Learning Guide

Apply a risk management plan

23393 Apply a risk management plan for a person in a health, disability, or community setting

Name:

Workplace:

Level 4 4 credits

Careerforce
Introduction

This learning guide will help you understand the risk management process and how to identify hazards and risks in the context of health or wellbeing settings.

How to use your learning guide

This guide supports your learning and prepares you for the unit standard assessment. The activities and scenarios should be used as a general guide for learning.

This guide relates to the following unit standard:
23393 Apply a risk management plan for a person in a health, disability, or community setting (level 4, 4 credits).

This guide is yours to keep. Make it your own by writing notes that help you remember things, or where you need to find more information.

Follow the tips in the notes column.

You may use highlight pens to show important information and ideas, and think about how this information applies to your work.

You might find it helpful to talk to colleagues or your supervisor.

Finish this learning guide before you start on the assessment.

What you will learn

This topic will help you to understand:
• interpret a risk management plan.
• implement a risk management plan that is consistent and in accordance with organisational policies and procedures.
• ensure the implementation of a risk management plan is documented properly.
• evaluate the effectiveness a risk management plan and ensure that is report properly.
Risk

Risk is the likelihood of danger, harm or abuse occurring. This may be from something someone does, or any physical situation. It is the chance that somebody could be harmed, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be.

A hazard is something that may lead to injury or harm to a person, for example, a broken step could lead to a fall and an injury.

Risk management is the process by which decisions are made about risks. It could be either to accept known (or assessed) risks, or to take action to reduce the probability of a harmful event occurring and to reduce the effects of these.

Risk management aims to reduce the effects of unavoidable hazards by:

- warning procedures and safety precautions.
- preventative plans; planned actions to reduce the likelihood of a risk occurring.
- contingency plans; planned actions of what to do if a hazardous event happens.

A risk management plan sets out how any identified risks can and should be managed. The risk management plan must be regularly reviewed in accordance with organisational and legal requirements.

A risk assessment is an examination of a person’s home or environment, any items within it and anyone or anything (including the person’s own behaviour) that could cause harm or lead to the abuse of individuals.

The purpose of this examination is to assess whether certain precautions are needed in order to manage any identified risks.

You will need to think about the environment and identify any hazards. Decide if they are actual and/or potential risks. For example, loose mats can be a fall hazard. This is a risk for the elderly.
Ask yourself ‘What if this happened?’

Examples of risk include:

- the possibility of danger and/or hazardous situations.
- the likelihood of damage to and/or destruction of the environment or property.
- environmental risks, from, for example, inadequate security, physical dangers, or hazards from potentially harmful substances.
- health conditions, for example, conditions such as diabetes which cause the potential for falls and slips.
- the likelihood of injury or harm to people, including self-harm, vulnerability and abuse.
- challenging behaviour.

**Legal requirements**

You need to be familiar with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSW Act) which came into effect in April 2016 as part of a reform to reduce the number of work-related injuries and death.

The main aim of this legislation is to ensure that everyone in the workplace is responsible for health and safety so everyone goes home at the end of the work day.

The Act requires that everyone in the workplace knows their health and safety risks and manages them proportionally. To achieve this there is an expectation that the workplace will:

- ensure that everyone has a role to play.
- make everyone’s responsibility clear.
- focus on managing risk.
- require those who create the risk to control the risk.
- engage with workers and enable them to participate on an ongoing basis.
- allow flexibility in the management of health and safety risks.
Who is responsible?

Within the HSW Act there are clear expectations on who is responsible for health and safety within the workplace.

1. Workers must take reasonable care to ensure the health and safety of themselves and others, and to comply with the procedures and policies.

2. Other people who come to the workplace, such as the people you are working with, family/whanau, visitors, also have some health and safety duties. It’s all about taking responsibility for what you can control.

All residential and service work environments will have organisational policies and procedures that are used to manage risks. It is your organisation’s responsibility to show and/or make available to you these policies and procedures.

