



Ballina Westside Community Church

Christians sharing hope and peace through Jesus Christ

RISK MANAGEMENT

All leaders have a role in identifying and assessing threats, coming up with plans to guard against these threats, put in place plans for if things go wrong and decide how to avoid or reduce risks.

These Risk Assessment Forms will be kept in our records and can be accessed in the years to come if necessary to review and use again.

All Risk Assessment Forms are to be **completed and returned to Child Safety Officer no later than one week prior to the event.** This is the responsibility of the leader designated for the activity.

Why have a risk management strategy or plan?

Everyone working in child-related employment can pose some risk for children. All these risks are best identified and managed through the development of an effective risk management strategy or plan.

Developing a risk management plan doesn't have to be hard or complicated, but risk management only becomes truly successful when a risk management perspective permeates the culture of an organisation so that it is an everyday part of organisational life.

Developing a risk management strategy or plan

When developing a risk management strategy or plan, churches should consider the formal processes outlined in the national standard for risk management, the [Risk Management Strategy - AS/NZS ISO 3100 \(2009\)](#).

But while the formal processes of risk management are very important, successful risk management can be dependent on informal processes as well. What happens at the informal level by every worker in their everyday activities can be just as valuable as the formal processes.

Identifying your risks

Risk management can be said to be about knowing what can go wrong and how to avoid it. Here are a few important things to consider:

1. *What could possibly happen?* Think about anything that could possibly go wrong. This could include things like people hurting themselves, a fire, lack of supervision, negative media coverage of an event.
2. *How likely is it to happen?* For each risk that you've identified think about how likely it is for it to happen. Consider everything, from the farfetched to the common, the everyday to the rare.
3. *How serious would the harm be?* If it did happen, how serious could the harm be? Consider the consequence for your church, children, staff, volunteers etc. if harm did occur?
4. *Have a plan of action for each risk identified.* What would you do in response if the identified risk happened? When the harm is serious, and the problem could arise often, you have a risk that needs immediate attention.

Risk management process

AS/NZS ISO 3100 is based on a continuous improvement process. It includes a number of steps that any community organisation or business enterprise can adopt. Here is an adaptation of these steps:

1. **Establish the context.** Why are you doing this? What external and/or internal factors/requirements are making you develop a risk management strategy/plan? What are the parameters in which you are doing it?
2. **How will you do it?** What processes are you going to use to develop the strategy/plan? Who is going to be involved, and how? Is there a timeframe for completing it in? What will you do with the strategy/plan when it is finished?
3. **Communicate and consult.** Let people know what you are doing and work together in identifying the risks and how they can be managed. Do this with your internal and external stakeholders in developing your strategy/plan as a whole, and then, as appropriate, at each stage of the risk management process.
4. **Identify risks.** What are the *where, when, why and how* events that precipitate risks? Identify not just Occupational Health and Safety issues but also risks to do with child abuse and unintentional harm.
5. **Analyse risks.** Determine what the likelihood and consequences are of each identified risk and assign a level to the risk, e.g. high if highly likely and the consequence is severe. Use a matrix to do this to plot the rating for each risk.

6. **Develop interventions.** Work out what you can do to stop the identified risk from happening, and what to do if the risk does eventuate. What will these interventions mean in terms of resources and what will be the consequences of doing them and not doing them.
7. **Monitor and review.** Develop a process to monitor and evaluate your risk management strategy/plan. Keep a record of any risks that happened and what the outcome was, both of the risk itself and what you did. Record whether these accorded with your strategy/plan or deviated from it and why. This is important for continuous improvement.
8. **Designate and manage.** Risk management is not a function you do once and forget about it. It should be part of the ongoing quality improvement process of the church. Nominate a person to be responsible for the ongoing management of the strategy/plan and include the strategy/plan in the church's culture and management.

We would recommend that you prepare a Risk Assessment for each Children's program which will cover all of its normal activities in a year. This can be reviewed and amended as and if incidents arise during the year. If an unusual activity is added to the program then the activity should be assessed individually.

Below is a simple template with some base ideas for assessing and ranking church activities. These will need to be written by the team leader and is a helpful process to invoke positive thinking.

Risk Assessment Template

Activity	Risks	Ranking	How to reduce Risk	Priority
Sunday School	Child needs to go to Toilet	High	Provide adequate supervision	1
	Movement of Children from Church to Sunday School Rooms	High	Provide adequate supervision	1
	Return of children to parents	Low	Ensure kids are handed off to parents	2
Youth Group	Transport	High	Screen Drivers See Policy	1
	Arrival of Kids	Low	Have a sign in procedure	2
	Kids leaving site	Low	Have a sign out procedure	2
Church Building	Ensure building Safe	Medium	Complete checks See Policy	1
SRE	Teacher alone in class with children	High	Have School office number programmed into phone	1

Volunteer Acknowledgement

I acknowledge:

- receiving the Risk Assessment Policy
- that I have had an opportunity to ask questions
- that I should comply with the Policy; and
- that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in the suspension of my participation.

Your name: _____

Your signature: _____ Date: _____