



**COURTENELL**  
Issue Number 71  
July 2007

Published bi-monthly

# Your Safety Matters

This information letter is distributed to those people who are ensuring that their workplace is safe and healthy. This includes members of OHS Committees, OHS Representatives, Safety Officers, Supervisors, Managers and Directors. "Your Safety Matters" (formerly "Committee Member") is free information letter which has been distributed since 1996.

## Risk Perception & Risk Assessment



When people assess a workplace risk it is not unusual to find that there is a variation in how each person perceives the risk. This difference in perception can result in different conclusions on how likely it is that an injury or illness will result from a hazard. Variations in risk perception can occur from things such as;



- incorrect or insufficient information
- previous trouble-free or unpleasant experience with this hazard
- the culture of their workplace or some other group they belong to
- publicity or the number of media reports about this hazard

So be sure you have reliable data about this hazard by:

**1. Considering and listing any factors that could contribute to the risk, eg.**

- length of time and frequency that persons are exposed to the risk
- the work premises & environment
- employee capability, skill, experience, and age
- the system of work that is used
- range of reasonably foreseeable conditions such as weather and staffing levels.

**2. Reviewing relevant health & safety information about this hazard from an authoritative source eg.**

- Safety Alert or Material Safety Data Sheet
- Code of Practice or Australian Standard
- statistics on health & environmental monitoring
- statistics on previous injuries, illness, and dangerous incidents.

**3. Consulting with anyone involved with the hazard.**

Now that you have reliable data;

- Decide how likely it is that someone will be injured or made ill.
- Decide how severe the injury or illness could be.

**RISK  
ASSESSMENT  
GRID**

What is the worst realistic result if there was an accident?	How likely is it that an accident will happen?			
	Very likely Could happen any time	Likely Could happen sometime	Unlikely Could happen but only rarely	Very unlikely Could happen but probably never will
Death	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Permanent disability, permanent ill health	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
Serious injury, serious illness, off work for 7 days or more	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
Injury or illness, less than 7 days off work	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
First-aid only	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>

The numbers show you how serious the risk is

*This publication provides general information about ohs. It is not a legal opinion and does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law to be applied to a particular problem.*