It is your responsibility to make sure that you follow these policies and procedures, and participate in the process of addressing any risk situations. It is also your responsibility to follow individual risk management plans so that everybody’s safety is ensured.

It is a two-way process, a conversation between you and others in your workplace. The conversation is about identifying and understanding what your work related health and safety risks are, then talking about what is the sensible way to eliminate the risk or to manage these risks.

Everyone has a chance to have their say. It is worth communicating with the person you support too.
The risk management process

Within the Health and Safety in Work Act there is an expectation that there will be regular reviews of your work activities to identify, assess and control risks. Everyone is responsible for making sure this happens.

A risk management process is the way in which risks are considered and managed.
Steps to take in the risk management process

**Establish context**
The context of the risk looks at the situation in which the possible risk occurs, for example, in a person’s home, in a bathroom, outdoors, in a facility, or in a group.

**Identify hazards**
Identifying hazards means deciding what could cause harm to a person, you, another worker or a member of the public. It involves a systematic way of thinking about the risk, for example, a thorough check of a person’s home.

**Assess the risks**
Analysing and evaluating the risks is a way of assessing the importance of the risk and its possible consequences. This means thinking about what, when, where and to whom an event can happen, as well as why and how it can happen. Evaluation also categorises the risk, for example, high, moderate or low risk.

**Risk management**
Risk management is about deciding what needs to be done to reduce or eliminate a risk and implementing a risk management plan to achieve this.

**Monitor control measures**
Monitor control measures is about having systems in place to regularly check risks are being well managed. There may be audits, inspections, meetings, feedback systems in place.
Consult

When thinking about risk, you need to talk to all of the people involved. This may mean talking to your colleagues, the person you are supporting and their family/whānau and friends, or your supervisor. Including all their ideas about the potential or actual risk will help to make a more complete plan to manage the risk.

Communicate

This means making sure that all the people who need to know about the risk are informed about it. This will be about the risk itself as well as ways to manage it.

You might do this by including it in a service plan, putting an alert sticker on a medication chart, or by placing a warning sign near a hazard such as a wet floor sign. It may also be discussed in a team meeting.

Monitor

The risk management process also requires you to monitor the risk to check whether there has been any change in the risk. Such a change could happen rapidly, or over time. Monitoring can be done internally or externally. Examples are:

- an audit.
- through health and safety checks.
- the reporting of hazards, incidents and complaints.
- by doing surveys.

Review

Reviewing the risk requires you to update the plan to keep it relevant, and to make sure that changes in risk levels result in a plan with all the necessary actions included.
Context of risk

The nature of care can differ from place to place and organisation to organisation.

Residential environment

Residential care situations include facilities designed for the older person, community homes with supervision, secured units, and hospital-level care. In some organisations the work environment may be controlled from within the work setting, for example, the supervisor or manager is on site. In other work environments workers may work in isolation or on shifts in community homes and they are supervised from a distance, such as from a central office. The nature of residential care can differ from organisation to organisation.

Home based environment

Workers who provide support to a person in the person’s home face hazards similar to those experienced in other health care settings. However, the home-based work environment is likely to be less controllable.

It can be isolated as support workers often work alone. They may be more likely to perform potentially hazardous activities such as lifting people or other loads alone, such as moving furniture. The home based working environment restricts the employer’s ability to control the place of work. The home in which the support is provided could be in a state of disrepair, conditions may be unhygienic, or there may be hazards such as faulty appliances, electrical wiring, or breakages.

People also have a greater degree of autonomy (personal control) in their own home, which support workers must respect. Support workers may be more likely to make allowances for people’s behaviour, and can gradually come to accept increasingly dangerous behaviours as ‘normal’ or manageable.

Supervision may be from a distance, and there may be delays in response to calls for assistance owing to the distance or degree of isolation.

Each of these factors can create additional health and safety risks for workers.
In the community

The community presents risks that cannot always be planned for. As a support worker, if you are using community facilities and services, it is important to follow any risk management plans in place for the person you are supporting. It is also important to think about some of the risks that you may encounter and have strategies in place that will help to keep the person safe.

