary action to be taken against anyone involved in breaking this rule. | JB RB SP SP | 10/1/06 20/6/06 27/1/06 23/1/06 | 10/1/06 27/1/06 23/1/06 |

| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed and how? | What are you already doing? | What further action is necessary? | Action by who? | Action by when? | Done |
|--|--|--|--|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Traffic movements (deliveries etc) | Injuries such as fractures or, at worst, fatalities can be caused by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ staff and visitors being hit by vehicle; ■ people falling from a vehicle or parts of a vehicle; and ■ objects falling from vehicle onto staff and visitors. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Floor and traffic routes suitable for the vehicles using them. ■ Vehicle routes kept free of obstructions (with spillages being cleaned up promptly). ■ Parking of cars and vans only allowed in marked spaces well away from external delivery/dispatch area. ■ Outside area gritted when frosty, snow cleared. ■ Sensible speed limits imposed and adhered to. ■ Adequate signage to warn of hazards. ■ Reversing of delivery vehicles should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. ■ Any reversing that is necessary should be overseen by a trained reversing assistant (banksman). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Anyone working in the vicinity of moving vehicles should be given training and high-visibility clothing. | SP | 20/1/06 | 20/1/06 |
| Machinery Stretch-wrap machine | All staff using the machine. Moving parts can trap parts of the body (eg fingers/hand/arm) causing crush injuries. The whole body may also get trapped between moving pallet load and fixed structure. Staff can also cut themselves on sharp edges or scald themselves on hot parts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Only standard palletised loads wrapped. ■ Machine is relatively new and instructions show it meets the relevant guarding standard. ■ Emergency stop button provided. ■ Fixed guards on moving parts. ■ Mechanical parts maintained regularly. ■ Staff trained to use correctly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Area around machine to be kept unobstructed at all times. ■ Area around machine to be indicated by use of markings in fluorescent orange-red. ■ Weekly check on guarding and condition of machine. | JB RB JB | 18/1/06 28/4/06 18/1/06 | 18/1/06 18/1/06 |
| Conveyor belt for unloading from lorries | As above, particularly where the belt meets rollers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Guards provided for moving parts. ■ Conveyor instructions show it meets guarding standards. ■ Emergency stop button provided. ■ Regular maintenance. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Weekly check on guarding and condition of conveyor. | JB | 18/1/06 | 18/1/06 |
| Portable electrical equipment Mess room: industrial cleaner, kettle and heater | All staff could receive potentially fatal electrical shocks or burns if they use faulty electrical equipment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fixed electrical installations are maintained to a suitable standard and inspected every five years. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manager to arrange and record the six-monthly inspection and testing of portable equipment. ■ Instruct staff to report faults immediately. | SP JB | 1/5/06 13/1/06 | 13/1/06 |

| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed and how? | What are you already doing? | What further action is necessary? | Action by who? | Action by when? | Done |
|--|--|---|---|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| Fire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bulk storage of easily burnt materials ■ Ignited through electrical fault, smoking materials, battery recharging etc | <p>If trapped in the warehouse, all staff and visitors could suffer from smoke inhalation or burns which could potentially kill.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Building designed with fire-resisting materials. ■ Exits and fire exits marked and kept clear. ■ Fire extinguishers located throughout warehouse. ■ Access to all exits and fire extinguishers kept clear at all times. ■ Fire detection and alarm system in place. ■ Fire evacuation procedures displayed at each fire alarm point. ■ Maintenance contracts for extinguishers and detection/alarm system. ■ Fire drill and training in use of extinguishers held once a year. ■ Smoking prohibited in the warehouse. ■ Cleaner ensures no debris left around warehouse. ■ All staff trained in good housekeeping during induction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Discussions with insurer on the provision of automatic closing of roller-shutter doors linked to fire alarm to be decided upon. | SP | 25/8/06 | |
| Hazardous substances Vehicle exhaust fumes | <p>The fumes may cause staff eye irritation and respiratory irritation.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Number of vehicles delivering materials is relatively low and exposure very limited; this prevents build-up of fumes. ■ Drivers not allowed to leave vehicles' engines running in warehouse. ■ Roller shutter doors and warehouse windows open, where practicable, to assist ventilation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action required. | | | |
| Bleach and cleaning fluids | <p>Direct skin contact could lead to the cleaner getting skin irritation. The vapour may cause the cleaner to have eye irritation or breathing difficulties.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cleaner made aware of safe procedures. Rubber gloves used. ■ First-aid facilities (including eye wash) are readily available. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Investigate availability of safer alternatives for cleaner. | RB | 17/2/06 | 28/2/06 |
| Recharging of forklift truck batteries – potential explosion by release of hydrogen, spillage of acid | <p>Burns or fractures from material ejected could affect any worker nearby at the time.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Batteries charged in designated bay that is well ventilated. Safe system of work used which includes provision and use of goggles and gloves. Potential sources of ignition controlled. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Supervisor to monitor and ensure protective equipment is being worn. | JB | 13/1/06 | 13/1/06 |

| What are the hazards? | Who might be harmed and how? | What are you already doing? | What further action is necessary? | Action by who? | Action by when? | Done |
|------------------------|---|---|---|----------------|-----------------|------|
| Lighting | Poor lighting is likely to result in higher levels of work error and accidents. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good quality lighting provided throughout the warehouse. ■ Stacking of materials in warehouse on top of racking is restricted in order to avoid blocking light and creating shadows. ■ Cleaner checks that light units are operating and are replaced by electrician when necessary. ■ Floodlighting in the external area. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action required. | | | |
| Hygiene/comfort | All staff could suffer varied discomfort, eg being too hot/cold. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Heated mess room provided with hot and cold water and water for beverages. ■ Area kept clean. Lockers available for staff members' belongings. ■ Toilets a short walk away, cleaned daily. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No further action required. | | | |

Assessment review date: 26/2/07