

# **A Guide to Risk Assessments**



# National Field Archery Society

## Preface

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting your members, your club and the public, as well as complying with the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter in your woods – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks. This isn't just about risks when shooting – you need to think about all aspects of risk that affects your club, for example catering facilities, traffic management.

The law does not expect you to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'. This guide tells you how to achieve that with a minimum of fuss. This is not the only way to do a risk assessment, there are other methods that work well, particularly for more complex risks and circumstances. However, we believe this method is the most straightforward for most organisations.

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## What is risk assessment?

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what associated with your course could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Members and others have a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure from those organising and laying the shoot to take reasonable control measures.

Accidents and ill health can ruin lives and affect your club. The club and its officials are responsible for ensuring an assessment of all the risks in your woods is completed, so that you can put in place a plan to control the risks.

## Five steps to risk assessment

Step 1 - Identify the hazards

Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how

Step 3 - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Step 4 - Record your findings and implement them

Step 5 - Review your assessment and update if necessary

Don't overcomplicate the process. In many organisations, the risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply. You don't have to be a health and safety expert, you can do the assessment yourself, remember, you are responsible for seeing that the assessment is carried out properly.



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**What is a hazard?** A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm e.g. a steep, slippery bank or hidden rabbit holes.

**What is risk?** A risk is the likelihood that a hazard will cause a specified harm to someone or something

**What does “reasonably practicable” mean?** This means that you have to take action to control the health and safety risks in your workplace except where the cost (in terms of time and effort as well as money) of doing so is “grossly disproportionate” to the reduction in the risk. You can work this out for yourself, or you can simply apply accepted good practice.

## Step 1 - Identify the hazards

First you need to work out how people could be harmed. When you work in a place every day it is easy to overlook some hazards, so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

**Walk around** your woods and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.

- **Ask your members** what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.
- **Check manufacturers’ instructions** or data sheets for equipment (and chemicals if you use things like portable toilets) as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and putting them in their true perspective.

**Remember to think about** everything else that is associated with your shooting ground (traffic, catering, security of your woods)

## Step 2 - Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn’t mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. ‘Archers’, ‘Marshall’s’ or ‘passers-by’).

In each case, identify how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur.

## Step 3 - Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions

Having recognised the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. The law requires you to do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing against good practice. So first, look at what you’re already doing; think about what controls you have in place and how the work is organised. Then compare this with the good practice and see if there’s more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard.

In asking yourself this, consider:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?



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When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:

- Try a less risky option;
- Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding);
- Organise the task to reduce exposure to the hazard (e.g. put barriers between pedestrians and traffic);
- Provide welfare facilities (e.g. first aid and washing facilities for removal of contamination).

Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen. Involve membership, so that you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice and won't introduce any new hazards.

## **Step 4 - Record your findings and implement them**

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after your members and the public. Writing down the results of your risk assessment, and sharing them with your members, encourages you to do this.

When writing down your results, keep it simple, for example 'Tripping over rubbish: bins provided, staff instructed, weekly housekeeping checks', or 'Fume from welding: local exhaust ventilation used and regularly checked'. We do not expect a risk assessment to be perfect, but it must be suitable and sufficient. You need to be able to show that:

- A proper check was made;
- You asked who might be affected;
- You dealt with all the significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved;
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low; and

There is a template at the end of this leaflet that you can print off and use. If, like many organisations, you find that there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, big and small, don't try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first. A good plan of action often includes a mixture of different things such as:

- A few cheap or easy improvements that can be done quickly, perhaps as a temporary solution until more reliable controls are in place;
- Long-term solutions to those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill health;
- Long-term solutions to those risks with the worst potential consequences;
- Arrangements for training members on the main risks that remain and how they are to be controlled;
- Regular checks to make sure that the control measures stay in place; and
- Clear responsibilities – who will lead on what action, and by when.

Remember, prioritise and tackle the most important things first. As you complete each action, tick it off your plan.



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## **Step 5 - Review your risk assessment and update if necessary**

Few types of woodland stay the same. Sooner or later, you will bring in new shoots, courses and procedures that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense, therefore, to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year or so formally review where you are, to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back.

Look at your risk assessment again.

- Have there been any changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Have your workers spotted a problem?
- Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses?

Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date. During the year, if there is a significant change, don't wait. Check your risk assessment and, where necessary, amend it. If possible, it is best to think about the risk assessment when you're planning your changes – that way you leave yourself more flexibility.

## **Risk Assessment example.**

This Risk Assessment has been conducted and recorded to give an example of the issues to be considered when hosting an Open Field Archery shoot. (See NFAS – RA001 – Example) These may or may not be appropriate for any particular club and the contents should be used as nothing more than a guide to conducting your own Risk Assessment.

The approach has been to think about each stage of the event, from the moment that archers arrive at the venue, until the moment that they leave. Hazards, once identified, are not repeated. For example, the risks in the Car Park and the walk to registration are taken to be the same for people both arriving and leaving.

NB on the blank form ( See NFAS – RA001 ) there may too many or few boxes for your RA form, you don't have to create potential hazards to fill the form or if you have more than there is space for on the form just add more boxes don't ignore the hazard.

Further guidance on completing Risk Assessments and on controls that can be put in place can be obtained by contacting the NFAS Safety Advisor – details on the website and in the NFAS Newsletter



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## How to Score the Risk on a Risk Assessment

The score for each hazard is made up of two numbers

1. Likelihood
2. Severity

Classification	Description / Examples	Classification	Description / Examples
1	Unlikely that this will happen	1	No injury to persons. Possible damage to property
2	Remote chance of this happening	2	<b>Minor injury</b> – treated with first aid or not requiring treatment at all
3	Possible that this will happen	3	<b>Minor injury</b> – requiring hospitalisation or need to seek medical assistance
4	Probable that this will happen	4	<b>Major injury</b> – an injury that is possibly life threatening
5	Likely to happen	5	<b>Fatality</b>

### Risk Value = Likelihood Score X Severity Scores

		Severity				
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood	1	1	2	3	4	5
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	5	5	10	15	20	25

	<b>Stop !!</b> reduce/remove Likelihood and/or Severity and re-assess
	Reduce/remove Likelihood and/or Severity and re-assess
	Monitor Likelihood and/or Severity and re-assess
	Re-assess periodically