

Learner Guide

TAAENV403A Ensure a healthy and safe learning environment

Part of a suite of print-based support materials for the
TAA04 Training and Assessment Training Package

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Introduction

Imagine trying to train or assess in an unsafe environment. What can you do as a trainer/facilitator or assessor to make sure this doesn't happen?

This Learner Guide supports *TAAENV403A Ensure a healthy and safe learning environment*, a core unit in the *TAA40104 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*. It focuses on the occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements and responsibilities of trainers and assessors together with other relevant parties in the process of delivering training and conducting assessment.

This guide will help you develop skills and knowledge to enable you to:

- understand the legislative and common law framework within which OHS operates
- assess the learning environment for hazards and risks
- apply risk control strategies and/or other action plans to ensure the safety, health and welfare of the learner or candidate for assessment
- provide appropriate OHS information to learners
- monitor on a continuous basis the risk control action plan or processes
- determine your shared responsibility with other personnel in the learning environment.

Before you begin

To help you work through this guide, make sure you read the:

- *Introduction to the Learner Guides*. This is a separate resource that outlines general information for learners.
- Unit of competency *TAAENV403A Ensure a healthy and safe learning environment*. In particular, read the 'Application of the unit' statement at the beginning of the unit.

Context

To complete this unit you need to identify a training and assessment environment where you can access information and apply the skills that you are developing. This setting is called the *practice environment* throughout this Learner Guide.

Pathways

This Learner Guide is designed to be contextualised, or adapted, to support learner needs. How you use it will depend on your background in training and assessment and the mode of delivery.

If you have experience in training and assessment, and in the area covered by this guide, you might negotiate the assessment activities with your facilitator and/or assessor without completing the Learning Topics.

If you have limited experience in the area covered by this guide, you should work through all or some of the Learning Topics and complete assessment activities.

Your facilitator will help you map out an appropriate learning pathway to suit your needs and negotiate evidence gathering for assessment.

Icons

This guide uses a series of icons that will help you through the learning program:



This icon asks you to consider a matter. Your facilitator may ask you to:

- reflect on your own work—what you do now and how it can be extended or improved
- discuss a topic with a group
- discuss with a colleague or with your facilitator
- make notes for your resource kit.



This icon directs you to suggested resources to assist you, including:

- websites
- journals
- books
- people and groups
- policies and procedures.

Note that websites can change from time to time.

If you can't access a website, use a search engine. If you can access the website, but can't find a document in it, search for it using the website's search engine or sitemap.



This icon indicates an activity that can form part of evidence for assessment. You could also use these activities to get feedback from your facilitator about your progress.

Compiling your own resources

As you work through this guide, compile a resource kit (electronic and/or paper based) to add to, use for your work and assist with your learning. This could include, for example, information that you print out or 'bookmark' from websites, newspaper articles about changes in your industry, and specific policies or procedures.

What you decide to put in your resource kit is up to you. Over time, it can become your resource companion containing information about current work practice and ideas.

This resource kit is for your own professional development and is different to any portfolio or file that you might keep for assessment purposes, although some resources may be included in both.

Glossary

A glossary of terms is included in the *Introduction to the Learner Guides*. Use this glossary to clarify the meaning of any terms used in this Learner Guide.

Assessment

To demonstrate competency in this unit, you must be able to provide evidence that you meet the requirements of the unit of competency. This includes evidence that you have undertaken activities to identify hazards and assess risk within a learning or assessment environment, liaised with employers and consulted others to ensure, as far as is workable, a safe and healthy learning and assessment environment.

The evidence provided must:

- describe processes used to assess the learning environment
- outline the basis for hazard identification and risk assessment
- give examples of consultative processes undertaken
- report on how the learning environment was monitored to ensure agreed actions and arrangements were in place
- include examples of provision of clear OHS information to learners
- include completed OHS checklists or reports.

The evidence that you provide to show competency should be gathered in the workplace or, where no workplace is available, through a simulated workplace. The evidence must relate to a number of different performances assessed at different points in time and, in a learning and assessment pathway, these assessments should be separated by further learning and practice.

Negotiating assessment

You and your assessor need to negotiate how you will show appropriate and sufficient evidence to demonstrate competence, reflecting the scope of the role as indicated in all components of this unit.

Completion of the suggested activities below will contribute towards your assessment. However, they are not necessarily the total assessment requirements for this unit of competency.

Suggested assessment activities

Below are some suggestions for activities to be used as assessment evidence. You are encouraged to negotiate activities with your assessor, relevant to your practice environment or future work roles.

One way you could organise, store and present your evidence is to use a portfolio approach. A portfolio is a collection of related items.

Include the following items of evidence in your portfolio:

- Evidence that shows you have undertaken activities to identify hazards and assess risk within the learning/assessment environment, for example:
 - An inspection checklist you have used to identify hazards in your own practice environment.
 - A proforma for a risk control plan which you can apply to ensure your own learning and practice environment is healthy and safe.
- Evidence that the learning environment was monitored to ensure that agreed actions and arrangements were put into place, for example, a report tracking
 - actions to be taken
 - persons responsible for actions and timeframes for completion
 - details for the process of follow up
 - any other details relevant to ensuring a safe learning environment.
- Evidence that you have liaised with employers and consulted appropriate others regarding actions to provide a healthy and safe learning environment. For example, steps you followed to communicate the risks identified, the controls selected, the actions to be taken, personnel involved, timelines, and costs and benefits.

Learning Topics

This section includes a number of Learning Topics, each containing background information and activities. Speak to your facilitator to determine which topics you need to complete. Some of the activities may be contextualised to suit your needs. These activities can be used as evidence for assessment.

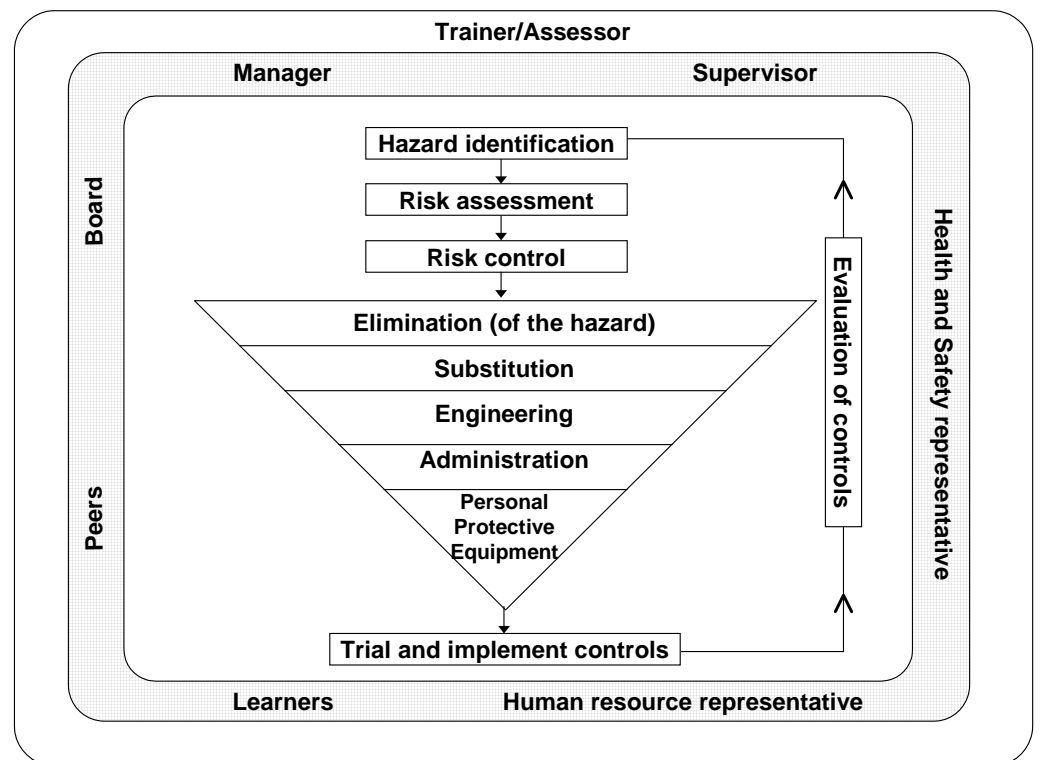
This Learner Guide covers the following topics:

1. Roles and responsibilities
2. Risk identification and control
3. Implementing controls
4. Your ongoing responsibilities.

1 Roles and responsibilities

This Learning Topic looks at the responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of a learner in a learning and/or assessment environment. It examines your role as trainer, facilitator or assessor in this process.

To ensure a safe and healthy learning and/or assessment environment, a total hazard management approach is necessary. The following diagram outlines this approach. This approach will be explained throughout the Learning Topics as you begin to understand where you fit in to the plan.

