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**Mactaggart Youth and Communities Outreach Services**  
 Providing Information and Accessible Youth Friendly Services

**Risk Assessment Policy**

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

Risk Assessment is the backbone of the health & safety process. It needs to involve everyone that is responsible for the safety of the group and those that will be carrying out the activity.

A risk assessment is simply a way of identifying:

- All the hazards - anything that has the potential to cause harm
- Who could be harmed - volunteers, young people, the public
- And the risk - the likelihood of that hazard causing harm, and the degree of harm it would cause

You then assess the risks and implement measures to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. There's no prescriptive way of formatting a risk assessment, although there are many resources available to help. Some guides suggest giving values to the risk to help decide if the activity is too risky to take place. Some thought also needs to be given to who may be harmed, or particular risks for certain people (e.g. pregnant women, those with a disability, people whose first language is not English etc).

For example: if you are taking a group for a hike one of the hazards could be the weather...

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Weather conditions: blizzard, flooding or very hot sun</b>
<b>Risk (how serious x how likely)</b>	5 (serious e.g. fatal) x 2 (not very likely) = <b>10</b>
<b>1 = low (not serious/likely)</b>	(depending on location and the dependability of the weather conditions etc.)
<b>5 = high (serious/likely)</b>	
<b>Who is likely to be harmed?</b>	Young people  Leaders
<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>1)</b> obtain the forecast beforehand and cancel the activity if the weather expected to be extreme  <b>2)</b> take sun block for the young people to apply

- 3) ensure all young people have adequate water supplies
- 4) check all young people have suitable clothing
- 5) ensure a home contact knows the route you will be taking and has contact details and an estimated time of arrival back to base
- 6) the group leader has a hill walking or mountain leader qualification
- 7) the group leader has a map, GPS, charged mobile etc
- 8) the group leader is First Aid trained

**Risk after control**

5 x 1 (likelihood of fatality decreased by control measures in place) = 5

Unless you are an adventure based group, most activities will be in or around your usual building. However, a familiar environment shouldn't lead to complacency. When you carry out a risk assessment you literally need to see your environment for the first time; it might help to go through the building with a colleague to help identify the hazards.

Potential premises-related hazards on a 'typical club night' may include thinking about:

Trips, slips and falls - does your building have any uneven flooring, wires or cables, dark rooms or corridors? How are spills dealt with?

Substances hazardous to health - are there any chemicals stored in the building? Who can access these and do they use protective clothing?

Falls from a height - Are ladders or other equipment checked and maintained? Do people currently stand on rickety chairs to reach objects in a cupboard?

Strains, sprains and pains - is anyone engaged in heavy lifting? Have they received any training or advice on manual handling techniques?

Equipment and machinery - is equipment regularly checked? Are all young people allowed to access the kitchen area (scalds, burns) unsupervised?

Hygiene - are there adequate toilet and hand washing facilities, including a disabled toilet? Do you prepare food for/with young people? Is anyone trained?

Transport - is your club on a busy main road, or does it have a well-used car park next to it? Do you use a hired minibus or volunteers' own transport for activities? Are these adequately insured and maintained?

Stress - do you provide support (training, supervision sessions) to your volunteers? Does your Child Protection Policy include support for volunteers after a young person has disclosed abuse to them?

Fire safety - do you have adequate fire escapes from your building? Does everyone know what to do in the event of a fire? Could a visit from the local Fire Service be included in a club activity to help volunteers and young people get involved? Do you have a 'drop in' approach or a sign-in and no re-entry system?

What would one of these hazards look like in a Risk Assessment?

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Kitchen equipment - knife cuts, shocks from electrical equipment, burns/scalds, food poisoning</b>
<b>Risk (how serious x how likely)</b>	3 x 4 = 12
<b>1 = low (not serious/likely)</b>	
<b>5 = high (serious/likely)</b>	
<b>Who is likely to be harmed?</b>	Young people  Leaders
<b>Control Measures</b>	<b>1)</b> Kitchen not accessed by young people unsupervised  <b>2)</b> Ratio of worker:young people kept at 1:3 during food preparation  <b>3)</b> Sharp knives in locked drawer with key kept by youth worker on duty  <b>4)</b> Youth worker trained in First Aid always on premises on club nights to deal with accidents  <b>5)</b> All electrical equipment PAT tested yearly  <b>6)</b> Youth worker has been on food hygiene course
<b>Risk after control</b>	1 x 2 (risk decreased by control measures in place) = 2