

# Example risk assessment for contract bricklayers

## Setting the scene

**The manager of a successful bricklaying contractor, with help from worker representatives, carried out a general risk assessment that covered their typical work. This assessment was used when tendering for contracts to demonstrate the firm's approach to health and safety. In the tender documents the manager was clear about what was needed from the principal contractor to do the job safely and properly.**

**The firm won a bricklaying contract for a development of three-storey flats. Work was due to start on 1 May 2006. The manager checked the construction phase plan and met the principal contractor's site manager on the site. This extra information was used to amend the general assessment so that it was specific to the work and conditions.**

## How was the risk assessment done?

The manager followed the guidance in *Five steps to risk assessment* ([www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf)).

- 1 To identify the hazards, the manager:
  - read HSE's construction web pages and HSE's publication HSG150 *Health and safety in construction* (available from HSE Books, [www.hsebooks.com](http://www.hsebooks.com));
  - checked the manufacturers' instructions for tools/machinery and the data sheet for mortar;

- thought about the work seen on sites; and
- talked to employees to help identify the significant hazards and particular work practices.
- 2 The manager then wrote down who could be harmed by the hazards and how.
- 3 For each hazard identified, the manager recorded what controls, if any, were in place to manage these hazards. These controls were then compared to the good practice guidance laid out in the manufacturers' instructions or the data sheets, *Health and safety in construction*, *Essentials of health and safety at work* publications and the HSE construction web pages. Where existing controls did not meet good practice the manager wrote down what further actions were needed to manage the risk.
- 4 Putting the findings of the risk assessment into practice, the manager decided and recorded who was responsible for implementing the further actions and when they should be done. When each action was completed it was ticked off and the date was recorded.
- 5 The manager decided that for each new site it was important to make sure the assessment was suitable and amend it depending on the particular work and conditions. A review and update of the general risk assessment would be made each year and staff would learn from the work on different sites.

## How was the site-specific risk assessment done?

- 1 To turn the general risk assessment into a site-specific assessment the manager checked the following had been identified:
  - the right hazards;
  - who might be harmed and how;
  - controls that would need to be taken on this particular site; and
  - who would be responsible for putting the controls into practice and when.
- 2 The manager did this by:
  - checking the construction phase plan for the site.
  - looking at the general layout of the site as well as what materials were to be used (in particular what weight of blocks and lintels), what equipment and plant would be needed, and what general rules would need to be followed;
  - visiting the site; and
  - discussing the work and the site conditions and general rules with the principal contractor's site manager.
- 3 The manager made the supervisor responsible for briefing the bricklayers about the site rules on their first day.

Company name: TWW Contract Bricklayers

Date of risk assessment: 6/3/2006

### Important reminder

This example risk assessment shows the kind of approach a small business might take. Use it as a guide to think through some of the hazards in your business and the steps you need to take to control the risks. Please note that it is not a generic risk assessment that you can just put your company name on and adopt wholesale without any thought. This would not satisfy the law – and would not be effective in protecting people.

Every business is different – you need to think through the hazards and controls required in your business for yourself.