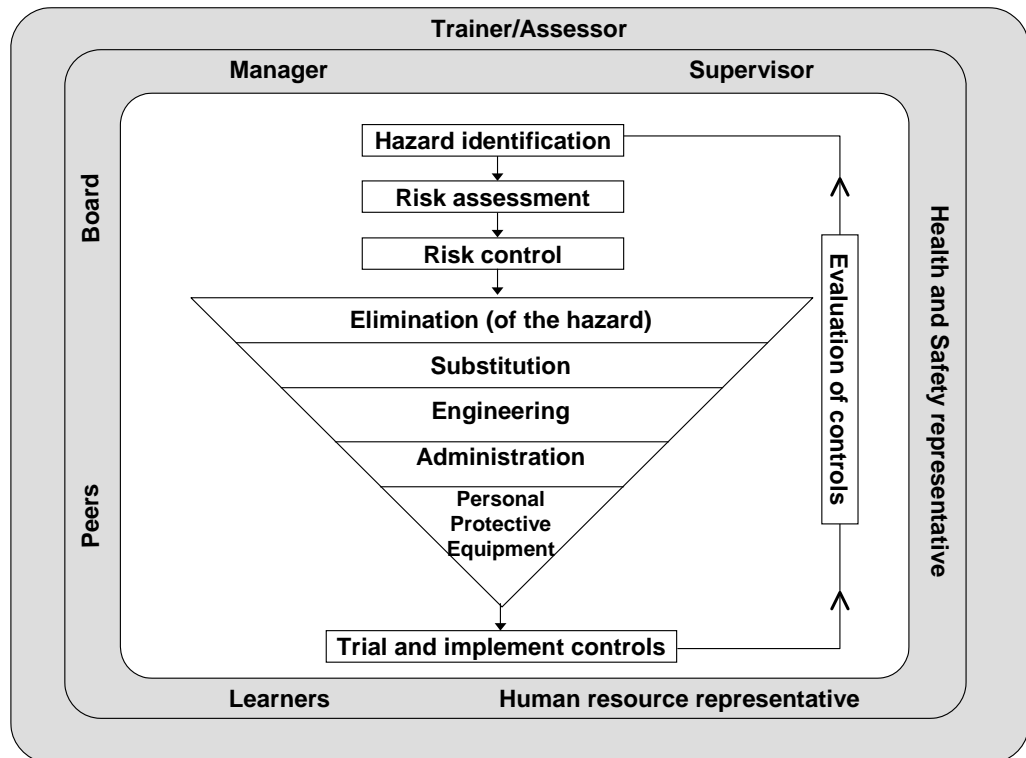


A learning environment could refer to a range of settings. The learning environment you train or assess in might be:

- a work placement—where you are responsible for the learner but may not have direct control over their environment
- an external organisation—where you may be contracted to conduct training or assessment in their learning environment
- a more traditional classroom setting—where you train or assess learning in a training or assessment organisation
- a workplace setting—where trainers or apprentices train on site
- a community house—where learners are taught skills such as English language skills.

While the types of risks and hazards may differ for each setting, OHS is equally relevant and important in all of them.

In this Learning Topic we will identify the key players, their responsibilities and the consultation process, and look at how this is based on the legislative and common law framework that governs OHS.



OHS legislative and common law framework

The legal framework from which OHS operates stems from the need to eliminate or avoid workplace injury, illness and death.

You have a responsibility to your learners and for the learning environment within which you are training or assessing; including ensuring the learning environment is safe and healthy. This responsibility is shared with other appropriate personnel who will be discussed throughout this unit.

State and territory OHS legislation sets a framework for addressing the safety of workers and others who may be affected by the activities at the workplace.

There are certain legal obligations within the OHS area, which you need to be aware of in order to meet your responsibilities. These legal obligations require stakeholders to exercise a 'duty of care' in relation to health and safety in the workplace.

There are several levels of law and guidelines which govern OHS in Australia. These are important sources of information, which you should research and become familiar with.

OHS Act—each state or territory has its own Act governing how occupational health and safety is to be addressed in that state or territory. The Acts set out general duties of employers, employees and others for occupational health and safety. Acts are made by parliament and they are rules that **MUST** be followed.

Regulations—each state or territory also has a range of OHS Regulations that provide more specific rules that **MUST** be followed for a range of OHS issues or hazards. Non-compliance with either the Act or any Regulation can result in prosecution, a prohibition notice, an improvement notice and, in some states, on-the-spot fines.

Codes of Practice—these have also been developed in all states and territories and provide information on how to comply with the rules set out in the Regulations. Codes of practice are not rules but should be followed unless there is an equal or better way of meeting the rules in the Regulations. You can't be prosecuted for not following a code of practice but a code may be called up as evidence in a prosecution. A code of practice can be considered as a **SHOULD** do.

Australian Standards and recognised industry standards—these have somewhat less authority than codes of practice and are guidance material as to what is a recommended minimum industry standard. While they don't have any formal standing, they do provide a benchmark of an industry standard and therefore could be considered a SHOULD do. Australian standards may be specifically cited in some legislation. In these cases the standard takes on the authority of legislation.

Guidance material—this is produced by a range of government and other bodies including the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC); the various state and territory OHS regulators; industry bodies and groups; employer groups; professional associations; trade unions; and commercial organisations. These are all helpful sources of information. Remember, new information becomes available all the time.

Note that OHS is covered by different Acts, Regulations and codes of practice in each state or territory. The NOHSC is a national body with tripartite (government, employer and union) representation but only has a guidance role.

Activity OHS research

Ensure that you have the web address for NOHSC, the OHS regulator for your state or territory, and any industry bodies covering your practice environment. Include these in your OHS resource kit.

What is the correct title of the Act relating to OHS for your state or territory? Can you access a copy? You are not expected to read it all but you will need to refer to sections of the Act. What are the objectives of the OHS Act in your state?

Make a list of titles of the OHS Regulations under your state's OHS Act. (Your state government website will have a legal section where you are able to access acts and statutory rules. Find and bookmark this webpage). Highlight the Regulations that you think impact on your practice environment.

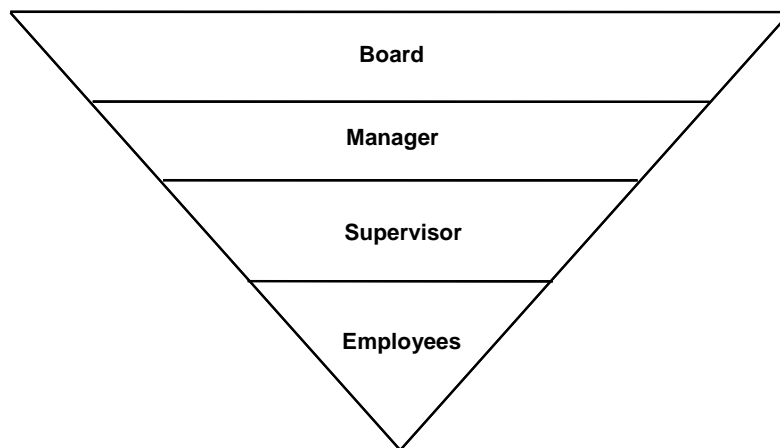
The Australian Standards website <<http://www.standards.com.au>> (accessed January 2005) lists all the Australian Standards. Click on *on-line shopping*, do a subject search and select a subject relevant to your practice environment. Are there any standards that you should make a note of? Purchasing standards can be quite costly—you should check with your employer, practice environment or local library first to see if they have any of the standards you might need.

Duty of care

Duty of care places into a legal form a moral duty to anticipate possible causes of injury and illness and to do everything reasonably practicable to remove or minimise these possible causes of harm.

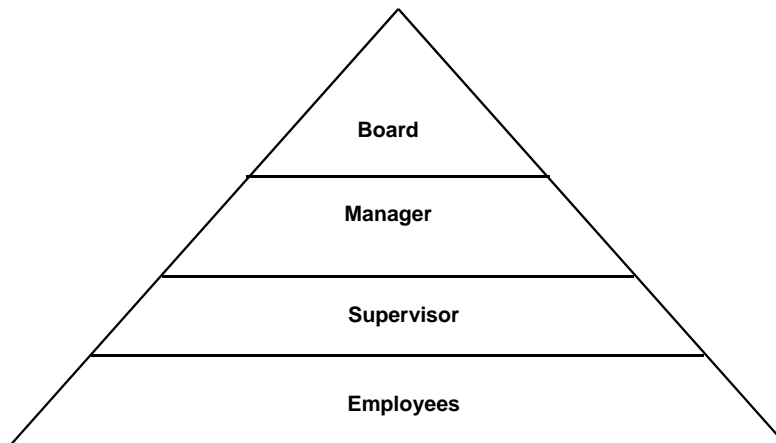
Many people in the workplace have a role in occupational health and safety. The individual roles are determined by the duty of care that has developed through common law and the legislated responsibilities that are based on common law but are rules determined by the parliament. The approach to responsibilities taken in both common law and the OHS legislation is that the responsibility sits with those who have the control.

This can be represented by an upside down triangle with the areas inside each level of the triangle indicating the **level of responsibility**.



Activities required to meet this responsibility may be delegated but the responsibility itself cannot be delegated. Thus, a manager may delegate activities such as training to a supervisor, but they still have the responsibility to ensure that the training is actually conducted and is of an appropriate standard.

