



COURTENELL

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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.

- Risks -



Risk as used in OHS means, " a measure of how likely it is that an injury or illness will result from a hazard". **But where did the word come from?** (Knowing the origin of a word and its journey to current day use often helps to make its meaning clearer.)

1. The most likely origin is the Latin word "riscus" meaning cliff.
2. From there it evolved into "risco", meaning "a steep rock".
3. It then moved into Spanish as "riesgo" and into Portugese as "risco".
4. England acquired the word **risk** when it had come to mean "sailing into uncharted waters"(then in the 18th century the French word "risque" moved into the English language meaning "a difficulty to avoid at sea").
5. **Risque** subsequently came to refer to a wide range of other situations involving uncertainty, in business, finance and life in general.
6. The modern English spelling is "risk" and the current meaning is "the possibility of suffering a harmful event".
7. So in OHS risk is now known as, " a measure of how likely it is that an injury or illness will result from a hazard".



We need to measure the "possibility" of harm so that we can eliminate or control the uncertainty that we may suffer a harmful event – and for that we can use a risk assessment grid such as the one below.

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	1	1	2	3
Permanent disability, permanent ill health	1	1	2	3
Serious injury, serious illness, off work for 7 days or more	1	2	3	4
Injury or illness, less than 7 days off work	2	3	4	5
First-aid only	3	4	5	6

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.