Write

Read the scenario and answer the following questions.

You have to take the person you are supporting to an appointment with the dentist. You can control how well you drive to the appointment, but you cannot control or manage how others on the road will drive. You cannot anticipate who you will have to share the waiting room with, but you may be able to predict how the person will react or behave in the waiting room.

Each of these factors can create additional health and safety risks to you both.

What will you need to do to ensure the person you support is safe?

What will you read before leaving for the appointment?

What strategies are you likely to have in place to ensure the person will be safe in the waiting room?
**Excursions**

Excursions or trips pose their own unique risks. If you are planning or participating in an excursion, always make sure you visit the place yourself first before you take any person or group there. You need to be able to identify any possible risks, and how you will deal with them before actually making the trip. Here are some transport safety procedures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confirm the health status and suitability of each person you plan to take with a supervisor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Log your route, destination and estimated return time with the appropriate senior staff member.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Check the ratio of support workers to people in the group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure the maximum number of people allowed in the vehicle is not exceeded.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the driver have a current licence?</td>
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<td>Does the vehicle have a current WOF and registration?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a first aid kit in the vehicle?</td>
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<td>How will you report any accidents/incidents?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know the emergency procedures?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is there a form of communication in case of an emergency, eg cell phone?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know how to use specialised equipment, such as the wheelchair hoist?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you know how to secure a wheelchair in the van?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is equipment correctly stored for travelling?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are any hazardous substances correctly stored, labelled and transported?</td>
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<tr>
<td>List any other safety procedures you think you need to take.</td>
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</table>
Identifying hazards and risks

There are a variety of hazards which you can encounter in the home or workplace.

Hazard can be dangerous and cause injury, harm or damage.

The likelihood of a hazard occurring is called the risk.

Physical hazards

These include the possibility of falls, accidents and emergencies.

Biological hazards

These include:

• blood-borne diseases including hepatitis A, hepatitis B and hepatitis C, and HIV/AIDS.
• other infectious conditions.

Exposure to biological risks may happen with exposure to blood or body fluids, used needles, contaminated laundry or waste, specimens, used medical equipment, or poor home hygiene.

Behavioural (psychosocial) hazards

Challenging or aggressive behaviour can be hazardous when people are stressed, angry, hostile, or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Some people’s behaviour or mental health conditions contribute to threatening or violent behaviour.

Exposure to actual or threatened physical harm may arise from interactions with the person, their family, visitors, or unrelated members of the public while the support worker is performing work, or while travelling to work.
Travel-related hazards
These types of hazards include vehicle accidents, breakdowns or security issues when support workers are alone at night with the person they are supporting.

Electrical, gas or fire hazards
These may result from conditions in the environment, for example, from faulty medical equipment, or leaking oxygen or gas bottles. These types of hazards can also be caused by faulty equipment, appliances and fixtures. A frayed cord on an electrical appliance is one example; faulty wiring in an older house is another.

Chemical hazards
These can occur as a result of leakage, unsafe handling, and storage, labelling or mixing of chemicals such as domestic cleaners, drugs, or medications. Fumes may also result from chemicals such as solvents or disinfectants.

Manual handling hazards
Manual handling can place a support worker at risk of sprain or strain injuries, including back injuries.
Look around your work environment. Identify as many hazards as you can. Decide whether they are an actual risk or a potential risk.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hazard</th>
<th>Is it a potential or actual risk? Why?</th>
<th>Is this risk your responsibility? What action would you take?</th>
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</table>
Assessing risks

Risks must be assessed so that you can identify the effect or consequence of the risk. You need to consider what risk is posed, who could be affected by the risk, and what the circumstances of the risk are.

The following are risk categories based on the effect (consequence) of the risk.

**High risk** – is when there is a strong likelihood of harm occurring. It may result in severe or permanent injury or even death of a person.

**Moderate risk** – occurs where there is a reasonable chance that harm will occur to a person resulting in damage or injury to the individual for several weeks or months.

