How to do a Risk Assessment

Before We Begin… Those running a society or committee have a duty of care in law to ensure the safety of its members and any other people who may be affected by its activities and events. Therefore, if you organise an activity for people, you need to take the necessary precautions to keep the activity safe otherwise the society or committee could be liable for any accidents and injuries which occur as a result.

Why Bother?
As you have legal duty of care, a risk assessment is more than just a piece of paper – it’s a useful checklist of what could go wrong and how your society or committee can take appropriate measures to reduce risks. And guess what needs to be produced if there is an accident… your risk assessment!

Public Liability Insurance – what’s that?
All societies’ and committees’ usual activities (i.e. what the founders originally applied to do) are covered by the Students’ Union’s third party Public Liability insurance. This means that your members are protected if they are injured or their property is damaged due to negligence (the Students’ Union or a society member is at fault).

Personal accidents and injuries are not covered. The most effective way to minimise accidents is by identifying potential risks and working out a way to prevent them… time to do a risk assessment! (For example, you risk assessment might say that you will check the floors are not wet before your dancers begin. If the floors were checked and someone fell, you may not be liable as a society, it is a genuine accident.).

Exemptions – what isn’t covered by Students’ Union Insurance?
There are certain activities that are not covered by SU insurance, therefore you cannot engage in them as a society/committee. These include:

- Activities that aren’t your group’s ‘usual’ activities (i.e. what the founders originally applied to do)
- Volunteering abroad
- Preparing food and distributing/selling it to anyone other than your members
- Providing self-help support, advice or counselling
- Any activity involving motor mechanics or mechanised parts
- Some specific high risk activities (e.g. some sports)
- Volunteering with under-18s/vulnerable adults (unless approved by SheffieldVolunteering)
- Please refer to the Rules & Safety Handbook (Zone Online) for a full list.

**Does this apply to me?**
There are two main instances where you'll need to complete a risk assessment:

1. **Annual Risk Assessment:** If your Society or Committee is categorised as ‘Red’ then you must complete an annual risk assessment. This is because your usual activities are of a higher risk and you'll need to consider how to make sure these are as safe as possible. You can find a list of ‘red’ groups in the Rules & Safety Handbook (Zone Online).

2. **Special Event Risk Assessment:** Any society or committee which is organising an activity or event which is not part of your usual activities or which carries an enhanced risk must complete a risk assessment. Your committee is responsible for ensuring the safety of your events/activities and should seek help and advice from the Activities & Sports Zone where appropriate. Here are some examples of instances when you should submit a risk assessment:
   - Trip (either UK or abroad)
   - Large events
   - Bar crawls or large alcohol-related events
   - Competitions (e.g. dance competitions)
   - Sport events
   - Any activity that has an enhanced risk.

*Please see Rules & Safety Handbook (Zone Online) for other examples of where a risk assessment may need to be completed.*

For some of the above activities (e.g. some trips and bar crawls) you will find that there are standardised pre-written risk assessments on the Zone Online. If you’re satisfied that these cover the main risks of your activity, then you just need to ‘tick’ your agreement to the risk assessment on the online form you submit to let us know about the activity.

However there will be times that you need to write a risk assessment yourself. In this instance you should:

1. Download a ‘risk assessment’ template from the Zone Online
2. Complete it to the best of your ability
3. Send it through to: society.coordinator@shef.ac.uk
4. A staff member will be in touch to let you know whether any changes are needed.

Often it can be easier to meet with a Zone staff member who can help and advise you with the risk assessment - just email society.coordinator@shef.ac.uk to book in a meeting. There are also training sessions on ‘How to do a risk assessment’ throughout the year so you may want to find them on the society training programme and book yourself a place. Look at the ‘Training’ section of the Zone Online for information.

The Zone staff will also check that the activity can be covered under the Students’ Union’s insurance policy. For some large events there may be an extra charge, roughly:

- External equipment hire (not from the Activities Zone Desk) costs from £5 per £1000 of insurance per week.
- Extra Public Liability Insurance cover costs from £26.50.