Thus, the actual **time involved** in occupational health and safety is not always relative to the level of responsibility. Rather, it is shown by turning the triangle back on its base.



The Board and the Manager have ultimate responsibility for occupational health and safety because they have the decision-making control. But the people who spend most time in safety-related activities are the supervisors and shop floor personnel.

Occupational health and safety is a shared responsibility. Depending on your situation, there will be a number of people involved. These might include:

- your practice environment's manager, coordinator or supervisor
- the director of the training and/or assessment organisation
- the employer
- the Health and Safety Advisor in your workplace or training and/or assessment organisation
- Human Resources personnel.

Don't forget, your learner has a role to play too but the level of their control may be minimal.

A learning environment, whether it is a classroom, shop floor or work placement, is also governed by that duty of care. Therefore, your training and/or assessment organisation must recognise and act upon this duty of care. And, as trainer or assessor, you will have a part to play.

The OHS responsibilities of the training and/or assessment organisation and the trainer and/or assessor are not usually specifically legislated and can best be understood by examining the duty of care.

The key factors relating to duty of care generally are that:

- duty of care applies wherever there is a special relationship. The relationship might be
 - employer-employee

- RTO-client
- facilitator-client
- duty of care applies to all circumstances of the relationship
- individual duty of care cannot be delegated, but roles and functions may be delegated
- duty of care applies personally to individuals
- it applies to all risks that are foreseeable and preventable
- it includes the concept of 'reasonable'.

The training and/or assessment organisation and individual designers, facilitators and assessors also have a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the learning or assessment process does not create risks for the learner or others.



The address of the website for the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission (NOHSC) is <<http://www.nohsc.gov.au/>> accessed January 2005.



How could the learning or assessment situation create risks for the learners or others?

Think about:

- people doing tasks that they are unfamiliar with
- the level of supervision needed for unfamiliar tasks
- learners placed in workplaces that they are unfamiliar with where induction and supervision are required
- harassment of learners
- errors made by the learner due to unfamiliarity
- the behaviour of the learner which may also impact on the safety of others in the work area.

Activity Finding out who is responsible

Identify the key players in your organisation and those who share the responsibility of OHS. Complete a contact list for your resource kit. Develop a brief responsibility statement for each of the players you identify. Add this information to your resource kit.

To assist you in completing this activity, some hints are provided below:

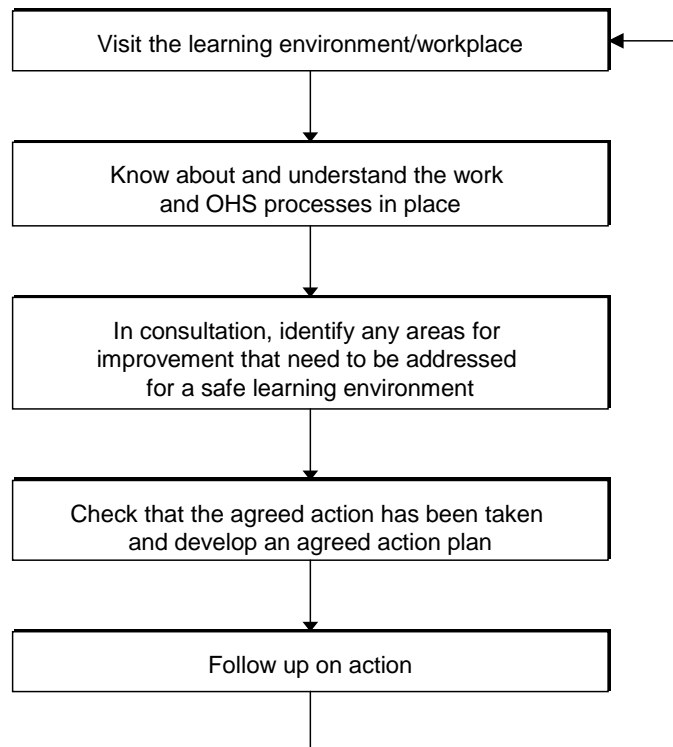
- Search under 'responsibilities' on the NOHSC website.
Look at the website for your state OHS regulator. Check the **publications** list for an explanation of the OHS Act or other publications on responsibilities. References to 'labour hire' provide information on the responsibilities when placing people in the workplace.
- You may wish to go directly to your state OHS Act. The information on employers, supervisors and employees will be readily available but you will need to apply your knowledge of duty of care to define the responsibilities of the training and/or assessment organisation.
- The Rozen Report is a useful reference and can be found on the NOHSC web site under **OHS info** then **Education And Training** (alternatively, search on 'Rozen'). This report was commissioned by NOHSC to review the case law relevant to school to work transition.
- As a result of injury statistics, known risk and this report, the NOHSC have developed guidelines for schools and employers participating in school to work transition. These reports are also on the NOHSC website and, although they refer specifically to schools, the principles apply to all training providers.

Remember to keep in mind—where does the control apply? What is reasonable? Another useful term when searching is 'due diligence'.

- What's my role?

Whilst the role you play in ensuring a healthy and safe learning environment will vary depending on your industry, the types of risks involved and the circumstances of each situation, your role could be outlined in the following way.

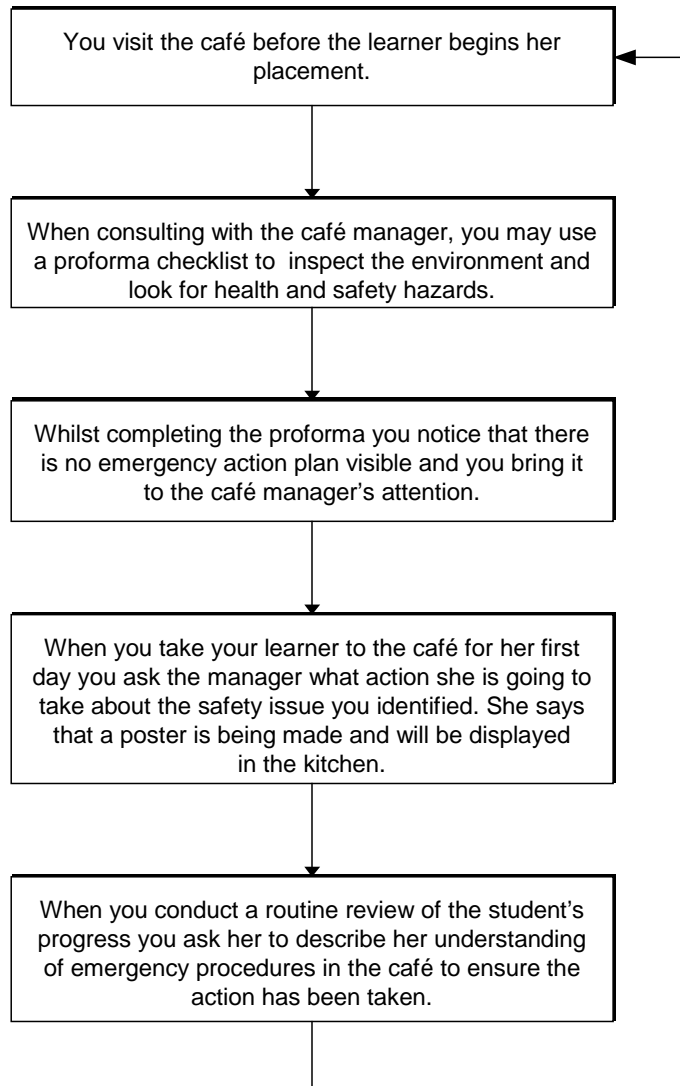
You should reasonably be expected to:



Snippet Your role in action

Here's an example of what kind of role you might play:

You have arranged for a learner in your hospitality course to begin a work placement at a local café.



Consultation

Consultation will be the key to fulfilling your OHS responsibilities as a trainer or assessor. You will need to consult with those you identified in the last activity throughout the process—not just at the start.

Consultation is an important part of the OHS legislation in every state and territory. This is based on the concept that those who are exposed to the risk are often not those who make the decisions about OHS. Also, those who are exposed to the risk are often the best source of information when identifying hazards, assessing the risk and identifying what will work when implementing controls.

Activity Consultation in OHS

Find the following information and add it to your resource kit.

- What are the requirements for consultation under your OHS state or territory legislation?
- What is the role of the OHS representative under your state or territory legislation?
- What is the role of the OHS committee under your state OHS legislation?
- What are the implications for these consultation requirements for you as a designer, trainer, facilitator or assessor?

Remember, you may find the information directly in your state or territory OHS Act or in the information you have already collected such as a guide to the Act.

Costs and benefits

Apart from your legal obligation, there are several other important reasons why you need to consider your role in the provision of a safe and healthy learning environment for your learners.



What do you think some of the benefits of addressing OHS might be in your practice environment? Discuss this question with your colleagues. Remember to consider both your industry in general, as well as your own environment.

The costs of implementing a good OHS plan in any workplace can often present a barrier. When this is the case, your organisation will need to weigh the costs against the benefits in order to determine a plan of action. Remember, when a risk is identified, you do have a legal obligation to take some kind of action. However, this does not necessarily mean you can't balance the two issues. The key issue in determining the balance between cost and benefit is to ensure that you have all the information on which to make an informed decision.

