

Policy No: 03-4401	Authorised: Pellagia Margolis	Date: 15/01/2020
RISK ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE DOMICILIARY CARE SERVICE PROVIDERS		

This document sets out the basic procedure for conducting a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. Within the Domiciliary Care environment there are 3 types of Risk Assessment to be considered:

1. **Physical Activities that place Stress on the Body** – Moving, Handling, Lifting & Assisting
2. **Environment / Security** – The Service User's Domestic Environment
3. **Individual Items of Equipment and Appliances** – Household (e.g. vacuum cleaners, kitchen appliances) and Commercial (e.g. hoists and other assistive devices)

1. AN INTRODUCTION TO RISK ASSESSMENT IN DOMICILIARY CARE:

- 1.1 Risk Assessment is a critical element of any Health & Safety programme, and is closely linked to the Health & Safety Policy Statement required by law. So how does this affect the day-to-day running of your Domiciliary Care Service where your workplace environment will essentially be the service user's own home, (or "domestic environment"), and you will probably be using the service user's own equipment and appliances?
- 1.2 Starting with the basic principles it must be remembered that service users' domestic environments are no different from any other workplace in that they all contain hazards in some form or another which can create risks to people. These people can be:
 - Your staff, including part-time and voluntary workers.
 - The service users.
 - Visitors; e.g. family members, contractors (cleaners, gardeners) and professionals (GPs, therapists).
- 1.3 The key piece of legislation controlling Health & Safety is *The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974*, which is supplemented by *The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999*. These require an element of "**due diligence**" on the part of the Domiciliary Care Proprietor, both as an employer and as a Service Provider, which places certain legal obligations on the Proprietor.
- 1.4 **Due diligence** requires that the Proprietor, or designate, of the Domiciliary Care Service should review a service user's domestic environment and the tasks to be carried out within it, and to identify possible danger points ("hazards") and the associated risks to persons that may be exposed to them. In other words, to carry out a baseline assessment of the risks to people - OR - **Risk Assessment**.
- 1.5 It need be nothing more complicated than this, but a Risk Assessment does need to be done systematically and thoroughly to ensure that your legal obligations are met. You will therefore need to assess the hazards and risks associated with *each* work activity, including any equipment and appliances used. Before proceeding to this let's just consider what exactly constitutes a **hazard** and a **risk**.

2. HAZARDS & RISKS:

2.1 Definitions:

2.1.1 A **HAZARD** can create a **RISK** - (*what's the difference?*)

2.1.2 **HAZARD** → **A circumstance that can cause harm, injury or damage**
OR.....
The potential that something has to cause harm or damage

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2.1.3 RISK → **The possibility of being harmed or injured by a hazard**
OR.....
The realisation of that harm, injury or damage actually occurring

2.2 Using these simple definitions we can now put together a simple framework for conducting a Risk Assessment Programme. The Risk Assessment process should proceed as follows:

2.3 Identify the WORK ACTIVITIES / TASKS to be undertaken as a key part of the Domiciliary Care duties, and make a list of these activities. Classify them into 2 types:

2.3.1 **Physical Activities** - tasks that require a degree of stress or strain on the body. These can include:

- Assisting Service User – *Mobility Issues – Indoor / Outdoor / Steps / Stairs / Kerb*
- Assisting Service User – *Transfer Issues – Chair / Bed / Toilet / Commode / Bath / Shower*
- Assisting Service User – *In and Out of the Car*
- Working at Height
- Vacuuming / Bed-making / Dusting and Polishing
- Wet / Dry Mopping of Floors

2.3.2 **Environmental** - an assessment of the working / living environment, including equipment and utilities:

- Moving Safely around the Property
- Security and Emergencies
- Electricity and Electrical Appliances
- Gas, Heating and Firelighting Facilities
- Cleaning, Washing and Laundry Facilities
- The Kitchen, Food Handling and Meals
- Gardens, Yards and Exterior Features

2.4 For each Work Activity consider the following:

- 2.4.1 the environment where the task or activity is carried out;
- 2.4.2 any equipment used;
- 2.4.3 any materials / substances used;
- 2.4.4 the people that may be vulnerable to any hazard;
- 2.4.5 any associated Policy or Procedure

2.5 Following this, you will then need to conduct the following exercise in the stepwise format shown:

- 2.5.1 identify the hazards involved;
- 2.5.2 evaluate the risks involved with each hazard;
- 2.5.3 decide who could be harmed by the hazard;
- 2.5.4 develop a plan of action (sometimes called “control measures”) to reduce the hazard to a manageable level;
- 2.5.5 establish on-going monitoring of the hazards.

