TOPIC ONE: CONDUCTING AN INFECTION CONTROL RISK AUDIT

The aims and objectives of this topic are to:

- state the rationale for conducting a risk audit
- detail the occasions when a risk audit should be conducted
- define the uses for risk audit data
- assign some priorities for controlling or eliminating risks
- conduct a risk audit assessment on own workplace to identify the need for additional policies and procedures
- write a brief risk audit report with recommendations for improved risk management
- follow a hazard and risk reporting system

Reading: (on your CD)

Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, QLD Risk Management Workbook. Step One – Getting Started. pages 6-8

Department of Training and Industrial Relations Queensland. *Risk Management Standard.*

Research assigned:

Firstly, go back and review the definitions of risk and hazard that you learned in OHS Level One. Use the self-assessment worksheets on pages 54-65 of the Risk Management workbook to plan how you would conduct a risk audit of your workplace. You will have to adapt this to Infection Control, so leave out any sections that are not directly relevant

Use the worksheets on page 33-48 of *the Risk Management Workbook* to do some preliminary research on Infection Control information you will need for developing a safety plan. This project is preparation work for the next topic where you will write work instructions and work procedures as part of your safety plan.

Assessment:

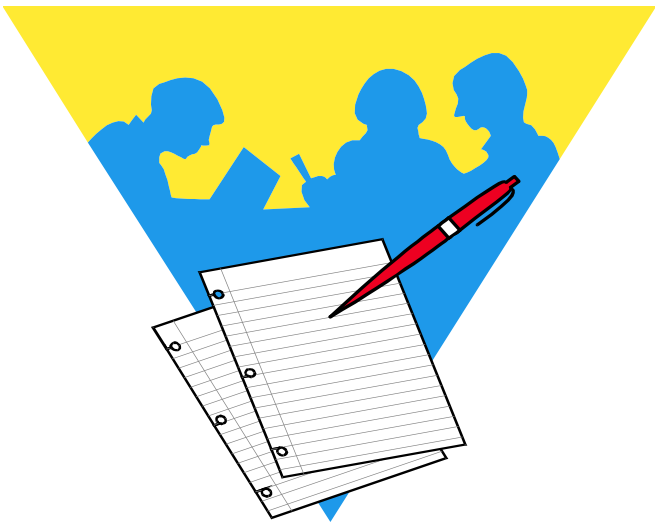
Please refer to your assessment manual for the assessments for this topic

WHY EVERY WORKPLACE SHOULD CONDUCT RISK AUDITS

In Level One you used a safety checklist to examine your workplace or clinic for safety hazards. This fulfils the requirements for good safety housekeeping.

A Risk Audit has a much larger scope. It is designed to look at all aspects of safety management in an organisation from planning right through to training. It specifically looks at how well (or if) your organisation complies with legislation, Codes of Practice or safety standards. It will examine:

1. Whether the organisation has policies and procedures and if these are communicated to staff
2. The degree of commitment of management to safety policies and procedures
3. Staff responsibilities and duty statements
4. General awareness of safety responsibilities
5. Staff performance reviews
6. The compliance of suppliers and sub-contractors with safety standards
7. The use of purchasing controls when buying equipment and supplies
8. Whether a safety group is mandatory or exists
9. Management strategies include hazard identification and control
10. Workers are trained in OHS policies and procedures
11. Health and safety information and instructions are provided to workers
12. A mechanism exists to keep management informed of OHS issues
13. Personal protective equipment and clothing is available and used properly
14. Record keeping systems exist to record incidents, accidents and worker's compensation records
15. Emergency planning takes place in order to train people in correct responses



USING THE RESULTS OF A RISK AUDIT

The main purpose of an audit is to find, and address, gaps in the management system. If your management system keeps no documentation (or most of it is in people's heads) there is no **audit trail** to follow and it is difficult to prove that anything actually exists. An audit trail is like a trail of paper breadcrumbs that allows you to retrace your steps until you find out where you took a wrong turning or where a significant event took place. Once you get to that place, you can look at it carefully to discover why things happened the way that they did and work out a strategy to save yourself.

Providing the **evidence** that things exist in real time is the whole point of quality assurance, which is what a risk audit is all about. Most people hate paperwork like the plague, but unless you keep good records of policies and procedures, minutes of staff and safety meetings and records of staff training, you may find yourself out on a limb if any claims are made against you for negligence or safety infringements. These records need not necessarily be bulky or complex if you are in a very small clinic, but they must be kept to satisfy State and National Laws. We will discuss record keeping in a later Topic. For now, we are concerned with using a Risk Audit as a means of improving safety management.