Here's an example of how this can be done:

Case study Assessing the dust risk

Southern Downs Builders has a workshop where new apprentices are trained in the use of power tools before they go on site. Most of the tools are new but an older wall sander is still in use.

A recent routine safety check of the equipment in the workshop identified this tool as a safety risk because it didn't have the new style vacuum to suck up excess dust which comes from sanding newly plastered walls.

The finance manager says the company doesn't have enough cash at the moment to buy a new sander but the supervisor still thinks it's important to address the health risk of apprentices and trainers breathing in the dust when the equipment is used.

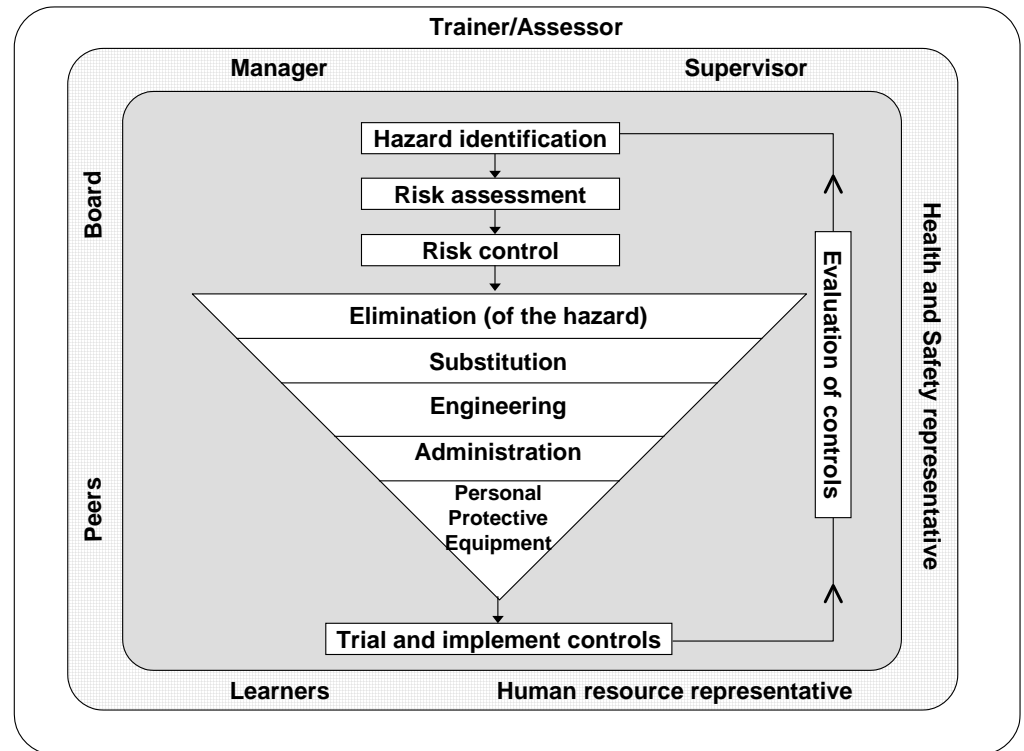
In the short term the supervisor instructs all apprentices and trainers to wear a mask when the wall sander is used in the workshop. He then searches out information on the hazards of plaster dust by visiting the website of the state OHS authority, the industry body for builders and the union. He also checks back through some industry newsletters that discuss issues of plaster dust and methods of control. He contacts some suppliers to determine the cost of the options for local ventilation and machine modification.

Now that he has all the relevant information he takes the information to the OHS committee which consists of the manager, the supervisor, the OHS representative and the finance manager. The issue is discussed and a decision is made.

Costs can have a major impact on the selection of controls. This will be touched on again in the section on selecting controls.

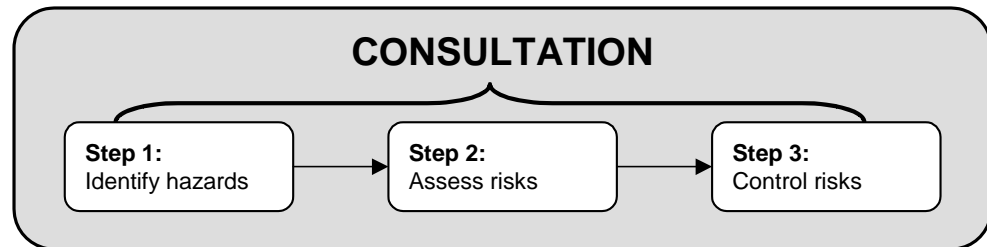
2 Risk identification and control

This Learning Topic discusses the second phase in the hazard management approach: the identification of hazards, risk assessment and risk control.



The three steps in accident prevention

The three steps in accident prevention are:



Remember, consultation is an important element of all three steps.

The process used by organisations to identify, evaluate and control hazards is called risk management.

Organisations have to continually:

- identify hazards
- assess the risk of illness and injury from the hazards
- implement control measures to eliminate or mitigate the effects of the hazards.

Step 1—Identify hazards

What is a workplace hazard?

A workplace is a place where people practise their occupations (or crafts professions, trades). A hazard is a source of potential harm or any situation that has the potential to cause, or lead to, harm. This can be harm to people or property damage. So a workplace hazard would be any situation that has the potential to cause harm in a place where people practise their occupation. The same principle applies to learning and/or assessment environments.

Each environment has its own types of hazards; no environment is hazard free. Elimination of hazards in a learning environment is the aim but it is more likely that strategies will be put in place to control the effect of the hazard (that is, minimise the risk).

Examples of workplace hazards

Occupational hazards can be physical, chemical, biological, mechanical or psychological. The following table shows some examples of each of these types of hazard.

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Noise• Hot or cold objects• Hot or cold environments• Fluids under pressure• Airborne particulates• Mobile plant or load shifting equipment• Machinery with moving parts• Underfoot conditions• Electricity• Working in exposed weather conditions• Vibration• Falling or flying objects• Radiation• Sharp or cutting edges
Chemical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hazardous substances• Dangerous goods• Hazardous atmosphere• Combustible materials• Fire• Explosions
Biological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pathogens• Microorganisms• Spiders, insects, snakes• Large animals
Ergonomic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manual handling• High repetition work practices• Fatigue• Work postures
Psycho-social	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workload• Fatigue/shift work• Role clarification• Interpersonal relationships

Many trainers and/or assessors make the mistake of dismissing hazards, saying their industry doesn't present any of the above hazards.

Even in a classroom situation where learners are taught computers or accounting, hazards can be present, for example, terminals too close together blocking pathways or stray electrical cords presenting a tripping hazard.



Activity Identifying hazards

Think about some of the possible hazards specific to both your practice environment and your industry.

Compile a list of these examples and place it in your resource kit.

You could use the following methods to help complete the list:

- discussion with other trainers or assessors in your field
- observation of the workplace
- research of relevant websites
- examination of previous incident or injury reports
- consultation with industry bodies and employers.

Consider the whole industry, not just your organisation. Just because it hasn't happened in your organisation doesn't mean that it can't happen.

Activity Injuries in your industry

How are people being injured or killed in the industry where you practise?

Go to the NOHSC National Online Statistics Interactive (NOSI) at <http://www.nohsc.gov.au/OHSInformation/NOSI/>. Select **NOSI2** (for more up-to-date data).

Research the following issues in your own industry:

- How many people have been killed in the last year/s?
- What have been the causes of the fatalities?
- What are the causes of the most serious injuries?
- What are the causes of the most common types of injuries?
- What are the most common causes of injury for young workers?

For information on cause, select 'Mechanism of Injury or Disease' and remember that you can drill down into sub-categories for both industry and mechanism by clicking on the categories once you have the table.

Learners' special needs

Your learners may have particular requirements that, if not addressed, can put themselves or others at risk. There could be a number of factors which raise health and safety concerns, such as:

- differing learning styles
- disabilities or special needs
- learning impairments, such as hearing or sight impairments
- language barriers.

Note that a learner's disability does not necessarily raise a potential health and safety concern.

Snippet Understanding emergency procedures

Samantha, the supervisor of the production line at the ThermoWare plastics factory, has just completed a short training session with her group. Among other matters, she has taken the group through a simulated emergency exercise. This exercise is premised on the hypothetical incident of one of the pieces of thermoforming equipment overheating and creating a work hazard.

After the exercise there is an opportunity for Samantha to debrief with her group and receive feedback. Unfortunately, she finds that three members of her team didn't understand the emergency procedure and just followed the others. Through further one-on-one discussion with these three learners, she finds out that two of them have difficulties reading and cannot understand the emergency procedure text provided at the worksite and in their folders. The third learner, although currently learning English, is far more confident in his own language; Vietnamese.

Having identified these special needs, Samantha prepares an action plan to simplify the emergency instructions by providing symbols and diagrams, and to have the text translated into Vietnamese.



Observe people in your practice environment. Would anyone have particular needs or requirements that should be addressed to ensure a healthy and safe learning environment?

