

How to carry out a stress Risk Assessment and Survey

In our introductory document to Stress “An introduction to Work Related Stress” we discussed the basic reasons as to why a Stress Risk Assessment should be carried out. Now we are going to discuss the basic Methods we would use and how we would apply them to a Work related stress risk assessment for one of our clients.

The most effective Risk Assessments involve substantial commitment from the workforce; this meant that that the following methods of research for the risk assessment would be the most effective.

- Stress Risk Assessment survey.
- Focus groups and interviews.

In addition to this the following documentation would be analysed: Incident/Accident Data and Sickness/Absence Reports. (depending on the company procedures and type of documentation)

The stress risk assessment surveys are used in order to gain views and information from a small part of the organization, covering a wide aspect form that section. As Brace (2004) establishes a simple survey is probably the easiest way to try obtaining information on areas of concern within your workplace. You are able to build a profile on what problems exist and show that you are being proactive.

Focus Group. The participants are all invited to attend a focus group with the purpose to discuss pressures in a semi-structured way in order to gather views about potential causes of stress. The management standards are used as a template for the discussions, and minutes are taken ensuring the anonymity of all staff is preserved. This data is used to provide qualitative information allowing the participants to describe their views in their own experiences. The advantages of this method are:

- More detailed analysis
- Experiences described rather than rated on a scale

- Allowed staff to feel involved in the process and take some accountability for the outcome
- Solutions as well as problems were discussed
- Staff can actively see that their views are being considered
- Problems identified in previous survey can be discussed in more detail.

The collection of the above data is based on the Management Standards for Tackling Work Related Stress (2005) as this is found to produce a more comprehensive study.

Findings of Risk Assessment

The risk assessment findings are a collaboration of the 2 methods of research detailed above. The finding will usually be displayed in a tabular format, detailing a cost benefit analysis and a suggestion of timescales for improvements based on the organisational needs and facilities. The HSE standards will be applied throughout the assessment taking into consideration the Risk Factors explained in our previous document (an introduction to work related stress), these are Demands, Control, Support, Relationships, Role and Change.