
Assessing the risk of stress in the workplace



This guidance will cover...

- What is a stress risk assessment?
- What does risk mean?
- What are control measures?
- What measures can I implement?
- How do I interpret results?
- What are reasonable adjustments?
- How to store and review completed stress risk assessments
- What support services are available, and how do I access them?



Network Rail's vision for employee wellbeing



“we want our people to feel positive, have a sense of purpose and be able to handle every day pressures”

-  Network Rail commitments
-  Individual responsibilities
-  Organisational benefits



Key points of the stress risk standard

- It provides an effective and consistent process with guidance for line managers on how Network Rail manages the risk of work related stress
- The tool is designed to assess and mitigate the risk of workplace stress occurring and helps mitigate the risk of continued harm due to workplace stress
- It acts as a control measure that manages risk of stress in workplace to protect the health and wellbeing of employees
- The risk score enables the right level of intervention to be put in place for the employee.
- We are legally compliant with the principles of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Management Standards for Work Related Stress

The Standard **does not:**
address the implications of personal stress or apply to contractors working for Network Rail



When should I use the assessment?

- If the line manager suspects a team member is under excessive workplace pressure
- If the line manager is made aware that an employee is experiencing excessive workplace pressure
- As part of a return to work process following any absence relating to stress
- If an employee discloses that they believe they are being affected by workplace pressure of stress
- If the outcome of a stress assessment reveals personal related stress – refer to Validium EAP, NHS IAPT, Mental Health Charities, Internal support groups/D&I/Wellbeing Champions

The Standard **does not**:
address the implications of personal stress or apply to contractors working for Network Rail



Preparing for an assessment meeting

- Meetings should take place in a room or quiet private space
- Give employee/team members prior notice of the intention to carry out an assessment
- Employees must agree to the assessment being carried out
- If an employee does not agree undergo the assessment, you should consider:
 - Offering a colleague to accompany them
 - Offer an alternative manager to carry out the assessment
 - If this is unsuccessful; seek support from HR Direct
- If the assessment is still refused– the manager should record the employees refusal i.e. in writing to employee by email and a copy should be recorded on the HR direct case file and/or employee record.

Support can only be made based on what the line manager/or person carrying out the assessment is aware of.



Preparing an employee for an assessment

- Discuss with the employee the reason for carrying out the assessment and explain how it will be used i.e. understand level of pressure they are under and identify support measures required
- Explain that it is confidential and how it will be stored i.e. on their employee file
- Advise that they will receive a copy of the assessment
- Employee can have a colleague or Trade Union rep accompany them for the assessment



What does the assessment include?

Section	Headings to be Completed
<p>Page 1 Stress Risk Assessment Form Front page</p>	<p>Subject of Risk Assessment – (Team/Individual) Number of Employees – (number or persons being assessed) Reason or Trigger for Risk Assessment – (initial issue raised) Current Control Measures – (What is already in place)</p>
<p>Page 2-5 6 Essential Factors of Workplace Pressure</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Control 2. Job Security and Change 3. Balance Workload 4. Job Conditions 5. Resources and Communications 6. Work Relationships
<p>Page 6 Report</p>	<p>Risk Score Risk Management Decision Comments to Justify Decision Make an action plan</p>



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Workplace pressures controls

Workplace Pressure	Definition
Control	Limitations on how the job is done/or freedom to make decisions
Job security	Pressure from change and uncertainty about the future
Balance workload	Peaks and troughs in workload, difficult deadlines, unsocial hours, work-life balance challenges
Job conditions	Pressure from working conditions/ environment/culture/pay and benefits
Resources and communications	Pressure from lack of resources or access to information or communication (in/out)
Work relationships	High pressure relationships from colleagues, customers or managers



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Additional control measures

Additional questions help identify any missing control measures that are not in place.

(Some questions may not be relevant. Additional controls can be added if appropriate)

Control measures help to:

- reduce identified risks
- identify measures of control that are not in place
- consult the employee or team members as part of the process of assessment
- consider controls listed and/or establish new control measures
- decide and agree on the most appropriate controls to put in place



What is the definition of risk?