Now that you have compiled a list of the hazards common in the industry/s where you practise, you can apply this to your practice environment.

Whether it is an actual workplace, a laboratory, a workshop, a kitchen or a training room, there will be hazards that the learner will face.

You need to ensure that you have done what is in your control and what is reasonable to identify hazards.

This will mean:

- visiting the workplace or learning environment
- discussing the OHS issues with key people
- ensuring that each party to the learning process is meeting their obligation to the learner and others
- visiting the actual work area where the learner will be placed.

When inspecting the workplace and discussing and considering the OHS issues for the learner and others, you need to consider the individual learner.

Remember that the duty of care is owed personally to individuals. This means that you need to consider not only the skill levels of the learner, but other characteristics such as:

- communication skills
- assertiveness
- any learning or behavioural issues
- any physical limitations.

You must also consider any possible impact on the safety of others in the working or learning environment.

Case Study Special needs in practice

You are a teacher working with intellectually disabled young adults and you are teaching them life skills. The learning environment is a specially designed kitchen with several gas and electric stoves, microwave ovens, kitchen sinks and crockery and cutlery including sharp knives. The objective is for the learners to be able to prepare a simple meal of soup (from a can) and a main course.

You have not worked in this particular training room before and you are about to have a new group of 10 people.



What preparations should you make to ensure that you have identified the hazards and OHS issues that may be encountered in this learning situation?

If you are going to facilitate training in the workplace or place a learner in a workplace, you must visit the workplace. This does not mean that you have to be an OHS expert or that you will be required to make a judgement on the adequacy of OHS in the workplace. However, it does mean that you (and the training and/or assessment organisation) have taken **reasonable** steps to ensure the safety of the learner.

What should you look for in a workplace that will also be a learning and/or assessment environment?

How you go about this will vary depending on whether the learning environment is also your own work environment. And it will depend on whether you work for the organisation where the learning takes place or you are placing a learner in a work and/or learning environment. The type of workplace, the size and the structure are also factors.

Your visit to the workplace is not like a traditional workplace inspection that the organisation may carry out to check the housekeeping, the condition of equipment and whether procedures are followed, although this information is important.

You will need to talk with the manager, the supervisor in the area and any health and safety representative. You should ask questions such as:

- Is there a documented OHS policy?
- Are OHS procedures and operating procedures documented?
- What are the processes for reporting hazards and incidents?
- Are these reports investigated and control measures implemented as a result of the report?
- What information or induction will be provided to the learner?
- How will the learner be supervised? Who will supervise?
- Are emergency procedures documented in the workplace?

From your knowledge of hazards and risk controls for the industry, you will make a judgement on how well organised the workplace is in relation to OHS.

If there are any concerns or if you feel that further advice is needed, this should be taken up with the appropriate person in your training or work organisation, or you should seek advice from external OHS advisors.

Activity Young workers and OHS

Go to the website for your state or territory OHS regulator and conduct a search for 'young workers'.

The website for WorkSafe Western Australia <<http://www.safetyline.wa.gov.au/>> (accessed January 2005) provides a good example.

What are the special safety and health risk factors for young people in workplaces? How does your state or territory's OHS regulator suggest these risks should be addressed?

Your practice environment may already have a checklist for workplace visits as part of checking the learning environment. There may also be a workplace inspection checklist designed for hazard identification. This will be of assistance, but remember—you are not conducting a workplace inspection to identify *all* hazards in the area, but to identify hazards that need to be addressed for the *learner*.

You should have a checklist available when you conduct your workplace visit. Such a checklist is useful to:

- direct attention to where it is most needed
- ensure that you do not miss vital questions or items
- save time
- provide a record as a basis for developing the risk control plan
- provide evidence towards meeting your duty of care.

Note that, if not already available, you may need to develop your own checklist that addresses the OHS 'system' questions that you would ask in a meeting, as well as the things you should look at in the workplace.

Activity Documentation at your practice environment

What procedures and support documentation does your organisation have to guide your workplace inspections to identify hazards in your practise environment?

Collect the documentation and keep it for your resource kit.

Consult with your colleagues to formulate an inspection checklist if no documentation is available.

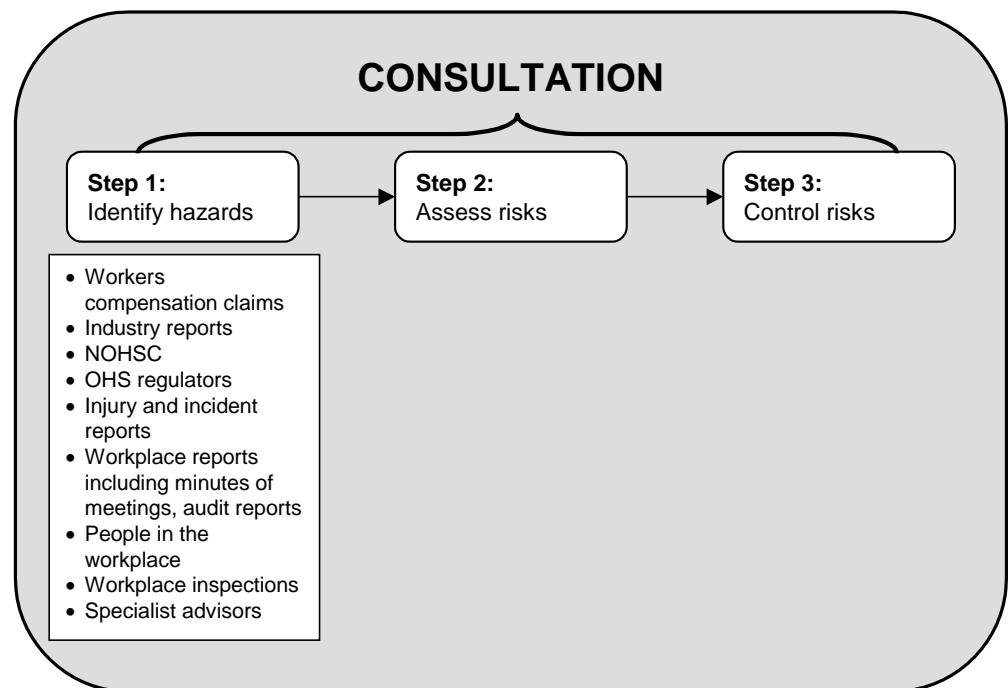


Activity Using a checklist

Use the checklist you have located or developed to identify some hazards in your practice environment.

Keep the results for your resource kit and for use in future activities throughout this Learning Topic.

This completes the first stage of the risk management diagram.



Step 2—Assess risks

Once you've identified a hazard, you need to determine its immediate or possible impacts on the health and safety of your learners. This is called risk assessment.

What is risk?

Risk is the chance of something occurring that will result in injury or damage. It is measured in terms of the consequence (of the injury or damage) and the likelihood of occurrence.

You have already identified hazards in your practice environment. You need to decide how likely these hazards are to impact on your learners and, if they do impact, what will be the severity of the outcome?

It will not be practical (or possible) to address all hazards in the learning environment. Instead, you should try to focus on the moderate or high risk items.

Remember, 'risk' is the chance of something occurring that will result in injury or damage and is measured in terms of consequences (injury or damage) and the likelihood of it occurring.

People can perceive risk differently, and it is these perceptions which influence whether a particular risk is acceptable to oneself or to others. Our perception of the risk is influenced by what we know about the risk. It is important when making decisions about risk that we have all the available information.

To help you assess the level of risk you could ask:

- How likely is the learner to be injured?
 - Has it happened before?
 - Have other people been injured?
 - What are the measures in place to prevent it happening?
 - How reliable are these measures?
 - How often will the learner perform the task?
- If the learner is injured, how bad is the injury likely to be?

Remember that you will have to do some research to answer these questions. You should look at both your organisation and the industry generally. Also, you may need to find out information about the hazard that is causing the risk

It is the balance between likelihood and severity that is important—for example, if the learner is quite likely to cut themselves on a machine, but the most likely outcome is a cut finger, then the risk may be assessed as low. However, if the chance of the learner injuring themselves on a machine is considered highly unlikely but the outcome may be losing an arm, then the risk may be assessed as high or very high.

As noted before, different people perceive risk differently and the assessment of risk is very subjective. There are a number of tools around that are used for risk assessment. Your practice environment may use one or more of these and, if so, you should know how to use them.