**Low risk** – is where the effect is likely to be short term, occur infrequently and/or where there is minimal likelihood of harm happening to a person.

Organisations usually choose to focus attention on moderate and high risk areas within the organisation.

Prioritising the level of risk

Think about whether serious harm could possibly result from the risk.

Some risks will need to be managed immediately, while others may be given a lower priority.

There are likely to be some risks identified that, while not high risk, will still need to be managed. Significant risks that may cause serious harm will have highest priority. If there is high risk, do something about it immediately. If there is a low probability of risk occurring and a low risk of severe injury, it will have a lower priority.

Where it is possible to easily put in place measures to eliminate or control something that is not high risk, then it would be good practice to do so.
Reducing risk

The Health and Safety at Work Act requires all significant hazards to be identified, eliminated, or controlled by isolating or minimising them.

Eliminate

If practicable, you must eliminate the hazard so that people will not be harmed. You can’t eliminate or get rid of all hazards immediately (it’s not practicable). For example, you cannot eliminate all chemicals, medical equipment, or blood and body fluid. But you may be able to substitute one chemical for another, replace any old equipment, and use safer alternatives where they are available.

Isolate

If it’s not practicable to eliminate the hazard, you must isolate it. This means separating the hazards from the person. For example, access to drugs or medications can be limited if you put in place the ideal security measures. You could use caution signs to protect people, for example, a wet floor sign.

Minimise

You must minimise the chance that a hazard will cause harm. Minimising hazards includes following safe and accepted work practices, and maintaining equipment.

A wet floor can be mopped to minimise the hazard. As well as minimising the hazards, you must ensure that the appropriate protective clothing and equipment is provided and used. For example, gloves can be used as protection against harsh chemical products and from any bodily fluids.

Your organisation will have policies and procedures in place for reporting accidents, incidents, hazards, and unsafe equipment. You will need to know what you have to do in each case.
Notifiable event, risk and hazard registers

A **notifiable event** is an incident that happens as a result of a person carrying out their work. It may be due to the condition of the workplace, malfunctioning equipment, hazardous materials or the way the work activity is organised.

Notifiable incidences occur when someone experiences:

- a death.
- a notifiable illness (seriously ill as a result of exposure to toxic substances or infections requiring medical treatment within 48 hours).
- a notifiable incident (admitted to hospital as an inpatient, serious injury).

The HSW Act requires you to contact WorkSafe NZ when work-related events occur. A register of these events must also be kept within the organisation for at least five years.

A **risk register** records all the risks that an organisation has identified and thinks are important to record. Risk registers also include hazard registers and these must be kept for at least five years in compliance with the HSW Act.

**Hazard registers** list any potential hazards that have been identified; how serious the problem is, how it can be overcome, who is responsible for overseeing it and by when. It should also be used for recording when and who has dealt with the problem.

Incidences that occur at work but are not related to work are not notifiable incidences. For example, a diabetic person going into coma at work, a person being injured on the way to work when driving to work is not part of their work.

You must record every incident that harmed or might have harmed any employee in the workplace, and any other person in your place of work. Systems need to be in place for the prompt reporting and documentation of accidents and near-misses. It is important to record near-misses in order to prevent serious harm occurring in the future.

As a support worker you may be working in a person’s home. Although this is your place of work, it is not the person’s place of work – it is their home. However, you as an employee of an organisation will be required to follow all of your organisation’s policies and procedures including health and safety and risk management requirements.
Reporting forms
A typical incident report will ask for information such as this form requires. You will also need to indicate if WorkSafe NZ needs to be notified.

Write

Consider your work place. What registers do you have?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there a register for:</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>Where is it located?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazard</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What are the procedures that you need to follow when you identify a risk or hazard?

What procedures do you have to follow if there is a notifiable incident and WorkSafe NZ has to be informed?
Risk management plan

A risk management plan sets out how any identified risks can and should be managed.