Severity Score = Severity of the potential stress/harm posed as a result of pressure

Likelihood Score = Likelihood of Risk Happening or not

$$\begin{array}{c} \text{Overall Risk} = \\ \text{Severity of Harm (i.e. Pressure)} \\ \times \\ \text{Likelihood of occurrence (i.e. of Stress)} \end{array}$$

Refer to Overall Risk Table



Scoring the assessment - Likelihood

Score	Situation	Output
Score 1: <u>'Remote'</u> -	There is very little or no risk of the pressure causing harm/stress. All reasonable precautions have been taken.	No Action - No immediate risk
Score 2: <u>'Unlikely'</u>	Potential risk of pressure causing harm/ stress. Risk is minimal and the probability is still low.	Minimal risk of harm/ongoing stress – immediate intervention–consider ways to omit potential risk
Score 3: <u>'Possible'</u>	Possible risk that pressure causes harm/ongoing stress. If additional factors contribute to it, but it is unlikely to happen without them.	Possible harm/ stress – (possible risk imminent) immediate intervention - discuss ways to omit immediate risk plan put in place
Score 4: <u>'Likely'</u>	Current or ongoing pressure will likely cause harm/stress. If additional factors contribute to it will cause further harm/stress	Likely harm/stress - (Current risk and ongoing risk) intervention needs more structured approach – remove immediate risk that can be omitted –plan put in place
Score 5: <u>'Almost Certain'</u>	It will almost certainly cause further mental distress and employees/team could be injured or cause injury due to work related stress.	Highly likely or Evident harm/stress - (high risk of stress/harm) immediate intervention required– remove immediate risk that can be omitted –make referral - plan put in place



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Scoring the assessment - Severity

Score	Situation	Output
Score 1: <u>'Insignificant'</u>	This is based on existing evidence. This can include one off situations and short term stress not requiring medical intervention.	Monitor and Review- no more than 6 months
Score 2: <u>'Minor'</u>	There are some concerns displayed over a period of time, but they are minor.	Maintain Situation: – mitigate risk by managing issues. Support is given by line manager and work colleagues. Consider: EAP
Score 3: <u>'Moderate'</u>	Stress displayed could follow extreme pressure, a traumatic work situation or occur over a longer period of time. It can potentially, cause ill health and might require intervention. Can lead to a “severe”.	Manage Solutions – Look at immediate solutions. Consider: Occupational Health Referral/EAP
Score 4: <u>'Severe'</u>	Likely result of a excessive pressure causing stress related illness causing incapacity to work and requiring medical intervention.	Intervention Required – Reasonable adjustments advised. Consider: Occupational Health Referral/EAP (advise OH Manager)
Score 5: <u>'Extreme'</u>	Likely Stress related ill health that is extreme and leads to long term/ongoing or permanent incapacity to work in the same way as before or work at all.	Immediate Intervention Required – Occupational Health Referral – Offer EAP and See TRIM* Standards and (advise OH Manager)

- *Trauma Risk: Result of one off event/or continued events –may lead to PTSD
- If Bullying / Harrassment refer to Policy and guidance also



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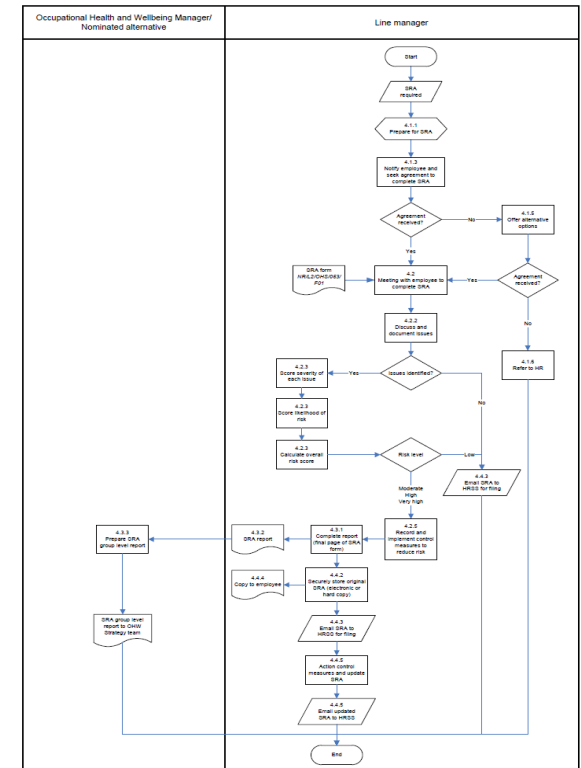
The Results.. $Severity \times Likelihood = Risk \text{ level}$