A Risk Audit is a useful way to discover the 'health' of the organisation and it's ability to respond correctly to events, accidents and incidents. Many lives are saved annually because people are trained in emergency responses, use protective equipment and clothing and take common-sense precautions to safeguard themselves and others around them. Your aim is to increase the level of compliance until you are satisfied that everything that can be done to provide a safe workplace is being done.

These are the stages and outcomes from conducting a risk audit.

Risk audit takes place	Risk audit finds out	Management responds by
The initial full audit takes place before developing a safety plan or other essential documents	Exactly what is missing from the management system and makes recommendations on how to address the non-compliances with standards, legislation or policies and procedures	Researching what is required for full compliance and ensuring that a development project is put in place to address the non-compliances. Priorities are assigned to the development process. Legislative non-compliances are generally addressed first. A risk assessment is used to assign priorities to other issues and they are often addressed in the following order: Those that will save lives and prevent serious injuries Those issues that ensure that all work is carried out safely and in compliance with regulations (on-job training) Those that will ensure that all staff know their rights and responsibilities (off-job training) Those issues that ensure that proper management and record keeping systems are implemented.

Risk audit takes place	Risk audit finds out	Management responds by
A review audit takes place when the organisation feels it has adequately addressed all the non-compliances revealed in the first audit.	The audit looks at areas where there were non-compliances and makes a decision on whether any further work is needed to bring the organisation up to standard	A comparison is made between the results of the primary audit and the review audit to measure how much improvement has been achieved. From this come recommendations for continuous quality improvement and the setting of review dates for future audits.
A secondary audit may take place in response to need for specific information on a narrow area of operation. It may address those areas where major non-compliances exist or in areas or functions where the highest rates of events, accidents and incidents occur. This type of audit may also take place as part of an accident or incident investigation in order to find out where the system failed.	This audit highlights exactly what is needed to improve the safety performance in one or two key areas. For example, a general rise in the level of violence in the community may force the organisation to examine its responses to workplace violence and psychological abuse.	Management assigns priorities to deal with the issues raised in accordance with risk assessments or recommendations from the audit or investigation team. Their primary objective in the wake of an accident is to find out why it has happened and to make sure that it never happens again.
An annual audit generally takes place close to the anniversary of the primary or initial audit.	The purpose of this audit is to ensure that all the policies, procedures and work instructions are still being implemented and followed as set out in previous recommendations, manuals and documentation.	Management receives reports on: Non-compliances discovered New recommendations for management action Areas or functions which arise because of changes in legislation or Codes of Practice The need for staff training to address safety in work practices or to disseminate new information on WHS

People generally baulk at doing audits because they feel this means they have to write bulky reports which no-one needs.

You will notice during this module that I am in the habit of using tables to condense and record the information I want to give to you.

So do many of the projects that you are given as assignments

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is all about protecting:

People: your staff and clients are the lifeblood of your business and your first responsibility is towards them.

Premises: without good care of your premises, the risk to your people can be much higher, so maintaining a safe workplace is part of your plan to protect your people.

Assets: the greatest threat to your financial security and assets is from litigation or by fines and workplace closures under WHS legislation.

Income: if your clients stay away because they feel unsafe in your workplace, your income will drop dramatically.

Goodwill: this is less easy to measure than money or asset statistics, however, public approval is won by presenting yourself and your workplace in the best possible light, and this means being spotlessly clean, scrupulous in your housekeeping habits and to be seen to take a professional attitude to client and workplace safety.

The aim of every manager or employer should be:

identify hazards: by conducting regular safety checks and risk audits

assess risks: by evaluating the probable and potential sources of accidents

minimise and control risks: by developing a safety plan and initiating a control hierarchy

Full control is implemented by:

Assigning priorities (sometimes known as the Control Hierarchy):

1. Eliminate the hazard
2. Substitute a less hazardous process or isolate the problem
3. Assign control solutions for hazards that cannot be completely eliminated

Response initiated	Defined event	Action required
Elimination, substitution or isolation of the hazard:	Worn power lead: eliminate	Replacement of lead or equipment eliminates the electrocution hazard
	Heavy waste bins: substitute	Substituting wheelie bins for old bins significantly reduces likelihood of manual handling hazards
	Wet floors: isolate	Use witches hats and signs to keep people away from slip hazards

