

Small Vessel Risk Assessment

How to perform the risk assessment

To assess the risks on your vessel, follow the four easy steps detailed below.

Step 1 – Identify the hazards

Walk around your vessel and look at what could possibly be expected to cause harm. Ask your crew members what they think – they might notice things that aren't obvious to you. Also, check what accidents have happened in the past (refer to such information as the MAIB Fishing Vessel Incident flyers) and check the manufacturer's instructions for any equipment onboard the vessel. List the hazards overleaf (note: it may help to group hazards in respect of area, eg list all hazards found on the shelter deck under the heading 'shelter deck').

Step 2 – Decide how crewmembers might be harmed

For each hazard, identify how a crew member might be harmed; what type of injury or ill health might occur (for example, there might be the risk of a limb being crushed or severed). Consider what harm might also occur from repeated activities (for example, back injuries from lifting).

Step 3 – Evaluate the risks and consider precautions

Having identified the hazards, you have to decide what to do about them. The law requires that you do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. First, look at what you're already doing – think about the controls in place and how the work is performed. Then consider what additional controls can be put in place, including the use of personal protective equipment, so that harm is less likely. Initially, ask yourself if it's possible to get rid of the hazard altogether. If it's not, there might be procedures or arrangements that can be put in place to reduce the risk (this may include, for example, reducing exposure to the hazard). Also, consider less risky options.

Step 4 – Review your risk assessment and update it if necessary

Review your risk assessment at least once a year. Ask yourself if there have been any changes or if it is possible to make improvements. If the vessel is modified or new equipment is installed then review the risk assessment straight away and amend it where necessary.



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This risk assessment is intended to help identify risks that have the potential to cause harm to any crewmembers onboard the vessel. You are required to protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'. A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in the workplace, could cause harm to people, so that you can determine whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

When filling out the risk assessment form, keep it simple, don't try to overcomplicate things, and ensure that all the crew members read it once complete. If you take on any new crew members, make sure they read the risk assessment form so that they are immediately aware of the risks and the controls in place.



Endorsed by the MCA