

**ESSENTIAL  
STANDARD  
no.1**

# **Risk Assessment & Method Statements (RAMS)**

**Safe People  
Happy People  
Sustainable Business**

## KEY MESSAGES

- RAMS stands for Risk Assessment & Method Statement. Put simply, RAMS are a crucial health and safety document that highlights the safe way to complete a specific task
- Risk reduction should follow the hierarchy of control: Elimination, Substitution, Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls, PPE.
- RAMS must be specific to the location and activities involved.
- A risk assessment should focus on those hazards that have the potential to cause real harm.
- Communicate the RAMS to everyone involved in the activity and get them to sign a receipt of acknowledgment and understanding.
- The task-specific RAMS must be available at the point of work throughout the duration of the activity.
- **No RAMS = No Work!**

## 1. Introduction

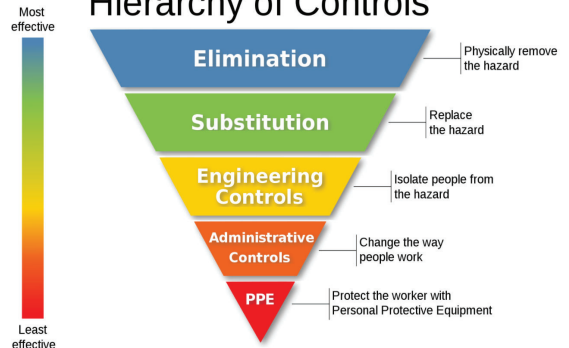
Risk assessments are a legal requirement that help reduce injuries and ill-health. An employer must:

- make a careful examination of what could cause harm to people in the workplace
- determine the likelihood of that harm occurring
- determine what steps to take, including necessary governance, to reduce the risks of injury and ill-health to an acceptable level

Poor risk management is currently the biggest root cause of all reportable incidents. We all have a moral and legal responsibility to reduce significant risks to as low as is reasonably practicable.

This essential standard defines the minimum requirements that Bridges and their sub-contractors should incorporate in their RAMS.

### Hierarchy of Controls



## 2. The Risk Assessment Process

You must follow several guidelines to make the risk assessment process effective:



Bridges

A company specific process/ procedure for managing risk must be in place



Review risk assessments regularly and adapt them as things change



Ensure that risk assessments are only written and authorised by competent people



Ensure risk assessments consider individual job tasks and are 'site specific'. The risk assessor must do a site visit to ensure that the physical environment is considered



Involve the workforce in the development of risk assessments, where appropriate

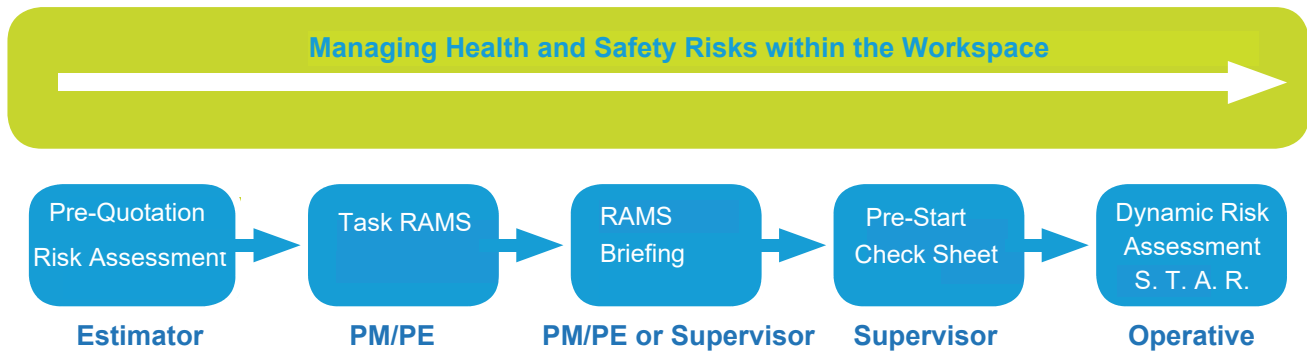


Use the 'Best Practice and Guidance' matrix in this standard for developing risk assessments and providing details about the process



Review Sub-Contractors risk assessments before work starts

Risk Assessment should follow this simple process:



### 3. Contents of a Risk Assessment

Refer to the HSE '5 steps to risk assessment' as guidance when developing a risk assessment:

[HSE Website Link](#)

#### Step 1: Identify the hazards

Focus on the significant hazards that are likely to cause harm (eg Working at Height, Electricity etc)

#### Step 2: Decide who might be harmed and how

Think about the most likely outcome of the hazard.