Assigning control solutions:

Engineering and process solutions

Instituting safe work practices

Ensuring that people use personal protection clothing and equipment

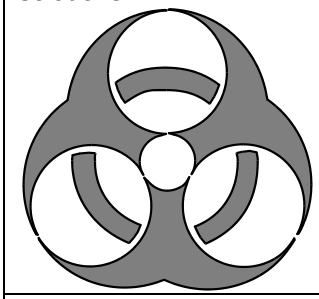
Developing and using safety and emergency procedures

Installing safety and emergency equipment and ensuring that it is kept in good working order

Using purchasing controls to ensure that you only buy what is safe to use and handle

Training staff and colleagues in all aspects of Workplace Health and Safety

Hazard response strategies:

Response initiated	Defined event	Action required
Engineering and process solutions 	Needle stick injuries	Ensuring that the correct disposal units are available in every treatment area
	Infections from contaminated wastes	Installing chemical biohazard disposal units
	Waste management	Having procedures for the handling and disposal of wastes
	Infection control	Training people in common sense precautions to avoid cross-infection
	Sharps	Training people in safe handling and using special disposal units
Personal protection equipment	Biohazards	Using disposable gloves, gowns and/or aprons to install a protection barrier
	Particles or substances in eyes	Using safety glasses or goggles in processes that involve dust, splashes or airborne grit
Safety and emergency procedures	Medical emergencies	Having a first aid officer and training staff in Doctor ABC
Safety and emergency equipment	Electrocution	Installing safety cut-out switches and power surge protectors
	Fire	Providing fire extinguishers and fire blankets and training people in their use
	Moving parts	Ensuring that all moving parts are shielded and that emergency stop switches are installed
Purchasing solutions	All eventualities	It is your legal responsibility only to buy equipment and consumables which carry the prescribed safety warnings, proper use and maintenance instructions, and to train people in the correct use of all equipment and consumables
Training 	Your workplace is only as safe as the awareness level of the people who work in it	Your Duty of Care requires that you instruct others how to work safely, involve them in the hazard identification process and educate them in ways to maintain good personal hygiene and health standards if necessary

ASSIGNMENT/ASSESSMENT RECORD

Student Name:	
Student Number:	
Assessor:	

Address:

Postcode:	
Telephone:	
Fax:	
e-mail:	

Topic:	Assignments/Assessments	Date	Pass
One: Risk management	1A. Hazard checklist		
	1B: Hazard report		
	2A: Risk Control analysis		
	2B. Risk Management matrix		
	3. Investigating accidents and incidents		
	4. Dealing with a critical incident		

Assessor's comments:

Assessor Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Sign-off date: _____

Assessment One A Assessing your workplace for potential IC hazards

Take this checklist and look at the conditions of your clinic or workplace. How safe is it?

Each item will require check boxes or points for P (Pass); F (Fail); (M) Maintenance required; IN (Improvement needed) C (Comments)

Housekeeping:

	P	F	M	IN	Comment
Clean up done regularly	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Waste removed nightly	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Sanitary condition	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Reception area clean and tidy	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Treatment rooms cleaned	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Offices clean and tidy	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Washrooms cleaned	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Lunchroom cleaned	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Treatment area					
Linen trolley made up/covered	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Equip.. trolley made up/covered	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Sterile. kit/autoclave prepared	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Spills kit ready-to-use	☐	☐	☐	☐	

	P	F	M	IN	Comment
Protective clothing/gloves	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Waste bins ready-to-use	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Materials storage and handling

Biohazards identified	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Chemicals labelling/storage	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Medicinals labelling/storage	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Store room	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Refrigerated stock	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Lifting and handling equipment	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Back care observed	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Environment

Air conditioning	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Heating	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Noise control	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Light control	☐	☐	☐	☐	
Space/workstations	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Assessment One B: Summary report

Take the results of your hazard checklist and make out a simple report for the workplace health and safety files. This file can also be given out to team members or in committee meetings.

These items pose high risk or require action to comply with legislation or Codes of Practice:

Item	Comment

These items are extremely low risk or low incidence and risk can be shared or not acted upon:

Item	Comment

These items require policies and procedures:

Item	Comment

These items require a budget allocation:

Item	Comment

These items require staff training:

Item	Comment