The main purpose of risk assessment for the designer, facilitator or assessor is to prioritise the hazards that have been classified, using the following categories:

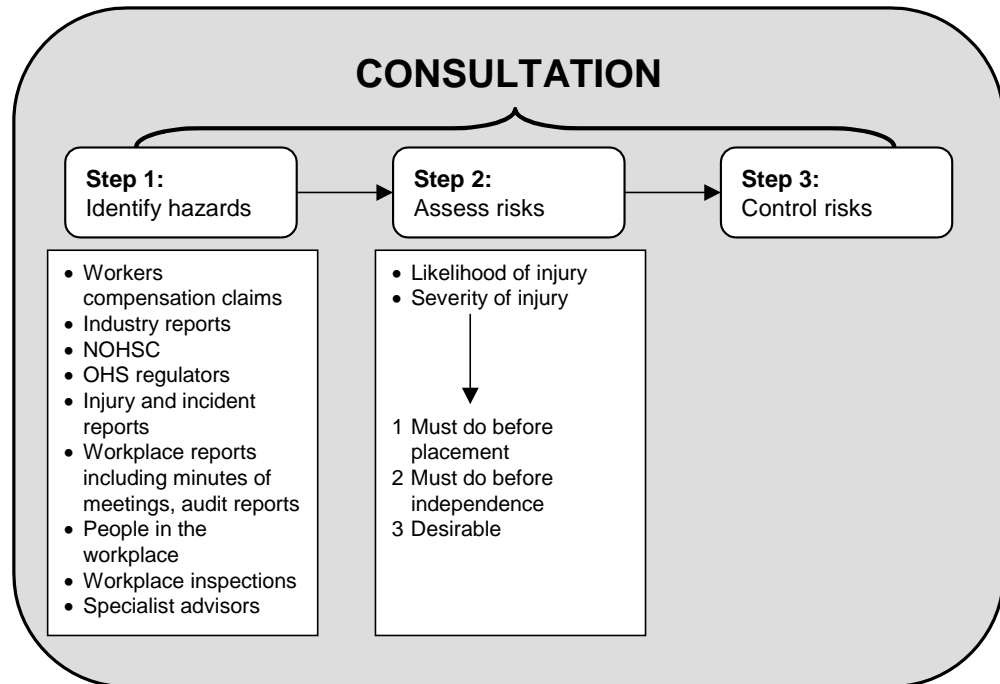
- Must be addressed before the learner is placed in the workplace and/or learning environment.
- Must be addressed before the learner begins to work independently.
- Desirable to be addressed.

Activity Assess hazards

Look at the hazards you identified in the last activity. Categorise these hazards using the following table. Justify your selections.

Must be addressed before the learner is placed in the workplace/learning environment.	Must be addressed before the learner begins to work independently.	Desirable to be addressed.

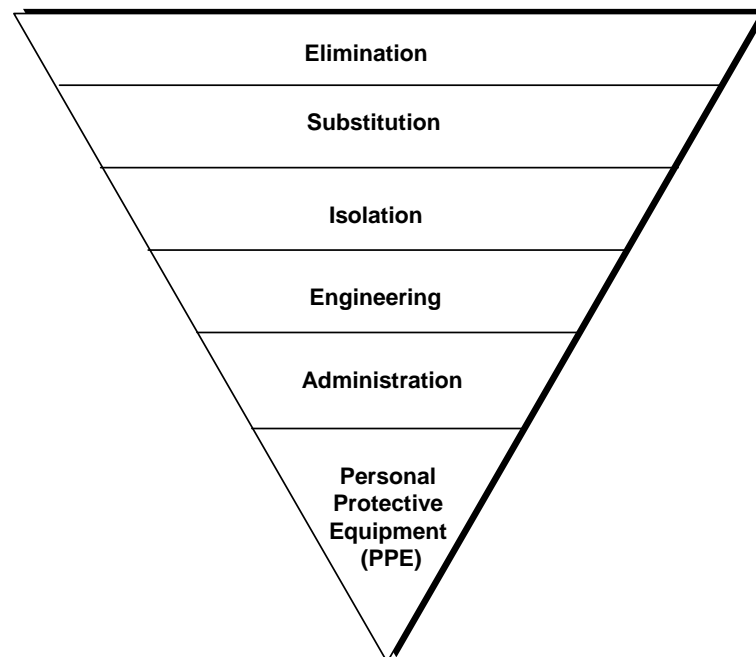
We can now update the risk management diagram:



Step 3—Control risks

The nature of the learning environment and the hazards and characteristics of the workgroup such as language, literacy and numeracy will influence the selection of the most appropriate controls. However there is a general principle that guides the selection of controls. This principle referred to as the *hierarchy of controls or the safety decision hierarchy*. It is the golden rule for reliably and cost-effectively controlling hazards. It describes the preferred options for controlling risk as follows:

- **Eliminate** the hazard. Where this is not practicable, minimise risk by **substituting** for a hazard of lesser risk.
- **Isolate** personnel from the hazard.
- Apply **engineering** controls such design of equipment, machine guards, equipment for manual handling.
- Implement **administrative** controls, such as procedures, training and supervision.
- Use **personal protective equipment (PPE)**.



In most situations, the actual method for controlling the risk is a combination of the options in the hierarchy. As we go down this list of options, the controls become less reliable and require more work to ensure that they are maintained and that they work. Personal protective equipment is always considered a control of last resort.

Case Study Using a hierarchy of control

Task:

Loading the hopper—in a plastic manufacturing process, workers are required to carry sacks containing a chemical substance up a ladder, cut the sack open, and empty the chemical into the hopper which then feeds the chemical into the mixer for the manufacture of plastic.

Risk:

There is a risk of manual handling injury when carrying and emptying the sack. Also, the chemical is listed as hazardous as it is a probable carcinogen.

Control options:

- **Elimination:** the preferred option—to use a chemical that is not hazardous, but there is no known chemical that will produce a plastic with the same properties and this would not solve the manual handling problem.
- **Substitution:** this would involve the use of a chemical of lesser hazard and the sack could be made smaller but this would mean that more sacks had to be carried. Again, no suitable chemical is available and the manual handling problems would not be resolved.

Action:

In this case, the best solution was a combination of **isolation** and **engineering** controls. A bulk container was built and the chemical was delivered by bulk tanker. The chemical was then transferred from the bulk container to the mixer via an enclosed conveyer. Thus, the manual handling was **eliminated** and the chemical was **isolated** from the workers. However, **administrative** controls including isolating procedures and **personal protective equipment** were required when any maintenance was required on the conveyor.

It is not expected that the trainer or assessor will have control or be able to impact on many aspects of the workplace, but they must still act within their control to ensure the safety of the learner. Sometimes it may be that the learner can't be placed in that workplace and/or learning environment.

The most common action will be to develop a risk control action plan in consultation with various parties; these may include the workplace manager, the supervisor, and the health and safety representative. Remember, it's one thing to develop the action plan, but it should be checked to ensure that the **must do's** are actually done.

Case study Learning in a coffee shop

You are placing a hospitality student in a coffee shop for some basic experience. The learner is young and has not had a work placement before. You visit the coffee shop and find that there are some concerns regarding OHS. These concerns include:

- carrying tables out to the street and bringing them in again (manual handling)
- making and serving coffee (burns)
- walking through the car park at night to the train station.

You also notice that the first aid kit is only a small plastic box with little in it and there is no incident or first aid reporting processes.



What actions are required before you place the learner in this learning environment?

Risk control plan

Once you have consulted with the parties in your practice environment to identify the hazards, prioritise the risks and agree on control measures, there needs to be an action plan documented. This action plan clearly states the agreed actions, who is responsible and the completion date. This is often referred to as a risk control plan. A sample proforma is provided at Appendix 1.

Activity Risk control plan

Refer to the previous case study.

Document a risk control plan for learner placement in the coffee shop.

Applying the hierarchy of control

Generally, follow the hierarchy of controls (starting with elimination) when selecting control measures. However, your selection may need to be influenced by the availability, perceived effectiveness and cost of the preferred control measure, particularly in regard to the perceived benefit or 'degree of control' offered. An expensive control measure need not be applied to a minor hazard. Equally, a hazard of high risk should have a range of control measures applied to it, regardless of any difficulties with the expense, degree of control and availability.

We talk about the quality of controls where the 'quality' of the control is the level and reliability of the control compared with the level of risk. The quality of the controls should be:

- the best *available* technology or approach applied when the most probable outcome is death or serious injury
- the best *practical* technology or approach applied where the most probable outcome is less serious.

Also, we noted earlier in the case studies that short term controls may be required while the most appropriate long term controls are identified, designed and implemented. Short term controls are often those that are lower on the hierarchy of control. However, in the long term, the most cost effective and reliable controls will be those higher on the hierarchy.

For example, reliance on personal protective equipment (PPE) as a control may be cheaper in the short term than isolating a hazard. However, in the long term, costs may make it an expensive and unreliable option. For example, there are costs associated with:

- ongoing supply of PPE and replacement of parts
- maintenance and cleaning
- training of workers in its use
- ongoing supervision to ensure it is used.

In reality there will usually be a combination of controls selected which address the design and engineering aspects, as well as the people aspects required for ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the effectiveness of the control measures.

The hierarchy of control is an important factor in determining cost benefit. Those higher up the pyramid are the most cost effective in the long term, as the control is more reliable and requires less maintenance to ensure it works effectively.



Activity Being proactive

Think about an example of an OHS initiative or improvement that could be made in your practice environment.

What is the risk assessment?

What information is needed to ensure an informed decision?

Is it a 'must do', 'should do' or 'desirable to do'?

Who needs to be consulted in collecting the information and making the decision?

What is the most reliable control measure? What are the other options?

Will cost be a barrier?

Are interim measures required?

Discuss your initiative or improvement with your supervisor, including details of your suggested action.