#### Step 3: Evaluate the risk and determine control measures (see Appendix)

Think about existing measures that are in place and identify any gaps. Remember that control measures identify the management actions that will ensure the work can be carried out safely and without risk.

#### Step 4: Record findings

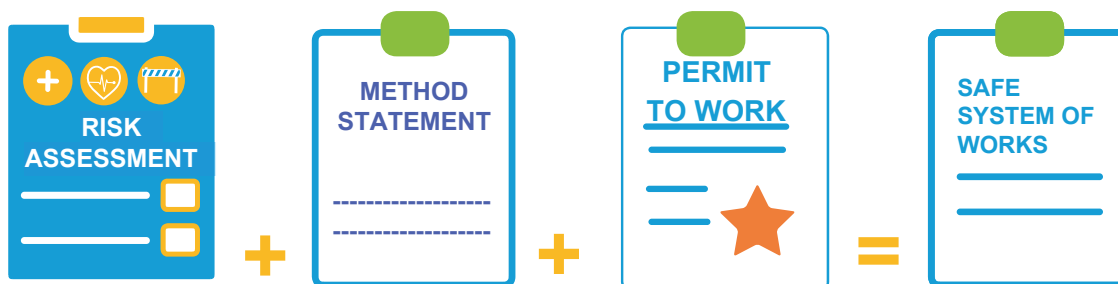
Try to avoid general statements such as 'all operatives to be trained' or 'barriers to be erected'.

#### Step 5: Review and update if necessary

Use active and reactive monitoring results to ensure that risk assessments continue to be relevant.

### 4. Method Statement & Permits

Supplement the risk assessment with a method statement and necessary permits to produce a complete **Safe System of Work (SSoW)**



Plan how the information in a method statement will be communicated to the person undertaking the work. Consider how much information they can reasonably be expected to retain. Method statements must therefore be concise, specific and focus on the key requirements needed to ensure that the work activity (task) can be carried out safely and without risk to health or safety.

## Method Statement

The Method Statement is intended to provide instruction to enable the safe and effective completion of task. The works are planned to be carried out by competent personnel. It is not appropriate to tell competent personnel about every aspect of the work. It is appropriate to provide a methodology to enable the works to be done safely and it is critical that significant risks are identified and either removed or mitigated. Identification and mitigation need to be relevant, clearly detailed and if appropriate reviewed by a suitably competent persons.

### Write a Site Attendance Risk Assessment and Method Statement

This document should cover the Site Rules, Standard Procedures i.e. use of steps & podiums etc and capture any client specific requirements. It should cover all of the appropriate information currently found at the start of (almost) every RAMS.

This information does not then need to be repeated in every subsequent RAMS, just ensure the attendance RAMS have been briefed and reference them. On long duration projects these should be re-briefed regularly.

These should also be in place where Bridges are PC, even if we are not carrying out any work.

### Write the specific task or area Risk Assessment and Method Statement

This may be for a complete job or area or it may be for a work type i.e.

**Complete job / area:** Inlet Works - Containment, Cabling, Glanding & Terminating

**Work Type:** GAC Building – Containment

This allows for those doing the work to sign up to documents that are relevant to the work they are doing. This is especially important on larger projects where for example cabling and containment may be completed by different personnel or teams. It also allows for a better review process as the work will be carried out at different times, for example this avoids installing cabling against a RAMS that is 3 months old because it was written at the start of the containment and hasn't been reviewed since

### Keep high risk works separate

If there is a confined space area on site then address that area in it's own right and don't have it lost in the main RAMS. Similarly work in a Hazardous Area would be kept separate as often these areas involve personnel with specific skill-sets and have specific controls. Again, these could be specific task or specific area – depends on the quantity and duration of the work. Anything out of the ordinary or requiring special planning, such as working around live supplies, night shutdown work or complex lifting activities should also have their own RAMS.

### Include photographs and drawings

These provide clarity for points of isolation, equipment identifications etc (a picture replaces a thousand words!)

