Risk Assessment and Afterwards
What they say…

“Who will protect us from the health and safety set?”

“…with their mantra ‘there’s no such thing as an accident’…”

“…cancer of a civilised society…”

“Please stop nannying us!”

“Hypersafe is the one true faith.”

“The minister for health and safety should be prosecuted as a public hazard”
Taking risks is a vital part of modern life and Health and Safety should not be used as an excuse to avoid that.
The approach

- NOT “Don’t do that!”
- But “How can you do that reasonably safely?”
- Sensible Risk management
• Identify the hazards

• Identify the people who may be exposed

• Evaluate the significant risks of exposure

• Recognise the likelihood of foreseeable incidents

• Select realistic and practical precautions
Definitions

- Hazard
  - Something with the potential to cause harm
  - This can include chemicals, electricity, working at height, lifting equipment and workshop machinery
Definitions

- Risk is the likelihood of the potential harm from the hazard being realised.
- The extent of the risk depends on:
  - Likelihood
  - Potential severity
  - Number of people who may be affected
  - Type of people who may be affected
Example

A bottle of bleach is a chemical hazard
- Locked in a cleaners cupboard it is a low risk.
- Used by a cleaner wearing appropriate gloves and eye protection it is a managed medium risk.
- Decanted into a lemonade bottle and left out on a sink during a visit of under 10 year old children, it is a high uncontrolled risk.
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

- Health and Safety must be protected ‘so far as is reasonably practicable’

- Balance the time, cost and trouble of control against the risk

- But the risk should be properly controlled
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

- It is a legal requirement to assess risks
- It is also a duty in several other sets of regulations – manual handling, noise, substances hazardous to health, asbestos, confined spaces and ionising radiation
What is Risk Assessment for?

- Deciding what you are going to do
- Identifying what dangers are associated with the work, including possible failures
- Identifying risk controls and ensuring that they are implemented
Who assesses the risk?

- A ‘competent person’
  Someone who understands the task and is aware of the hazards
- Research Supervisor e.g. Post Doc and Academic
- Facility Manager/Administrator/EMBS
- DSO may assist or co-ordinate
- Everyone can all contribute
- Those who create the risks must manage them
When should the risk assessment be done?

Before any work is carried out, at the planning stage.
Evaluating the Risk

- Who is doing the task?
- What kind of relevant training and supervision do they have?
- How many people are doing the work?
- For how long?
- How many times?
- Where is a problem likely to occur?
- Why/when might it happen?
Evaluating the Risk

- What about non-routine operations?
- What existing controls are in place?
- Do the controls work?
- Are the controls adhered to?
- If the controls fail do they fail to safety or danger?
- Any evidence of accidents, incidents or near misses?
- What are results of health surveillance?
- Is the Risk Assessment recorded?
- Is it reviewed?
Significant Hazards

- Are you confident that all these have been identified and addressed?
What is the format?

Recommended scale

- High
- Medium
- Low
What is the format?

- Risk Assessment Handbook
- Examples of 3 formats
- www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/safety
What is the format?

- Large departments have their own arrangements
- Specific formats for:
  - Hazardous substances
  - For use of open sources of radioactivity
  - GM work
  - Stress
Controlling and managing the risk

- If possible, avoid the risk
- Substitute a less hazardous method or process
- Limit the number of people exposed
- Use engineering controls e.g. a fume cupboard
- Separate the process from personnel
- Introduce written procedures, SOP’s and Permits to Work
- Adapt the work to the individual
- Take advantage of technological progress
Controlling and managing the risk

- Administration procedures e.g. restricted access, no lone working, safety signs
- Training - is specific training needed for any part of the process or for any people involved?
- Places - are access arrangements needed for particular areas of work?
- Experiments or events – any particular control measures needed e.g. will children be involved?
Controlling and managing the risk

- Information, instruction, training and supervision of people new to the work
- Personal Protective Equipment e.g. wearing glasses and safety footwear when changing gas cylinders
- Health surveillance may be required
- Have you thought about Emergency procedures?
Controlling and managing the risk

- An effective strategy will usually involve a series of control measures
  - Code of practice
  - Safe operating procedure
  - Training
  - Personal Protective Equipment
- BUT the process must be
  - Recorded
  - Communicated to those doing the work
  - Reviewed
The movement of individuals around buildings – slips and trips

- **Significant hazards**
  - Slippery or wet floors

- **What could go wrong?**
  - Anyone might slip or fall on slippery or wet floors
  - Bad weather means water could trail into the building
  - Floors may be left excessively wet after washing
  - People may be rushing or not paying attention

- **The risk is high, particularly if the floors are very slippery in some areas**
The movement of individuals around buildings – slips and trips

- Existing or intended control measures
  - Mats to minimise water on floors in wet weather
  - Receptionist monitors conditions
  - Actions included in the safety training for all reception staff, including temporary cover
  - Training for cleaning staff
  - Provision of signs
The movement of individuals around buildings – slips and trips

- Further actions
  - New floor covering?
  - State who, what and when
  - Different type of floor polish?
  - State who, what and when

- Check actions have been completed
The movement of individuals around buildings – slips and trips

- Keep an eye open
  - Informal monitoring and formal inspections
  - Accident and incident reporting

- Review
  - Regularly
  - After changes
  - After accidents and incidents
Sensible Risk management is about…

- Ensuring we all work safely
- Focusing on the significant risks
- Enabling research and work and NOT stifling it
- Ensuring that those who create the risks manage them responsibly
- Letting people know they have responsibilities as well as rights
Sensible Risk management is NOT about…

- Creating a totally risk free University
- Generating mountains of useless paperwork
Sensible Risk management is about…

Getting a life and managing the risks you create responsibly
Sources of Information

- www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/safety
- www.hse.gov.uk
- Departmental websites
- Occupational Health
- Fire Safety Unit