So, how do I actually do a risk assessment?
Think of a risk assessment as a checklist form of how safe your activities are. You are, quite literally, assessing the risks. There’s a blank template at the end of this guide for you to look at, as well as a real-life society examples.

First, you’ll need to complete the basic information at the top of the risk assessment. This includes your group name; date; the name and location of your activity; the name and contact details of the person completing the risk assessment; the names of anyone else consulted.

- If your risk assessment is covering a variety of dates, make sure all dates are covered, e.g. 1st June 2015 – 31st July 2016;
- Be specific: remember that your risk assessment will need to be produced in the event of an accident, so ensure all your dates are correct and contact details are accurate.

Next, your risk assessment checklist will ask you for five pieces of information about each ‘risk’. These are:

1. **Hazard** - What might cause harm?
2. **Risk** - Who might be harmed and how?
3. **Control Measures (Existing and Proposed)** - What are you already doing to control the risk? What else do you need to do?
4. **Action by whom?** - Who is in charge of making sure control measures happen?
5. **Action by when?** - By what date do the control measures need to be in place?
Top Tips!

1. Think of a risk assessment as a checklist of how safe your activities are;

2. Keep an electronic copy for easy updating and send your risk assessment through to society.coordinator@shef.ac.uk who will let you know if amendments are needed;

3. Don’t get bogged down in minor details but think about the main risks posed;

4. Do your risk assessment as a group, maybe in a committee meeting;

5. Be completely honest – don’t say you’re going to do so something in your risk assessment if you can’t do it!

For more support about society safety, please see ‘Safety Matters’ on the Zone Online.

Any questions? Contact: society.coordinator@shef.ac.uk

Real-life risk examples from societies

1. Dance Society rehearsal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Wet dance floor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Participants might slip or trip, causing injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Measures</td>
<td>The floor will be checked before every practice. If any areas are wet or hazardous, it will be swept and dried before use. Participants will be advised to wear sensible shoes at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Existing and Proposed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by whom?</td>
<td>The dance teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by when?</td>
<td>Every rehearsal.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Duke of Edinburgh Society Peak District walk:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Bad weather when walking in the Peak District.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Participants may get injured from slips, getting cold, and hypothermia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Measures (Existing and Proposed)</td>
<td>The walk will be cancelled if weather conditions are bad on the day. Students will be advised to wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy footwear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by whom?</td>
<td>Eric Thomas (President)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by when?</td>
<td>07/03/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. History Society trip to York:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Large number of students in an unfamiliar city.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Participants may get lost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Measures (Existing and Proposed)</td>
<td>The trip leader will take all participant names and phone numbers on the coach, and will take a register before departing York, to ensure all participants have returned. All participants have the trip leader’s mobile number and a map of York with the coach drop-off point clearly labelled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by whom?</td>
<td>Catherine Wright (Secretary - trip leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action by when?</td>
<td>08/04/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Sheffield Students’ Union Activities Risk Assessment

Need help with your risk assessment? Visit [www.sheffield.ac.uk/socissuesandsafety](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/socissuesandsafety) or contact your designated staff member (For Societies/Committees: society.coordination@sheffield.ac.uk)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Society/Committee:</th>
<th>Date of Risk Assessment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event/Activity:</td>
<td>Completed by (Name/Position):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event/Activity Location:</td>
<td>Contact details:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Event/Activity:</td>
<td>Other Persons Consulted (if any):</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS</th>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>EXISTING CONTROL/PROPOSED CONTROL MEASURES</th>
<th>Action by who?</th>
<th>Action by when?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Who might be harmed and how?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What are you already doing to control the risk?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What else do you need to do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sheffield Students’ Union Activities Risk Assessment**

