5×5 Risk Assessment Matrix

Use this form to rate the risks of **one** risk assessment on a 5 by 5 matrix: you score the likelihood (L) and the severity (S) of each risk with the controls that exist today, add the control you intend to put in place, and score it again. **The scale labels, the frequencies, the outcomes and the score bands on this form are examples.** Write your own over them, agree them before you score anything and keep them the same from one assessment to the next. **A matrix rates risks; it does not decide whether a risk is acceptable.** That decision is made by people, on more than the score, and section 7 records it. This is not the risk register (a separate template that summarises the significant ratings of your assessments) and it is not a job safety analysis (which breaks one task into steps). It does not show that you meet a legal requirement. ISO text not reproduced.

1 Assessment details

Assessment title and reference	Version and date

Activity, area or process rated	Assessed by (names, roles) and date

Scale and bands agreed by (name, role, date)	Where your scale and bands are written down

Likelihood counted per	Severity rated as
☐ task ☐ person ☐ site ☐ per year ☐ other: _____	☐ most likely outcome ☐ worst credible outcome

2 The 5 × 5 matrix (L × S)

Likelihood (L) down, severity (S) across	1 Negligible	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Major	5 Catastrophic
5 Almost certain	**5** M	**10** H	**15** H	**20** E	**25** E
4 Likely	**4** L	**8** M	**12** H	**16** E	**20** E
3 Possible	**3** L	**6** M	**9** M	**12** H	**15** H
2 Unlikely	**2** L	**4** L	**6** M	**8** M	**10** H
1 Rare	**1** L	**2** L	**3** L	**4** L	**5** M

How to read it

Choose the likelihood row and the severity column. The cell is the score, L × S. The letter and the shade show the example band of section 4 (L low, M moderate, H high, E extreme); the letter is there so a black and white copy still reads.

Read L and S as well as the product: 5 × 1 and 1 × 5 both score 5 and are not the same risk.

3 Likelihood and severity scales (examples; write over them)

Likelihood scale (example wording)

L	Label	Example frequency (change it)
1	Rare	less than once in 10 years
2	Unlikely	once in 5 to 10 years
3	Possible	about once a year
4	Likely	several times a year
5	Almost certain	monthly or more often

Severity scale (example wording)

S	Label	Example outcome (change it)
1	Negligible	no injury, minor inconvenience
2	Minor	first aid only
3	Moderate	medical treatment
4	Major	lost time, hospitalisation
5	Catastrophic	fatality or multiple injuries

Your wording where it differs from the examples (for example the frequency per person, the cost or environmental harm wording)

4 Score bands (examples) and what each band calls for

Band (example)	Example scores	What the example band says	Your band, scores and what you require (write over the example)
L Low	1 to 4	Monitor; routine review	
M Moderate	5 to 9	Additional controls preferred	
H High	10 to 15	Controls required before proceeding	
E Extreme	16 to 25	Stop work; senior sign-off required	

The bands above are one example. A published example from CCOHS places its band boundaries differently, so write the bands you use and what each one requires. A band says what your method asks for at that score; it does not by itself make a risk acceptable.

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5 Risk rating rows (one row per risk of this assessment)

No.	Hazard and risk (who is harmed, how)	Existing controls (in place today)	Rating with existing controls			Added control (further action)	Residual risk with the added control working			Owner	Review date
			L	S	L × S		L	S	L × S		
Ex.	*Example: pallet falls from a top rack level onto a picker*	*Example: racking inspected weekly*	*3*	*4*	*12 H*	*Example: retention bars fitted to the beams*	*2*	*4*	*8 M*	*Example: warehouse lead*	*Example: 6 months*

Existing controls are the controls in place and working today. Fill in the residual rating only when an added control is named beside it, with an owner and a review date. Review earlier than the date after a change, an accident or a near miss.

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6 Checks before you rely on the ratings

- ☐ The scale and the bands were written down and agreed before the first row was scored (section 1).
- ☐ Every row uses the same basis for likelihood and for severity (section 1), so rows can be compared.
- ☐ Existing controls lists only what is in place today; planned controls are in the added control column.
- ☐ Every residual rating has an added control, an owner and a review date beside it.
- ☐ Each row was read as L and S, not only as the product, and rows with a high S but a low L were looked at separately.
- ☐ The people who do the work were asked about the rows that concern them.

7 Decision on the rated risks (the matrix rates; people decide)

Row no.	Rating (L × S, band)	Decision (accept, add a control, stop the work, other)	Basis for the decision (what was weighed besides the score)	Decided by (name, role)	Date	Risk register ID (if carried over)

Write who decided and on what basis, for example the legal duty that applies, what the control would cost in money, time or trouble, and what the people doing the work said. Carry the significant risks to your risk register; this form is the working for one assessment.

8 Review log

Date	Reason (scheduled, change, accident or near miss, other)	Reviewed by	Rows or scale changed	Version

9 Sign-off

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Assessed by			
Reviewed by			
Approved by (manager)			

Where this form is kept, and for how long	Next review date

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