### Utilise the Bridges Essential Standards

By reference or adding them as an appendix. The content does not need to be repeated in the RAMS, but it must be available at the point of work.

### Utilise the Bridges Electrical and Mechanical Safety Rules

By reference or adding as an appendix. Bridges personnel are competence tested and assessed against these rules and they have been approved by most of our significant clients so they should not need to be copied into the RAMS.

### Sub-Contractors

If task specific sub-contractors are engaged, then either look to make reference to their RAMS in the main text and attach their RAMS as appendices or use as a standalone document. If their RAMS don't include elements of our requirements i.e. what3words etc, then their RAMS should reference our site attendance RAMS. Do NOT make a sub-contractor's RAMS a Bridges RAMS.

### Testing & Commissioning

Keep testing and commissioning RAMS separate. This work invariably involves specific personnel and skill-sets, and it is not appropriate that they sign onto the installation RAMS and must wade through reams of information before they get to their specific instructions.

## CoSHH Data Sheets

The appropriate CoSHH data sheets must be available with the RAMS at the point of work. Where they are not available separately, they should be included as appendix to the RAMS.

## Consultation

It is wholly appropriate and must be encouraged that you discuss the work with the Supervisor or team carrying out the work, they may well be more experienced and practiced in the task than you. Don't be afraid to ask the SHEQ Team for help, 80% of their role is to provide guidance in completing the work safely.

## Peer/Subject Matter Expert Reviews

Formal peer reviews are required, they are intended to ensure key risks are not missed, they are not intended to be a nut and bolt assessment of the job. Reviews must be recorded on Form BHS-F-045 and this should be attached to the RAMS.

### Reviewers

For a standard installation it is more than reasonable for a competent person to complete the review i.e. a PE who is also a Gold Card Approved Electrician can review an electrical RAMS.

For complex or high-risk activities then it is appropriate that a Subject Matter Expert (SME) is engaged. Examples might include MCC isolation/energisation, working around Live Supplies, Hazardous Area working, Lifting, Pressure Testing, Confined Space Working etc.

### Subject Matter Expert (SME)

An SME is someone deemed competent and qualified and there are appointed personnel for activities such as Hazardous Area and Lifting. In other areas i.e. Confined Space, it may be appropriate for the Supervisor doing the work to review. The RAMS should have had a peer review before being passed to the SME for their review of the specific tasks.

SME reviews should be restricted to those areas of the document their guidance is required for. They are not required, or expected, to review the whole document. If there is a need for multiple SME reviews, then consideration should be given to a combined review to avoid multiple revisions.

## Permits to Work

A "permit to work" is a formal, documented procedure that authorises specific work to be carried out within a defined time frame and location, ensuring safety through a system of checks and risk assessments. It is important to decide and understand what permits are required to carryout the work safely.

These may be permits required from the client to allow access to, or isolation of process plant or they may be internal permits to permit others to carryout designated tasks.

### Competence to issue and receive permits

It is essential that those issuing permits and receiving them are competent to do so. By issuing a permit to work to others they are responsible for setting the precautions, procedures, and restrictions outlined in the permit and ensuring these are being followed.

By receiving a permit, they are confirming that they understand the precautions, procedures, and restrictions outlined in the permit and will abide by them.

### Hold Points

Where permits are required before work proceeds, these should be included in the Method Statement as **HOLD POINTS** and highlighted red. This is to designate that work must not proceed without the documented permit in place. **HOLD POINTS** can and should also be used where input from others is required, for example isolations etc or where a specific task is required before proceeding.

**Don't forget.... Carry out the risk assessment first, when you have identified the significant hazards, risks and mitigation you are able to write the method of doing the work!**

## 5. Task Specific Briefings

After evaluating hazards and risks for the project and environment (see Appendix) pay specific attention to the tasks at hand. Do a task specific RAMS briefing at the start of a shift or at the beginning of a new activity. This brings life to the Safe System of Work and makes it relevant to the people undertaking those specific tasks. A Safe System of Work Briefing describes the sequence and means of construction. It should include the following minimum elements:

- A brief description of the work to be undertaken; including a sketch if necessary
- A list of activity's or task specific risks
- The safety controls/measures in place to eliminate/reduce risk of injury
- Details of tools, specialist safety equipment, plant, materials and PPE to be used
- Details of environment (physical) factors (include photographs)
- Details of the required permits to work or authorisations
- Any contingency arrangements if they are required
- Any **Hold Points** required to meet specific limitations
- Details of the people involved in the work and confirmation that relevant information/instruction (including safety controls) have been satisfactorily communicated
- Names of people who are responsible for implementation and monitoring of the safe system of work and managing and communicating any changes in risks
- Provisions to monitor and review safe systems of work where appropriate



## 6. Communication and Instruction

Everyone involved in the activity must be briefed on the findings of the RAMS in a clear and concise manner so that they understand the key risks and controls. The person providing the briefing must describe the following:

- The key risks to health & safety
- What control measures have been put in place for worker protection & why
- What is required of them?

