



# **Module 5 : Health & Safety and Risk Assessments**

- What goes into a good risk assessment
- How to carry out a risk assessment
- How to rate a hazard in terms of severity and probability
- Who you need to protect in terms of health and safety

## **In this module you will learn:**

- What goes into a good risk assessment
- How to carry out a risk assessment
- How to rate a hazard in terms of severity and probability
- General ways to be safer in your work place
- Who you need to protect in terms of health and safety

## **5.1: Introduction**



**All large companies will have to carry out risk assessments for their employees and the workplace, but don't think that just because there is only one of you, that you will not have to complete risk assessments for your own business.**

Risk assessments are an extremely important part of running your own company, even if you are the only employee. They help you to identify any potential hazards to you and your clients, they ensure that you have evaluated the risk which is associated with that hazard or potential hazard and they allow you to start thinking about ways in which you can control or eliminate the hazard before it causes you any problems.

## **5.2: Risk Assessments**



**Risk assessments can seem like an arbitrary piece of paper, but they will start to make you think about the way in which you conduct your business and if there are things that you could do to make your job safer for you and your customers.**

They will highlight the areas of your work which you could make safer in order to protect both you and those you work with. This will help you to alter your practices and start to work in a way which keeps you and your clients happy, healthy and safe. Adhering to these standards will make you look like a true professional and will protect your reputation as a balloon modeller and children's entertainer.

**Keep a copy of your risk assessment on you at all times**

You should make sure that you have a risk assessment for your shows, and that you keep a copy on you at all times in case someone asks to see one. It is recommendable to have two separate risk assessments: one for entertaining children and one for entertaining adults. There are certain things which are more likely to happen or could be more dangerous if they did happen when you are working with children which would have a different outcome or probability if they happen when you

work with adults. Children, for example, are much more likely to pick up a balloon or other small item and place it in their mouth, increasing the risk of choking. This is much less likely to happen when working with adults and therefore wouldn't rank as highly on your risk assessment.

It is fairly simple to carry out a risk assessment, although it might take you a while to complete the first time you do it.

The first thing that you will need to do is to take a look at your day-to-day actions in your line of work and to identify potential risk areas. These could be risks to you, such as dropping your equipment box on your foot, or risks to the people you perform to, such as a child swallowing a balloon.

### 5.3: Dealing with each Hazard



**You should give each hazard its own heading, detailing underneath who is at risk of being hurt by this hazard and what sort of injuries or damage could be done if the hazard was not to be dealt with.**

You should then outline the activities which you would perform which could lead to this situation becoming a reality. Underneath this, you should then list action points which you will take if you are to carry out the activity which could cause the accident. These action points should aim to reduce, if not completely eliminate, the hazard to make your job safer for you and others around you.

### 5.4: Rating risk



**You will need to rate every risk with a score from 1 to 3 in terms of the severity of the risk i.e. whether it would cause mild, moderate or serious harm if it were to happen.**

If it would only cause minor harm then you rank it as 1; if it would cause moderate harm to people involved then you rate it as 2; and if it would cause serious harm then you rate it as 3.

You then have to rank all of the risks out of 3 again, but this time in terms of the probability of them happening. If something is not very likely to ever happen then you rate it as 1; if it is fairly likely then you write a number 2 next to it; and if it is very likely then you rate it 3.

When you have finished doing this, you should have two numbers next to each of the risks that you have identified. Take those two numbers and multiply them together to create the risk's overall score. In the last line of the entry for each hazard you should write both the individual scores for severity and probability, as well as its amalgamated final score.

## 5.5: Analysing the risk



**You shouldn't have any hazard which ranks higher than 9 overall.**

If you have any risks which have a combined score which is higher than this then you will need to go back and double check your calculations, as you will have made a mistake somewhere down the line.

9 is the absolute maximum that any risk should score on your assessment, but you should have very few of these.

If a hazard is very severe and very likely to happen then you are doing something unsafe in your line of work. You will need to take a detailed look at your practices and put concrete actions in place to reduce this risk drastically. Most of the hazards on your risk assessment should not rate higher than 3.

### **General points to bear in mind when drawing up a risk assessment:**

- Include everything you can think of, don't worry about making the assessment too long, it is much better to have something written down than to leave it out.
- Plan for situations which are out of the ordinary, as well as for everyday ones.
- Make sure you consider the health and safety of everyone around you when you work: You, the

children at a party, cleaners who will clear up, the parents of the children. If you can think of anyone at all who could be put at risk when you carry out your job, write them down on the risk assessment.

- Keep the assessment updated as you go along. Things will change as you go through your career as a balloon modeller and you should always ensure that your risk assessment reflects these changes accordingly.

## 5.6: Consider all aspects of your work



**When you are carrying out a risk assessment for your business, you will need to take into account all areas of your work.**

It is not only the time in which you are performing which is important to assess, but all of your preparation time and clearing up time too. The loading, transporting, carrying and unpacking of equipment are all important processes to consider; as well as the types of hazards which might arise at different locations in which you are asked to perform.

## 5.7: Why you shouldn't ignore food hygiene

**Even if you are not dealing with food, hygiene is a crucial area to examine.**

Children will often try to blow up balloons using their mouths, and it is important that you don't allow germs to spread from one child to the next. Here, you would have to assess the risk of this happening and come up with an action plan to deal with it effectively and gently.

Taking care to keep all of your balloons on your persona or contained within your equipment box would be a good start, as would using pumps to inflate the balloons so that the children do not see you using your mouth and don't follow suit.

The exact action points that you include in your risk assessment would differ depending on what the hazards are that you are addressing, but there are several practices which you should do your best to employ generally to make your job safer for you and those around you.

## 5.8: Safe Lifting



**If your equipment is heavy, make sure that you transport it safely.**

Invest in a small trolley with wheels so that you don't have to carry heavy items from place to place.

Don't let anyone help you with carrying heavy items as you could be liable if they drop them and hurt themselves.

## 5.9: Keeping your work space tidy



**Keep your work area tidy. Don't leave things unattended in places where people are likely to walk or need access.**

Don't block fire doors or fire exits and don't place anything anywhere where someone could trip over it.

Remember that it is not just you who you have to protect when it comes to health and safety, but all of those around you. Just because you will remember that you put something on the other side of a door doesn't mean that others will remember that too.

## Module Summary

### Lessons Learned

Health and safety is very important in any business, and you should always be aware of potential risks and do your best to be safe, responsible, and professional at all times.

You'll need to draw up two comprehensive risk assessments: one for children and one for adults, that you should keep a copy of on you at all times when you are working. The risk assessment should list all possible risks to you and others, rating each according to severity and probability out of 3, and multiplying the two scores to get an overall rating for each hazard.

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