

# GBSF Risk Assessment Guidance

This document advises clubs on the need for risk assessments and provides guidance on how to carry them out.

## Why should we carry out risk assessments?

All organisations and individuals who are involved in teaching (and other undertakings) have legal duties under health and safety legislation to assess risks involved in their work (Management of Health and Safety at Work regulations 1999, Regulation 3). Instructors also owe a duty of care to their students, and anyone else who may be involved/affected by their training (e.g. visitors, spectators, other users of the training space).

The law does not expect you to eliminate all risks, often it is not possible to do so. You are expected to identify these risks and take measures to reduce them (which is usually quite simple).

## What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is an audit/record of the fact that you have thought about all of the risks that could occur in running your club/class, and have put sensible measures in place to control those risks. It is strongly recommended by insurers that you have a risk assessment in case of claims, and often venue owners require one. If you run your club as a business then a risk assessment is a legal requirement.

Actual paperwork is not technically necessary (unless you have five or more employees). All that is required is that you identify and weigh up risks and take sensible precautions. However written risk assessments are useful tools to make sure that you have examined your activities carefully, and they provide proof – should you ever need it – that you are a safe and responsible instructor who takes reasonable precautions. It is strongly recommended that you produce written risk assessments.

## How do I assess “risk”?

There are generally five steps to performing a risk assessment:

- 1) Identify hazards
- 2) Decide who might be harmed and how
- 3) Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures

- 4) Record and implement your findings
- 5) Review at regular intervals.

Step 1: A hazard is “something with the potential to cause harm”. You can identify these by simple methods such as observing and analysing your venue and considering how and what you teach. It is often useful to break down hazards into categories such as environmental hazards; hazards from contact training; hazards from non-contact training; hazards from competition etc.

Step 2: Identify who could be harmed by these hazards, such as your students or members of the public

Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on control measures to protect people from harm as much as reasonably practical. For each hazard you should assign

- a likelihood score from 1-4 saying how likely the risk is to affect people (where 1 is highly unlikely, 2 is unlikely, 3 is likely and 4 is highly likely)
- a severity score from 1-4 saying how severe the outcome would be if someone was to be affected by the risk (where 1 is minor injury not requiring hospital treatment, 2 is minor injury possibly requiring hospital treatment, 3 is major injury requiring hospital treatment and 4 is life threatening)
- calculate an overall risk score by multiplying together the likelihood and severity score

Step 4: Record these risks, and use the risk score to determine what actions to implement (your “control measures”) in order to reduce the risk score. For any scores greater than 4 you should aim to enhance the control measures so that either the likelihood or the severity, or both, are reduced. Aim to reduce all risk scores so that they are at or below 4 to demonstrate that you have suitably mitigated risks for your activities. A rough guide to how to react to your risk scores is as follows:

- 1,2: No action required
- 3,4: Requires regular monitoring (approximately at monthly intervals)
- 6,8: Improve or increase control measures
- 9 or over: Immediately improve or increase control measures significantly

Step 5: Regularly review and update your risk assessments.

It is not necessary to assess hazards that are outside the control of the instructor or that they are not responsible for (e.g. the risk of a student getting into an automobile accident on the way to class).

The Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 says that the “significant findings of risk assessments should be recorded and that insignificant risks can be ignored.” Trivial risks and

concerns (essentially those with a likelihood or severity close to 0) do not need to be recorded. Examples of trivial risks might be: risk of students getting blisters (very low severity); risk of a terrorist attack on the venue (very low probability)

### **When do I create/update my risk assessments?**

You should create a new risk assessment for every new venue or different class you run. You should repeat each risk assessment every year, and review the situation approximately every month for changes.

### **The Example Risk Assessment**

The GBSF has produced a generic example risk assessment to help their instructors to create their own risk assessments. It is likely that most classes will have hazards or risks that are not covered. Instructors will need to alter the assessments to reflect this and introduce measures to control for any new risks that arise.

The GBSF assumes no responsibility for unidentified risks or inaccurately filled in risk assessments, **this is merely a tool to help you write your own risk assessments.**