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
Falling from height	Serious injury or even fatal injury could occur if a worker falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Agree scaffolding requirements at contract stage, including appropriate load rating and provision of loading bays.</li> <li>■ Bricklayers' supervisor to check with the site manager that the correct scaffold is provided and inspected.</li> <li>■ Workers instructed not to interfere with or misuse scaffold – supervisor to keep an eye out for problems.</li> <li>■ Ladders in good condition, adequately secured (lashed) and placed on firm surface.</li> <li>■ Band stands with handrails to be used for work on internal walls.</li> <li>■ Workers trained to put up bandstands.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Scaffold requirements agreed, including loading bays and appropriate load rating.</li> </ul>	TB	20/3/06	20/3/06
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to speak regularly to site manager to arrange scaffold alterations and ensure that weekly inspections have been carried out.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	
Collapse of scaffold	All operatives on scaffold may incur crush injuries, or worse, if the scaffold collapses on top of them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Agree scaffolding requirements at contract stage, including appropriate load rating and provision of loading bays.</li> <li>■ Bricklayers' supervisor to check with the site manager that the correct scaffold is provided and inspected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to keep a check to make sure that scaffold is not overloaded with materials.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	
Falling objects hitting head or body, including feet	Serious head and other injuries to workers, others on site and members of the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Brick guards kept in position on scaffold lifts.</li> <li>■ Waste materials removed from scaffolding and placed in skip.</li> <li>■ Safety helmets and protective footwear (with steel toecaps and mid-soles) supplied and worn at all times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to monitor use of safety hats and protective footwear.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
<b>Manual handling</b>	All workers could suffer from back injury and long-term pain if regularly lifting/carrying heavy or awkward objects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bricks, mortar etc to be transported and lifted to scaffold using telehandler provided by principal contractor.</li> <li>■ Provision of lifting bay agreed with principal contractor.</li> <li>■ Bricks/blocks to be covered with tarpaulin when stored on site to prevent taking up water.</li> <li>■ Spot boards to be raised with blocks to easy working height.</li> <li>■ Trolley to be used for moving loads of bricks around the scaffold lift.</li> <li>■ Check at tender stage for any blocks or lintels over 20 kg and make arrangements.</li> </ul>	■ Heaviest blocks are 15 kg, no special arrangements necessary.	VP	From 1/5/06	
			■ Concrete lintels are well over 20 kg, to be positioned using telehandler (all are accessible).	VP	From 1/5/06	
			■ All workers to be instructed not to carry materials up by hand.	LG	From 1/5/06	
<b>Workers struck or crushed by moving vehicles on site</b>	Workers could suffer serious or even fatal injuries from vehicles and machines on site – particularly when reversing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Manager to agree safe route to work area with principal contractor based upon the construction phase health and safety plan.</li> <li>■ Induction to each site to be carried out for all workers on first day.</li> </ul>	■ Safe route agreed with principal contractor	TB	20/3/06	20/3/06
			■ Supervisor to liaise with site manager to ensure safe route stays clear.	LG	From 1/5/06	
			■ Instruct staff that they must never drive vehicles and plant on this site.	LG	From 1/5/06	
			■ High-visibility vests to be provided.	LG	From 1/5/06	
			■ Supervisor to check vests are worn on all sites where the principal contractor requires them.	LG	From 1/5/06	
<b>Slips and trips</b>	All workers may suffer sprains or fractures if they trip over waste including brick bands and pallet debris. Slips at height could result in a serious fall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Good housekeeping maintained at all times.</li> <li>■ Waste including brick bands and pallet debris disposed of in skip.</li> <li>■ Safety footwear provided to all workers.</li> <li>■ Safe route to workplace agreed with principal contractor based on construction phase health and safety plan.</li> </ul>	■ Temporary storage locations to be agreed with site manager.	TB	20/2/06	20/3/06
			■ Supervisor to ensure that workers wear safety footwear whenever on site.	LG	From 1/5/06	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
<b>Stepping on nails and sharp objects</b>	All workers could suffer foot injuries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Safety boots with steel toecaps and mid-soles provided to all workers.</li> <li>■ Waste disposed of in skips.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Explain the need to wear safety boots and dispose of waste in skips – repeat annually.</li> </ul>	LG	1/5/06	1/5/06
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to check that safety boots are always worn and waste disposed of properly.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	
<b>Hazard to eyes, cutting bricks</b>	Bricklayers could suffer eye injury through flying brick fragments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Safety goggles (EN 166 B standard) worn when breaking bricks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Use of goggles to be monitored by supervisor.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	
<b>Hazardous substances, mortar</b>	Direct skin contact with the mortar could also cause bricklayer contact dermatitis and burns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Risk of dermatitis or cement burns and precautions explained to all workers.</li> <li>■ Use cement or cement containing products within the use-by date.</li> <li>■ Direct skin contact to be avoided, CE marked PVC gloves used when handling mortar.</li> <li>■ Good washing facilities on site, with hot and cold water, soap and basins large enough to wash forearms.</li> <li>■ Principal contractor's first aid includes emergency eyewash.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Training on how to treat exposure to be given to all operatives.</li> </ul>	TB	17/4/06	26/4/06
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to be aware of anyone with early signs of dermatitis.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	
<b>Dust from cutting bricks</b>	Dust exposure could cause silicosis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Angle grinders replaced with block splitter, removing the risk of significant dust exposure.</li> <li>■ The use of a grinder for chasing etc is not needed on this job.</li> </ul>				
<b>Operating cement mixer</b>	Workers could be crushed or cut if the mixer topples or they get caught in moving parts. Damage to electrics could result in a shock.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Cement mixer located on firm, level ground.</li> <li>■ Mixer is fully guarded and guards in place during operation.</li> <li>■ Mixer is 110 volt and PAT tested every three months.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to check mixer daily for obvious damage.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing?	What further action is necessary?	Action by who?	Action by when?	Done
<b>Noise from use of equipment, eg angle grinder</b>	Workers using grinders or working near people who may suffer hearing loss.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Angle grinders replaced with block splitter, removing high noise levels from our work.</li> <li>■ Construction phase plan show other trades using grinders etc should not be working close enough to cause problems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to monitor and talk to site manager if noisy work does start close by.</li> </ul>	LG	From 1/5/06	
<b>Vibration from use of equipment such as angle grinder</b>	Exposure to vibration can lead to the development of 'vibration white finger' (VWF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Angle grinders replaced with block splitter. No significant vibration left.</li> </ul>				
<b>Fire/explosion</b>	All operatives in the vicinity could suffer from smoke inhalation or burns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Suitable fire extinguisher kept in site office and welfare block.</li> <li>■ Good housekeeping monitored by supervisor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to brief all workers on first day on emergency arrangements agreed with principal contractor.</li> </ul>	LG	1/5/06	1/5/06
<b>Welfare/first aid</b>	Good facilities help prevent dermatitis etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Principal contractor will have facilities on site by the time bricklaying starts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- flushing toilet;</li> <li>- hot and cold running water, soap, towels and full-size washbasins;</li> <li>- heated canteen with kettle etc;</li> <li>- first-aid equipment;</li> <li>- principal contractor will arrange clearing and ensure the necessary electrical and heating safety checks are made; and</li> <li>- site agent is appointed person for first aid.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Supervisor to brief workers on facilities and keeping them clean.</li> </ul>	LG	1/5/06	1/5/06

**Assessment review date: 25/8/06**