Activity Selecting controls

Return to the results of the Inspection Checklist you completed in Step 1 of this Learning Topic.

For each hazard you identified, list your recommended controls. Remember, a mix of controls is possible.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of each control option? Consider factors such as reliability; short and long term costs; actions for implementation and monitoring of the control such as training and supervision; and maintenance of equipment including ongoing purchase of parts.

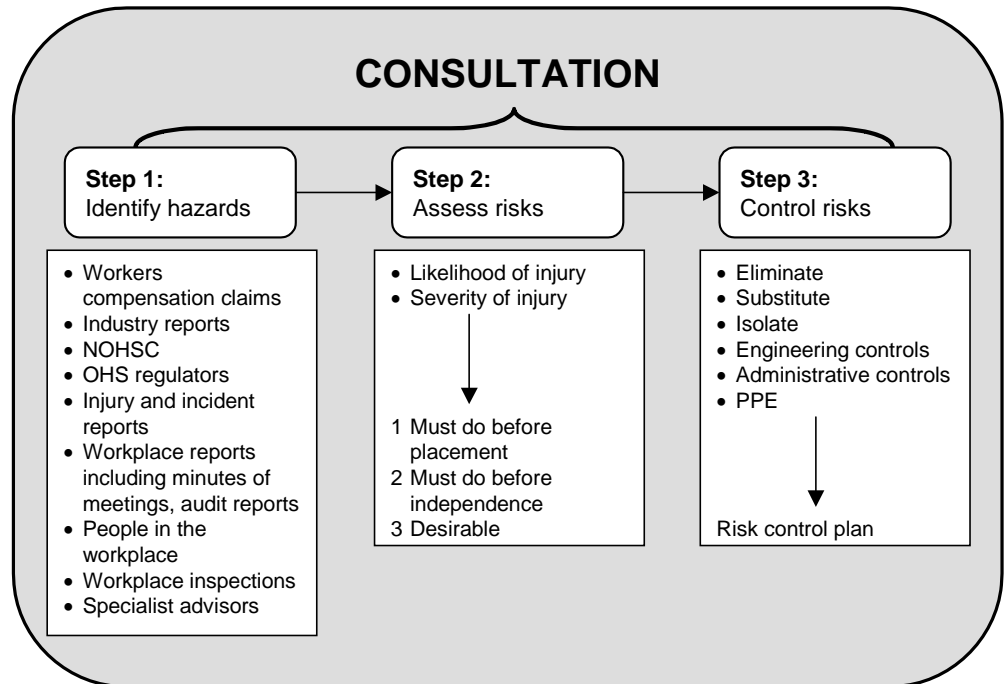
What is your preferred control or combination of controls?

Explain the reasons for your choice.

Activity Control measures in a risk plan

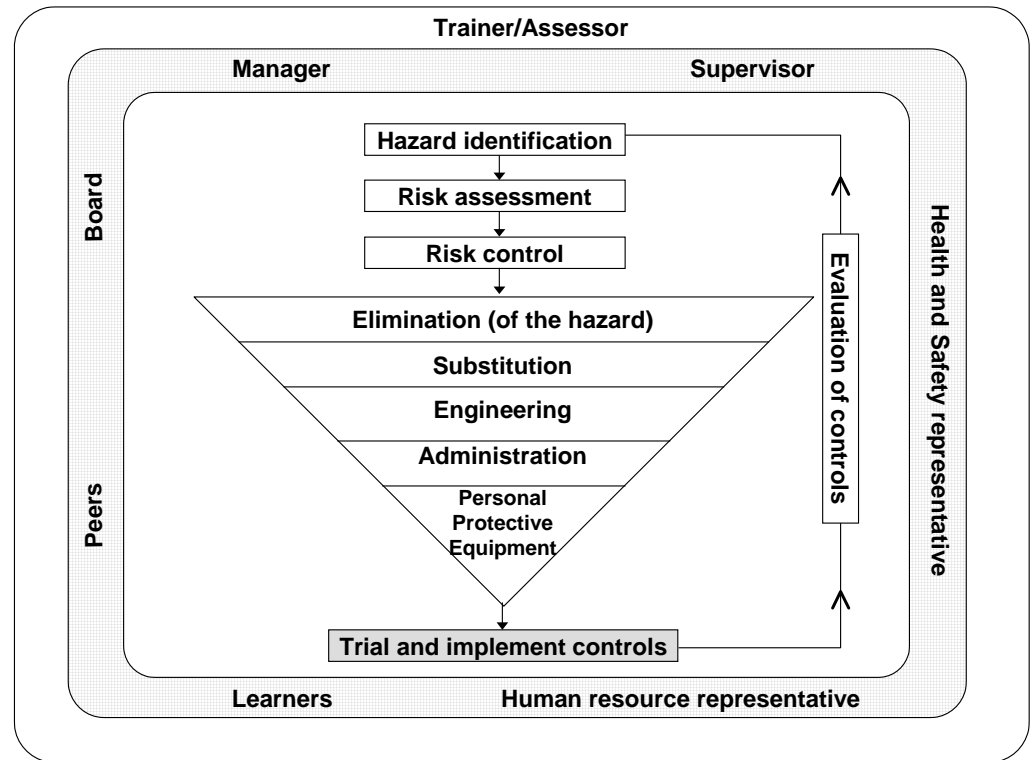
In another risk control plan, document actions you have selected to control risks identified in your practice environment.

We now have another stage of the risk management diagram completed.



3 Implementing controls

This Learning Topic discusses the next phase in the hazard management approach: implementing the chosen control measures.



Getting help

Once you've devised the risk control plan to help eliminate hazards in your practice environment, it may become apparent that you will need help to implement some of the actions. This may mean:

- sharing the tasks with your colleagues
- delegating some simple actions to others
- involving the learners
- enlisting the help of some internal and external expertise.

In Learning Topic 1, you identified some internal expertise within your organisation. At various stages through this risk management process you may feel that you need assistance; after all you are a designer, facilitator, trainer or assessor, not an OHS expert. OHS advisors may include:

- in-house or external OHS personnel
- ergonomists
- occupational hygienists
- health professionals including occupational medicine practitioners or occupational health nurses
- injury management advisors.

If you feel that you need specialist advice, check with your organisation as to who can provide OHS advice. You could also try the information officers at your state or territory OHS regulator. If there is still a problem then you should check with your organisation as to how to seek external advice.



The Safety Institute of Australia <<http://www.sia.org.au>> (accessed January 2005) might also be a good source of information. It is a professional body for safety practitioners.



Activity Determining who should be involved

Look at the risk control plan you devised in the previous Learning Topic.

Who in your organisation could be made responsible for each of the actions?

Do you need to consult external sources to help achieve any of your goals?

Assign each of the actions you have formulated to a person or group for execution.

Don't forget to allocate a timeframe, and budget if necessary, for each action. Remember to consider the level of risk you perceive for each hazard when determining this.

Your learners' role

Employees have responsibilities under state and territory OHS legislation. However, this is limited to taking 'reasonable' care and cooperating with the employer in relation to complying with the legislation.

In the case of learners, the definition of 'reasonable' will be very limited.

Your learners have an important role in the implementation and maintenance of your risk control plan. They could, for example:

- give feedback on issues or concerns they may have
- participate in emergency exercises
- help to identify new hazards
- help to design emergency procedure posters
- suggest better ways of operating.

Whatever role you decide to let the learners play, it is your responsibility not only to make provisions for their health and safety but also to inform them of these provisions and ensure that they understand existing and new policies and procedures regarding health and safety.

What should they know?

What do your learners need to know about OHS to enable them to safely achieve the learning outcomes?

It is best to consider this in three stages:

1. Before they enter the workplace or learning environment.
2. On entering the workplace or learning environment.
3. Ongoing support and answers to queries or concerns.

Stage 1: Before they enter the workplace or learning environment

The information required by the learner before entering the workplace or learning environment will depend on a number of factors. These include the nature of the industry and learning environment, the current experience and competency of the learner, and the expected learning outcomes. An assessment of current knowledge and the ability of the learner to apply the knowledge would be important in determining further information needs.

Stage 2: On entering the workplace or learning environment

On entering the workplace or learning environment, the learners need specific information on hazards, procedures and requirements within that environment. This information will usually be provided by the workplace and is covered in an induction program. The facilitator should check the content and scheduling of the induction as part of their pre-placement visit to the workplace or learning environment.

Stage 3: Ongoing support and answers to queries or concerns

It is important that the learner has a recognised process and contact for raising and discussing queries and concerns. In addition to the supervisor, the workplace will often assign a 'buddy'. The supervisory and support arrangements within the workplace should be discussed at the pre-placement meeting. The learner should also have a contact and support available outside the workplace. While the trainer may make a monitoring visit to the workplace or learning environment, the learner should have an 'emergency' contact that they feel comfortable using to raise any concerns that they do not feel comfortable discussing in the workplace.