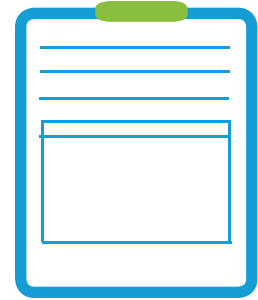
Make sure that the following information is recorded:

- Details of the risk assessment (reference name/number)
- The person giving the briefing
- Date of briefing
- Names of people being briefed
- Signatures of people being briefed for the first activity briefing or at the start of each week
- Signature of the manager/supervisor putting people to work for the first and each repeat daily briefing
- A declaration that workers understand the briefing content before the briefer signs to confirm that the brief has been carried out

**These should all be recorded on a briefing sheet attached to the RAMS**

## 7. Pre-Start Check Sheets

The Pre-Start check sheet is used to ensure the RAMS capture all the hazards associated with carrying out the task on the day and that the risks are mitigated with appropriate measures in place. It is also a place to record the daily PUWER checks on plant & tools prior to use. This may not be needed where a formal daily RAMS review and briefing is being recorded. PUWER checks can be recorded on standard CDM check sheets if this is the case.



## 8. Dynamic Risk Assessment – S T A R



Before commencing any activity, everyone is required to carry out a dynamic risk assessment of the task.

This involves **Stopping & Thinking** about who could be harmed by the activity & how, **Acting** to apply additional controls (if necessary) and **Reviewing** to ensure they are sufficient. If the additional controls are significant then they should be recorded on the risk assessment and made available for others benefit.



## 9. Monitoring

Supervisors should check work is proceeding in accordance with the RAMS. This is an essential part of any monitoring/inspection process. If you notice differences between agreed working methods and actual site practices, you should carry out an investigation to understand why and to implement actions to rectify them.

The following table provides the specific responsibilities for preparing and monitoring RAMS. It outlines the key competencies, procedural requirements and monitoring arrangements to ensure effective risk control.

**Senior Managers and Directors must provide visible leadership on site and be active in the review, checking and audit of RAMS as part of their routine monitoring activities.**

## 10. STOP

**STOP** if things change & re-evaluate. Unmanaged change is one of the most significant causes of incidents. If things change or a task is added, for example, pumping out a chamber to be able to continue work, then the RAMS must be amended and re-briefed. These amendments may require approval of the person who wrote the original RAMS and this should always be checked.

Remember everyone at Bridges is empowered to **STOP** work if they feel the task they are being asked to perform is unsafe.

If you are unhappy with the way you are being asked to work or feel unduly pressured, **STOP** and speak with your Manager or a member of the SHEQ Team.

You will be thanked for stopping as this may well prevent a serious incident.

## Risk Assessment Matrix

Perform an assessment of the Safety, Health and Welfare (SH&W) risks for all works to be done.

A risk assessment matrix will help in the decision making at every stage of the operation. This will ensure that the necessary controls and mitigation is in place before commencing work and allowing the plan to be executed safely on site.

0 - 5    =    Low risk		SEVERITY OF THE POTENTIAL INJURY/DAMAGE				
6 - 10    =    Moderate risk		Insignificant damage to property, equipment or minor injury	Non-reportable injury, minor loss of process or slight damage to property	Reportable injury, minor loss of process or limited damage to property	Major injury, single fatality critical loss of process/ damage to property	Multiple fatality catastrophic loss of business
11 - 15    =    High risk						
16 - 25    =    Extremely high unacceptable risk						
		1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood of the hazard happening	Almost certain 5	5	10	15	20	25
	Will probably occur 4	4	8	12	16	20
	Possible occur 3	3	6	9	12	15
	Remote possibility 2	2	4	6	8	10
	Extremely unlikely 1	1	2	3	4	5