Society/Committee: Hong Kong Society
Event/Activity: Computer Gaming Competition
Event/Activity Location: Octagon Centre
Date of Event/Activity: 06/06/2015
Date of Risk Assessment: 05/05/2015
Completed by (Name/Position): Emily Smith (President)
Contact details (telephone & email): 07853147443 emsmith@shef.ac.uk
Other Persons Consulted (if any): Cheana Fung (Secretary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS</th>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>CONTROL MEASURES: EXISTING AND PROPOSED</th>
<th>Action by who?</th>
<th>Action by when?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of Octagon Centre (external venue)</td>
<td>Participant or audience would be harmed if venue is unsafe or there is a poor fire evacuation procedure.</td>
<td>Octagon Centre has its own public liability insurance from the University. Emily (President) is aware of the fire evacuation procedures and will brief the stewards in advance.</td>
<td>Emily (President)</td>
<td>02/05/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of electrical equipment</td>
<td>Participant or audience may be injured or killed from smoke or fire.</td>
<td>All electrical equipment will be PAT tested before the competition by Technical Services Committee.</td>
<td>Technical Services Committee</td>
<td>05/06/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of equipment and cables</td>
<td>Participant or audience may trip over trailing cables, causing injury or entrapment.</td>
<td>Cables will be only be used where necessary. Any trailing cables will be safely secured out of the way of walkways (using tape).</td>
<td>Cheana</td>
<td>02/06/2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Sheffield Students’ Union Activities Risk Assessment

**Society/Committee:** Various (see trip form)  
**Event/Activity:** UK Day Trip  
**Event/Activity Location:** Various (see trip form)  
**Date of Event/Activity:** Various (see trip form)  
**Date of Risk Assessment:** 01/04/2015 – 31/07/2015  
**Completed by (Name/Position):** Zoe Speakman on behalf of Sheffield Students’ Union registered societies and committees  
**Contact details (telephone & email):** 0114 222 2631, z.r.speakman@shef.ac.uk

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Please note that this is a standardised risk assessment. If there are any specific risks associated with your day trip which are not covered in this risk assessment then you must inform the relevant staff member in the Activities & Sports Zone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNIFICANT HAZARDS</th>
<th>RISK</th>
<th>CONTROL MEASURES: EXISTING AND PROPOSED</th>
<th>Action by whom?</th>
<th>Action by when?</th>
<th>Date?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sightseeing, visiting pubs, museums and cafes | Participants getting separated from the group and becoming lost; Participants becoming unwell or having an accident | - Every participant must be given the trip leader’s mobile number. The trip leader must keep their mobile on at all times.  
- The trip leader should carry a named list with every participant’s name and mobile number.  
- A meeting point (possibly the drop-off point) should be designated in case of emergency and students should be briefed about this on the journey.  
- If anyone becomes seriously unwell or has an accident during the trip, the trip leader should be notified and the emergency services (999) should be called. | Trip leader and all participants. | During trip. |
| Drinking alcohol | Illness and dehydration from excessive alcohol consumption | - The trip leader should advise students to visit venues with free tap water available. All licensed establishments should promote sensible drinking.  
- The trip leader and at least two committee members should not drink alcohol during the trip. In case of emergency, if any participant is seriously unwell, the trip leader should be notified and the emergency services (999) should be called. | Trip leader and two committee members. | During trip. |
| Travelling to and from destination | Somebody being left behind; Risk of accident | - The trip leader should carry a named list with every participant’s name and mobile number. They should ensure every name is ticked off before departure.  
- Everyone travelling should wear a seatbelt. There should be no alcohol consumption on coaches or minibuses in line with the Rules & Safety Handbook.  
- In case of emergency, the trip leader should carry the University Security Services number (0114 222 4065). | Trip leader, all participants. | During trip. |
| Carrying valuables in a public place | Risk of losing valuables or being mugged | - Participants should be encouraged to advance notice and bring expensive valuables on the trip and should keep vigilant regarding their belongings.  
- Anyone who is a victim of a mugging should contact the police immediately (999). They should obtain a crime number if they wish to make a claim on their personal insurance. | Trip leader, all participants. | During trip. |

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**Final Comments:**

All society/committee policies (including the Rules & Safety Handbook and Alcohol Code of Practice) must be adhered to throughout the trip.

Any accidents/incidents should be reported to the Activities & Sports Zone within 24 hours (Accident Reporting Form is obtainable from www.sheffhusu.com/zonelines).