Activity Documenting the specific OHS requirements

Each environment will vary according to the industry, the setting and the type of equipment used. Tailor a checklist of important information your learners will need in order to help ensure a safe and healthy learning environment. Try to organise the checklist in the three stages:

- Stage 1: Before they enter the workplace or learning environment
 - Stage 2: On entering the workplace or learning environment.
 - Stage 3: Ongoing support and answers to queries or concerns.
-

Delivering OHS information to learners

Once you have assessed your learners' understanding of OHS information and identified their needs, you can determine a method for imparting the appropriate information. Some approaches you could use include the following:

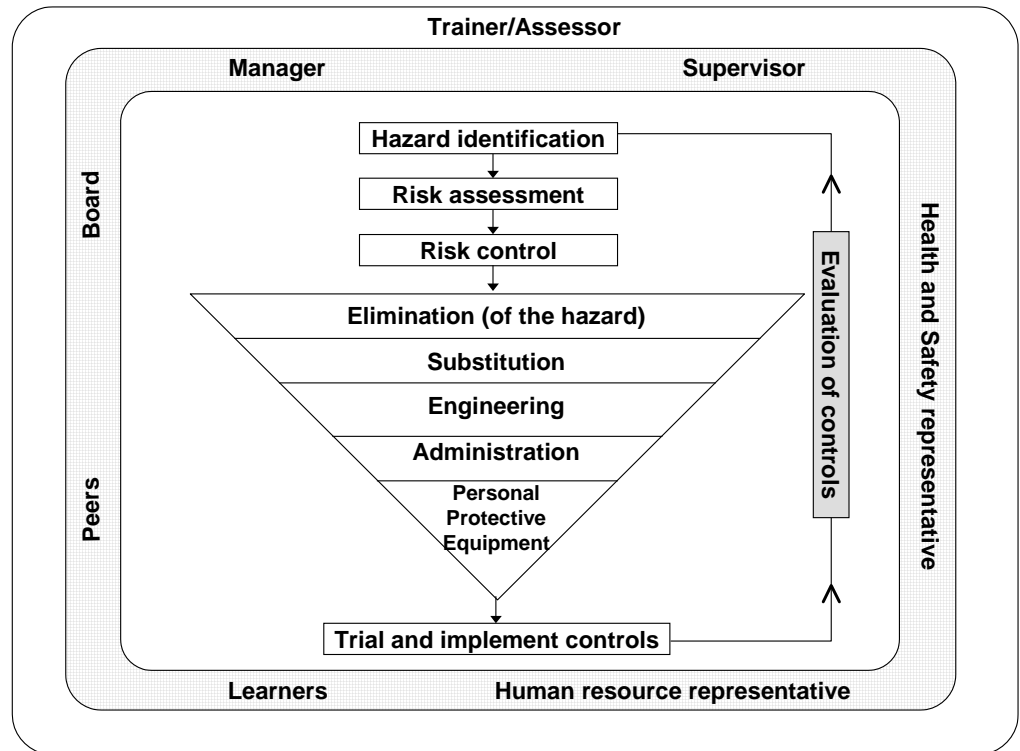
- Organisation an induction—your organisation may have a standard induction program for new learners, including apprentices and trainees. These sessions should always include a health and safety component.
- Tailored induction—in addition, or as an alternative to an organisation induction, you could conduct your own session specific to the needs of your learning or practice environment. This way, learners will be aware of the hazards specific to their environment.
- Policy and procedure manuals—learners should be made familiar with these documents, especially so that they can avoid risks and know what action to take should an accident or injury occur.
- Quizzes or games—whilst it's a serious topic, OHS can be made to be fun. This is often a good tactic to help you monitor learners and ensure their knowledge is current and relevant.
- Open discussion—group discussion can encourage a better understanding and help re-affirm existing knowledge.
- Debriefing—if an accident or injury does occur, analysis of the situation, reactions and possible preventative actions can enhance the learners' understanding of OHS issues in their specific environment.



What methods do you think would be suitable and appropriate for your learners?

4 Your ongoing responsibilities

This Learning Topic discusses the final phase of the hazard management approach: the evaluation of controls and continuous improvement.



In any risk control plan, evaluation and continuous improvement are important to the ongoing success of the plan. As a trainer or assessor, ongoing monitoring of your environment is even more important. This is because:

- you may often have new learners and/or candidates for assessment
- the skills and knowledge of your existing learners will develop
- your learners will often commence new tasks which may have their own unique set of hazards
- you might update or change equipment
- your learners may have other trainers and assessors who also cover OHS issues.

All of those who shared in the responsibility of developing a good risk control plan should have a role to play in the monitoring of its success and continuing improvement.

A number of things must be considered when evaluating existing plans:

- achievements
- evaluation of controls
- debriefing
- supervision.

Achievements

It's important to check achievements against your original risk control plan. Many organisations make the mistake of setting goals or determining actions but never carrying them out. Others believe that their OHS responsibilities end with a risk control plan.

Each identified action must be checked for completion or at least the progress of each action reported upon, especially those actions you have delegated to other personnel. This is particularly important in situations such as work placements, where you share responsibility for the learner but don't necessarily control the learning environment. Follow-up is essential, either by contact with the delegated party or by observation.



How would you follow up on each of the actions you identified in previous activities?

Evaluation of controls

You also share a responsibility to ensure that the controls implemented are appropriate and adequate to guarantee the continued safety of your learners. Many ideas formulated in plans don't necessarily work in the field. Some actions, for example, may successfully decrease risk but may also inhibit productivity. Others may prove to be too expensive or too difficult to implement.

The success of actions can be measured in a number of ways. Here are some examples:

- discussion with learners and colleagues
- comparison of incident reports before and after implementation
- incident and injury rates
- site inspections.

Incidents and injuries

It is the role of the training organisation to make sure that any incidents or injuries involving their trainees are reported to them (in addition to standard workplace reporting). If it is a serious injury, or had the potential to be serious, then the RTO may need to be involved in the investigation. The RTO may need to debrief the trainee as well, and they may need to take follow-up action.

When incidents occur, it is important to report them in accordance with policies and procedures already in place. This may mean completing an incident report form or informing the appropriate personnel. This procedure is often a legal and insurance requirement but such documentation can have a greater value, which is often ignored.

After an incident occurs, it should be investigated and analysed with a view to future prevention. Perhaps the hazard which caused the incident had not yet been identified. Maybe there was not a control measure in place or the measure was inappropriate.

This kind of debriefing after an accident or injury can be included in the continuous improvement of your hazard management plan.



Examine some previous incident reports in your learning or practice environment.

What was or could have been learnt from these reports which might enhance the organisation's hazard management approach?

Supervision

Having all of these processes in place is of no use to an organisation if they are not implemented uniformly and correctly. This is especially the case when there is more than one trainer or assessor working in the same learning environment with a number of learners of differing skill level.

The only way to ensure such measures are being applied across-the-board is to monitor and supervise the process.



Who is responsible for the supervision of the process in your organisation?

How is this done?

Resources

Websites

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

<<http://www.acci.asn.au>> accessed January 2005.

Commonwealth Government

<<http://www.australia.gov.au>> accessed January 2005.

National Occupational Health & Safety Commission (NOHSC)

<<http://www.nohsc.gov.au>> accessed January 2005.

National Safety Council of Australia

<<http://www.safetynews.com>> accessed January 2005.

The website of the National Safety Council of Australia has links to a wide range of other organisations such as the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The Australian Workers Compensation Index and the Internet Safety Resource (itself a list of OHS links) are there, along with a number of commercial organisations (safety equipment suppliers, for example).

Standards Australia

<<http://www.standards.com.au>> accessed January 2005.

State OHS websites

ACT WorkCover

< <http://www.workcover.act.gov.au>> accessed January 2005.

Northern Territory Work Health Authority

<<http://www.nt.gov.au/deet/worksafe>> accessed January 2005.

New South Wales WorkCover Authority

<<http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/default.htm>> accessed January 2005.

Queensland Division of Workplace Health and Safety

<<http://www.whs.qld.gov.au>> accessed January 2005.

Victorian WorkCover Authority

<<http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au/dir090/vwa/home.nsf>> accessed January 2005.

Workplace Services South Australia

<<http://www.eric.sa.gov.au/home.jsp>> accessed January 2005.

Workplace Standards Tasmania

<<http://www.wst.tas.gov.au/node/WST.htm>> accessed January 2005.

WorkSafe Western Australia

<<http://www.safetyline.wa.gov.au>> accessed January 2005.

Other resources

National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, 1990. Australian Standard 1885.1 – 1990, *Workplace injury and disease recording standard*. Standards Australia.

Adeanne, J.A. in *Crean vs Port of Napier Ltd* [1994] DC of WA

Appendices

Appendix 1: Risk control plan

Appendix 1: Risk control plan

Location of workplace/learning environment _____

Person in control of workplace (for example, manager) _____

Date of Plan _____

No	Hazard or OHS issue	Agreed action	Priority* A,B,C	Person Responsible	Target date for completion	Completed

Plan agreed by:

Representative of workplace/learning environment _____ Date _____

Representative of training provider/facilitator/assessor _____ Date _____

Priority

A = must be completed prior to learner placement

B = must be completed by agreed date

C = desirable to be completed