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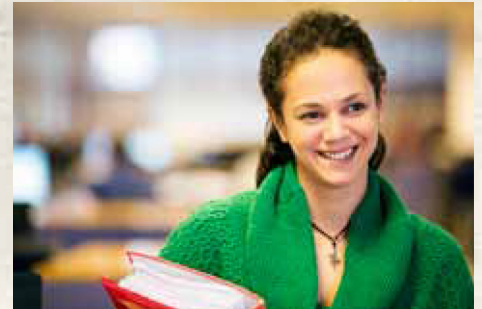
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## Understanding risks at work

If you're just starting work, you won't know much about how to do the job safely or what might hurt you. You will need information from your employer.



In most workplaces, the chances of being seriously hurt are pretty low. But there are risks at work and some things at work can hurt you, or might hurt someone else.

Speak Up if you are not given information about risks at work. You need it to make an informed decision. You need it to Stay Safe.

Getting it right means you have to get involved.

Getting involved means you need to understand some basic ideas about hazards, risks and rewards (benefits).

### Hazard

**A hazard is anything that might hurt you (physically or mentally).**

Examples includes a spilt drink (slipping hazard), a loose wire (tripping hazard), dust (breathing hazard) or stress or bullying at work (mental health hazard).

### Risk

**A risk is the chance and impact of getting hurt by the hazard**

Is it likely or not very likely, and the impact, i.e. how bad the injury/ill health would be (for example would it kill you, break a bone, cause a small bruise or make you sick or unhappy).

### Reward/Benefit

**This is what you want**

It includes achieving something (like finishing a job), getting something (like a new bike), doing something pleasurable, making some money or saving some time.

### Example

Let's take an example of how you already use these ideas to act safely.

You want to get home quickly to see a friend, but a busy road is in your way. There's a bridge you could cross but it would be much quicker to cross the road directly.

So how do you decide what to do?

- **Step 1 – Identify hazards/risks**

In this case the hazards are the passing cars; the risk is the chance and impact of being hit by a car.

- **Step 2 – Balance the options**

You balance the risk of being hit by a car with the reward of seeing your friend.

To understand the risk you remember that someone was badly injured crossing the road. To understand the reward you think about spending time with your friend.

- **Step 3 – Decision time**

We are happy to take a risk as long as we think it will lead to a reward. If the risk is too big or the reward too small, we will stop doing it or do it differently. We say: "it's not worth the risk."

- **Step 4 – Take action**

You make a decision and act accordingly. Sometimes in a split second.

We often think like this in our normal lives.

<sup>1</sup> HSE Statistics 2011/12.