You are probably the one who will have the most contact with the person you are supporting. You will need to know their risk management plan well and how to implement the plan. It may include risks that you have little or no control over. It may be something that you can directly influence, for example, an infection outbreak, by practising good hygiene.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Managing the risk</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Identify the risk.</td>
<td>Showering the person in the bathroom may be a risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Decide who might be harmed and how.</td>
<td>The person could slip and fall on the wet areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Assess the risk (high, moderate, low). Decide on the precautions to take to prevent or reduce the level of risk.</td>
<td>Moderate risk level. Stay with the person to reduce the level of risk. Use a non-slip mat, shower chair, shower rails, to reduce the risk of an accident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Record your findings. Consult and communicate. Implement a risk management plan for dealing with the risk, following your organisation’s policies and procedures.</td>
<td>Inform the person, their family and whānau and your supervisor/manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Monitor and review the effectiveness of the risk management plan.</td>
<td>This will be monitored through health and safety checks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Risk management strategies

Risk management strategies are used to minimise all risks. When supporting the implementation of a person’s risk management plan you are minimising the identified risk situations and supporting the person to be safe.

Some strategies you may be involved in are:

- using your common sense and being practical in the support you offer.
- ensuring the support you give is practical and fair.
- reacting early enough to prevent a risky situation.
- ensuring that you provide opportunities for the person to explore and experience their environment safely.

A support worker may be involved in identifying early warning signs and these should be documented in the individual risk management plan, and reported, recorded and acted upon.

A support worker may also contribute to managing risk through being involved in a multidisciplinary team. For example, attending meetings, and providing feedback or reports on individual people.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of risk</th>
<th>Risk situation</th>
<th>Early warning signs</th>
<th>Strategy to implement</th>
<th>Steps to take</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioural</strong></td>
<td>Alistair stands too close to people, placing him at risk of verbal or physical abuse.</td>
<td>He stares at people. He is confrontational. Others become restless and scared of him.</td>
<td>Encourage Alistair to imagine a ‘comfort circle’ for other people, at arm’s length away. He must stand outside that circle.</td>
<td>Remind Alistair of the circle. Draw an imaginary circle in the air. Remind Alastair to take a step back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health</strong></td>
<td>Ethel places herself at risk when she forgets to take her angina medication with her.</td>
<td>Shortness of breath. Appears distressed. Clasps her hand to her chest and unable to speak.</td>
<td>Reminder cards on bedside table and door. Have a special bag containing the medications for Ethel to take with her. Verbal reminder by support worker.</td>
<td>Make up the cards. Help her place the medications in the bag. Inform other support workers of the plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Find and read an existing risk management plan for a person that you are currently caring for, and complete the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the hazards identified in the plan?</th>
<th>How are they potentially harmful for the person?</th>
<th>Are the risks high, moderate or low?</th>
<th>What does the plan say about reducing the risk?</th>
<th>What action will you take to reduce the risk?</th>
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Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the risk management plan. Organisations will have their own way of monitoring risk, reviewing risk, and updating the risk management plan to keep it current.

In your daily work you will have made observations about the effectiveness of the plan. It is a good idea to note down any problems as you notice them.

Your colleagues may well have made observations too and discussed this with you. It may have been informally, or a more formal process such as at a team meeting.

Larger organisations may have a risk committee and senior management will review reports on risk and quality. Remember to get feedback from the person. They will have their own viewpoint on the effectiveness of the plan and how it has impacted on the quality of their life. Customer satisfaction surveys will also provide feedback.

From all of the above, the effectiveness of the plan will be evaluated. Recommendations may be made for change or improvement, or indeed for no change, retaining the status quo. There needs to be a rationale for recommendations for change.

When evaluating a plan, consider:

- Is the plan practical to implement?
- Is the outcome of the plan what was intended? If not, why not?
- Does the plan have the desired effect? If not, why not?
- What would be an improvement that could be made?
- What are the reasons for doing this?

A risk management plan can never be perfect, but evaluating the plan and constantly refining it will improve the process of risk management.