Score	Output	Action
LOW 1 – 3	Acceptable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action required. Review and monitor to ensure any controls in place are maintained and the situation does not change.
MODERATE 4-6	Requires some action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make effort to work together to find solutions to reduce the risk. Ensure any changes are carefully measured and are kept to a low or moderate level. Share findings with local OH Manager
HIGH 8-12	Requires Immediate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods to reduce risks should be implemented immediately. Consider restricting activity until control measures are implemented. Ensure control measures are maintained and reviewed regularly. Refer employees to the occupational health provider within two working weeks to avoid unnecessary prolonging or worsening of their condition. Immediate medical referral and inform employee of reasons Inform local OH Manager of results
VERY HIGH 15 or above	Intolerable, requires immediate action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial improvements of risk control measures are necessary to ensure risk is reduced to a low or moderate level. Activities should be stopped until controls are in place and carefully monitored once implemented. Refer employees to the occupational health provider within two working weeks to avoid unnecessary prolonging or worsening of their condition. Immediate medical referral and inform employee of reasons Inform local OH Manager of results



Next steps: Actions

- Decide 'what' actions should be taken and 'why' - consider the output and its benefit
- Confirm 'who' will be responsible for 'what'
- Confirm 'when' and 'which' actions will be taken - Clear timescales should be given
- Confirm if a medical referral is to be arranged with occupational health
- Arrange 'when' the review meetings will take place and provide the 1st meeting date
- Discuss 'what' adjustments can be made immediately i.e. flexible working or workload adjustments and that further adjustments can be made pending medical referral and advice



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Reasonable adjustments: Legislation

A reasonable adjustment helps remove the barriers an employee faces to staying employed as such it enables employees to continue their job with the required support and interventions. Disability also includes mental health conditions.

The Equality Act 2010 requires Network Rail to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and disabled employees who are:

- continuing to work
- Being promoted
- redeployed
- seconded

Reasonable adjustments will be required where a physical feature, provision, criterion or practice puts someone with a disability at a substantial disadvantage.

It would be seen as discriminatory to refuse to consider or make reasonable adjustments which would allow a disabled applicant to work for Network Rail or a disabled employee to return to work and/or continue to work at Network Rail.

Refer to the “Reasonable Adjustments” policy for guidance

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace



HSE guidelines: Key steps to planning adjustments

- Consider the needs of the employee and what they can do
- Assess possible obstacles to the employee's ability to work or return to work
- Consider what adjustments are needed to overcome these obstacles
- Review health and safety risk assessments in the light of the proposed adjustments
- Review how well the adjustments work
- Seek professional advice, where necessary, to help you make informed decisions



Storing stress risk assessments

- Employees should be given a copy of their stress risk assessment
- File the stress risk assessment:
 - hard copy in a locked secure cabinet that has restricted access* or:
 - File electronic copy in a restricted folder* and:
 - Upload electronically completed documents to HRSS for the employees personal file*; EmployeeRecords@networkrail.co.uk

Team risk assessments should remain accessible to all team members

Individual copies to be stored as noted

Health & Wellbeing – Stress in the workplace

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Stress Risk Assessment Form

Subject of Risk Assessment; Team / Individual (delete as appropriate) Number of Employees

Insert name of individual or team Insert the number of employees in attendance

Reason or Trigger for Risk Assessment

Add a brief description indicating why the stress risk assessment is being completed, for example: Return to work after stress related absence, Employee informed you that they had been suffering with symptoms of stress or workplace pressures.

Current Control Measures

Control measures can be preventative (prevent workplace pressure or hazards happening in the first instance) or protective (protect employees from existing workplace pressure or hazards). It is therefore, important that all measures in place are listed here to show what is already being done, for example: Hold regular meetings with the employees to discuss performance and offer further support if necessary. Have sign posted employee to higher SIP and given them details of the health and wellbeing portal and tasked them with looking at resilience information before next meeting. Employee is due to start a training course next week to ensure skills are up to date.

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Reviewing your risk assessment

Remember: people and workplaces rarely stay the same....

- Have there been any significant changes?
- Are there improvements you still need to make?
- Does the intervention need to change- is it still current/applicable?
- Has your team/employees spotted a problem?
- Is there a new situation?
- Have you learnt anything from the situations/incidents/near misses – what have you done to mitigate this risk going forward?

Good practice: carry out a stress risk assessment on your team annually to measure if interventions you have put in have actually worked or may need to change because the workplace has changed

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Reviewing your risk assessment


- Assessing the risk of Stress is a 'legal' requirement
- Record the 'significant' findings
- 'Prioritise' risks and deal with most 'serious' risks first
- Always keep stress risk assessments up to date by reviewing them
- File the risk assessment - it is evidence that a risk assessment has been done with relevant steps in place
- Advise Occupational Health and Wellbeing Managers (Routes) of high risk cases
- Open a case file with HR Direct for continued case management


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Level 2
Business process
 Assessing risk of stress in the workplace


Endorsement and Authorisation

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Remember...

Safety is not an absence of risk.

**Instead, safety is matching the
level of risk to personal
wellbeing.**

The Council of Quality and Leadership, USA

