

# Risk Management Assessment

## Introduction

Many of the tasks performed by Building with Heart personnel are potentially dangerous if not done thoughtfully and according to safe practices. As part of the Building with Heart management team, it is essential that you understand potential risks so that you can constantly be vigilant and identify ways to improve safety.

While Building with Heart provides extensive documentation and standards[[1]](#footnote-1) for running home construction, recycling, and HouSalvage store operations, Leslie Oakes, author of *Risk Management for Nonprofits* states that you should “periodically perform the risk assessment process in your own operation to identify any special risks your operation may be exposed to, as well as any steps you can take to avoid or mitigate those risks.” (2009)

For a summary of various types of risks that the organization might face, refer to [Types of Risks](Types%20of%20Risks.docx).

For any questions on legal risks, contact [Daniel Kaffee](mailto:dan@bwhgreene.org?subject=Question%20about%20Legal%20Risks) in BWH’s legal department.

## Risk Assessment

Figure : The Risk Assessment Cycle (The Nonprofit Managers Group, 2001)

Perform these steps[[2]](#endnote-1) to perform your own risk assessment:

1. Identify potential hazards:
   1. Refer to existing BWH documentation for help identifying where hazards might exist.
   2. Walk around your operation and carefully observe operations. Make note of anything that might pose a risk. Document your findings in a Risk Management Table, as on shown on page 3.
   3. Talk to your staff and solicit their input on health and safety issues.
   4. Review the accident log to identify previous problems.
2. Write a list identifying who might be harmed by each hazard, and how they might be harmed.
3. For each hazard, write down what controls, if any, are in place to manage the hazard, note any that you deem inadequate, and indicate what else you might do to control the risk.
4. Share your findings with your staff, and discuss them. Make sure that each improvement you identify is implemented.
5. Review and update the risk assessment on a regular basis—at least once a year and as follow-up to any health or safety incidents.

Table : Risk Management Table (Katz, 2001)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hazard | Harm Caused | Current Controls |
| Electrical shocks or burns | Staff could experience electrical shocks or burns from faulty or improperly used electrical devices | * Staff are trained on proper use of electrical devices * Staff are trained to identify and report to manager faulty plugs, outlets, cable, and switches * Staff know where the fuse box is located and are trained to safely turn off electrical power in an emergency * Only staff who have been trained and evaluated by the manager may carry out minor repairs * The fuse box area is kept clean and free of clutter * A qualified electrician inspects the building wiring and electrical service every year * Staff is trained to inspect and test electrical devices |
| Falling from a height | Falling from high locations can result in staff wounds, bruises, fractures | * Strong stepladders in good condition are provided in all areas where climbing is required * All staff are trained on stepladder and climbing safety * Staff required to perform a pre-use check * Only managers are allowed to use stepladders |
| Falling objects | Staff and customers may be crushed or suffer impact injuries as a result of inventory, building parts, and other objects falling on them | * Storage areas are designed to keep heavy or dangerous items low * Shelves and displays are securely fixed to walls, stocked in a safe manner to ensure stability * Staff are trained in proper stacking and shelving procedures |
| Fire | Staff caught in a fire could be burned or suffer inhalation injuries or death | * Staff are trained on fire safety and exit procedures * Exit procedures are defined and approved by the safety board |
| Hazardous materials | Cleaning fluids, finishes, strippers, and other chemicals may cause skin irritation or eye damage from direct contact. Vapors may cause breathing problems. | * Mops, brushes and strong rubber gloves are provided. Staff is required and trained to use them * Staff are trained on safe use of chemicals, to follow instructions on the label, dilute properly, and never transfer to an unmarked container * Dangerous chemicals are replaced with safer alternatives whenever possible |
| Injuries from processing donations | Staff may suffer injuries such as cuts, puncture wounds, broken bones, exposure to toxic fumes, etc. when pulling nails, cleaning up house parts, etc. Also may suffer from repetitive stress injury. | * Provide good supply of suitable protective gloves, hard hats, and eye protection and require staff always wear them on the job * Train staff to screen for any sharp objects or dangerous situations before beginning any task * Require staff work in teams of two or more to provide double-checks and emergency help, if needed |
| Overexertion | Staff may suffer injury to back or other parts of the body from handling heavy and/or bulky  objects, or employing poor posture | * Staff are trained on proper lifting, posture, and other techniques * Hand trucks, chain lifts, and other transport devices are provided, and staff are trained on their proper use * Storage areas are designed to minimize lifting of heavy or dangerous items * Hallways are kept clear and proper clearance is provided between racks |
| Slips, trips, and falls | Staff may suffer cuts, sprains, fractures, or bruising if they trip over  objects, such as stock, or  slip and fall | * Wet floor warning signs are provided and staff trained on using and respecting them * Floors are mopped after all other staff and customers are gone * Staff are required and trained to clean and organize as they work * Door mats are provided at the entrance in wet weather * Floors are kept in good condition and periodically reviewed * Uneven floor areas and doorways are marked or cordoned off until repaired * Quality lighting is provided in all areas * Staff are required to wear specific types of work shoes * Ceiling cableways are provided for all extension cords and outlets and staff are forbidden from leaving cables on the floor * Cordless tools are used whenever possible |
| Parking lot traffic | Staff and customers may be injured by vehicles entering or leaving the parking lot and loading dock area | * Pedestrian areas are separated from parking areas by medians and barriers * Staff are trained not to enter the parking lot or use it to walk between buildings or storage areas |
| Pinch points | Staff and customers may be injured by pinching fingers, toes, and other body parts in doors, materials, tools, etc. | * Staff are required to wear safety gear, including steel-toed shoes, work clothing, and protective gloves * As much as possible, buildings are designed to prevent access to pinch points * Staff are trained on safety procedures to avoid pinch points |
| Violence and threatening behavior from other staff, customers, or other members of the public | Staff and customers may be victim to violence and threatening behavior from other staff, customers, or members of the public | * Staff are trained not to resist a robbery * Two managers are always on duty * Staff are trained not to confront customers * Staff report any incidents of abuse to manager for discussion and support * A panic button and audio/video monitoring equipment are constantly active and monitored by the back room staff |

# Bibliography

Katz, L. (2001). Risk Management. *Nonprofit Managers Journal*.

Oakes, L. (2009). *Risk Management for Nonprofits.* Chicago: Top Shelf Publishing.

The Nonprofit Group. (2012). *Risk Assessment Cycle.* Greene City: NG Press.

The Nonprofit Managers Group. (2001). *Risk Management.* Greene City: NPMG Press.

1. Refer to the manuals in the main office, also available online at www.bwhgreene.org/standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Process adapted from the article "Risk Management" by Lionel Katz, Nonprofit Managers Journal, 2001. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)