## Example

Ref	Consideration	Hazard	Cause	Consequence	Uncontrolled Risk			Control Measures	Residual Risk		
					Likelihood	Severity	Risk		Likelihood	Severity	Risk
1	Slips, Trips & Falls	Slips, Trips & Falls	Untidy conditions Waste accumulation Lack of visibility Unsuitable storage of materials/tools Unaware of layout Slippery surfaces Build items around the workstation Cabling	Injury	5	3	15	All site staff and visitors, unless escorted by staff at all times, to be inducted, housekeeping to be included Place barriers around any unsafe obstacles Place barriers around openings All designated pathways to be kept free of tripping hazards and cables Clean up spillages immediately Outside walkways to be gritted in cold weather in winter Adequately illuminated pathways/walkways Where cables have to extend across footpath ensure they are protected by a cable protection strip Materials to be stored in designated areas and safely Work area to be kept tidy at all times Use of correct access / egress points No horseplay Packaging, cardboard boxes & waste materials removed to bins / skips	2	3	6
2	Waste Generation	Obstruction Environmental spill Untidy site	No bins / skips available Bins / Skips full, require exchanging	Contamination Slips, trips & falls Prosecution	4	3	12	Do not allow waste to accumulate No burning of waste Remove waste to designated skip / bin Tidy work area frequently, removing waste Do not allow bins / skips to overflow Segregate waste Ensure waste is transported by a licensed waste carrier to a licensed transfer station / recycling facility Waste transfer note in place	1	3	3



## Risk Assessment Best Practice and Guidance

Responsibility	Competence	Procedural Requirements	Monitoring Arrangements
<b>Manager/Supervisor</b>	<b>Mandatory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of company specific risk assessment processes</li> <li>Core safety training such as SMSTS, IOSH Managing Safely, or company equivalent</li> </ul> <b>Optional – Role Dependant</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervisory Leadership Training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit the location of work before preparing the RAMS Involve the workforce/site supervisor in preparation of the risk assessment</li> <li>Prepare site specific risk assessments</li> <li>Link to the method statement Use the relevant company templates to develop the risk assessment</li> <li>Communicate findings of the RAMS with everyone affected by the work at the place of work</li> <li>Ensures that the risk assessment and other relevant documents such as lift plans, are retained at the point of work</li> <li>Manage the changes to method or the work environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular inspections to ensure that site practices reflect the RAMS</li> <li>Regular reviews to ensure the continued effectiveness of the control measures</li> <li>Reviews to confirm the validity risk assessment and relevancy of control measures</li> <li>Record findings of inspections</li> <li>Ensure that any subcontractors are following these requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Others' input to risk assessment (Engineers, SHEQ Team etc.)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As for Manager/Supervisor above</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where possible visit the location</li> <li>prior to reviewing the risk assessment</li> <li>Verify that hazards are identified and suitably mitigated</li> <li>Where there is input from other personnel, risk assessments must be reviewed and signed off by a manager with authority to instruct work to proceed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out regular inspections to ensure that works are in accordance with the risk assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Supervisor on Site</b>	<b>Mandatory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge of company specific risk assessment processes</li> <li>Core safety training such as SSSTS or SMSTS</li> <li>Competence in the task</li> </ul>	<p>Ensure control measures are in place</p> <p>Ensure people engaged in work activities are competent</p> <p>Ensure all people involved in the task are briefed and understand the hazards and controls to be applied</p> <p>Ensure that a copy of the risk assessment and supporting documents are held at the place of work, including briefing record <b>Stop work</b> if control measures are not adequate/suitable</p> <p>Feedback proposed changes to a Manager/Supervisor for approval</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carry out regular inspections to ensure that works are in accordance with the risk assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Workforce</b>	<b>Mandatory</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CITB 2 day Safety Passport or equivalent</li> </ul> <b>Optional</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hazard recognition training</li> <li>Company specific risk assessment process training</li> <li>Toolbox talks, engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively contribute and provide feedback on risk assessment</li> <li>Cooperate and play a part in implementing controls and safe methods of work detailed in the risk assessment</li> <li>Undertake work in accordance with the RAMS</li> <li><b>Stop work</b> if this cannot be achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report any safety concerns or changes that may affect health and safety to the supervisor</li> </ul>