This is explained in more detail in 3. below.

2.6 The Risk Assessment Programme within your Domiciliary Care Service should ideally be managed by the Proprietor / Manager who will act as the Competent Person in Health & Safety matters.

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3. HOW TO CONDUCT A RISK ASSESSMENT:

Risk Assessments can be carried out as a 4-stage process, as described below:

- Stage 1:** Identifying the hazards;
- Stage 2:** Evaluating the risks and the persons most vulnerable to each hazard;
- Stage 3:** Agreeing the Control Measures necessary;
- Stage 4:** Following-up the action taken, and reviewing the results

3.1 IDENTIFYING THE HAZARDS:

The first step is to identify hazards. In doing so, don't over-complicate things! A service user's home is not a factory, and though there will be hazards they should be few and relatively simple.

Checking for hazards is basically common sense, but you still need to do it. Checklist sheets offer a logical way for you to do this.

Taking each area / activity in turn, look at what can cause harm. This could be an item of equipment such as a kitchen blender, or part of the decor such as badly lit passageways and trip hazards where a frail person could fall.

When identifying hazards, ensure that this is done for both day and night opportunities; a reduction in lighting levels for the latter can increase the risk potential for some activities.

3.2 EVALUATING THE RISK & PERSONS MOST VULNERABLE TO EACH HAZARD:

Once the hazard is identified, you will then need to:

- assess or evaluate the level of risk associated with it;
- decide who is most vulnerable to this risk (service users, staff, visitors, etc).

3.2.1 Risks are evaluated as either high, medium, low or negligible, according to the level of exposure to the vulnerable person. This is known as the **severity** of the risk and this is "graded" on a scale of 1 (negligible) through to 5 (very high).

3.2.2 Having evaluated the severity of the risk you will now need to decide upon the **likelihood** of the hazard occurring. Again, this is graded from 1 (most unlikely to occur) through to 5 (very likely to occur).

3.2.3 The **degree of risk** (also called the **level of risk**) can now be simply calculated by multiplying the "score" for **severity** of the risk with the "score" for **likelihood**, and plotting this figure in the columns on the Risk Assessment checklists:

Score 1: (--) **negligible** degree of risk;

Score 2 to 8: (L) **LOW** degree of risk (include **negligible** risks in this column);

Score 9 to 16: (M) **MEDIUM** degree of risk;

Score 17 to 25: (H) **HIGH** degree of risk.

A maximum of 25 is therefore possible for the degree of risk; i.e. the lower this figure, the safer the risk.

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3.3 AGREEING THE CONTROL MEASURES NECESSARY:

For each hazard listed the Risk Assessment checklists provide for observations and comments relevant to the control measures needed to reduce the hazard to acceptable levels.

Having calculated the degree of risk in each case, the *degree of risk* column on the checklists will automatically identify the hazards which will need to be addressed as a priority, i.e. those with the highest **degree of risk** "scores".

From this, the hazards should therefore be prioritised for action and the control measures required agreed between the Proprietor / Domiciliary Care Manager and appropriate staff. Targets should be set for putting the control measures into action, and the responsibilities for doing so clearly defined.

3.4 FOLLOW-UP ACTION TAKEN & CONFIRMATION OF EFFECTIVENESS:

It is important to ensure that all action taken to control hazards to an acceptable level is followed up to check that it has been effective. Records must be maintained of this follow-up and signed and dated by the Proprietor / Domiciliary Care Manager.

Regular reviews of the identified hazards must be made to ensure that control measures remain effective. If they are not effective, new Risk Assessments must be instigated as described here. It is equally important to ensure that if you purchase new equipment, start using new hazardous substances, or substantially alter working practices, then new Risk Assessments must be put in place.