

ULTRA ACCESS Scaffolding Safety Alert









Risks, Assessments and Duty of Care - is the risk worth the reward...?

Risk Assessments - another "grey area" within Health and Safety law, with them being both legally required (and not...), depending on the interpretation of its sometimes ambiguous language used. But, one thing that isn't, is that Employers and Employees (all those at work, regardless of their employment status) both have a LEGAL **"duty of care"** to conduct their works with as low risk to themselves and others as possible or as "reasonably practicable".

Legally required or not. Documented officially or not. We do in-fact carry out Risk Assessments everyday, day-in-day-out - and we don't have to just be at work to conduct one either. We do so when driving our vehicles, making a cup of coffee, going to sit on a park bench and even entering a dark room within the places we live - you would look and assess the situations that are in front of you and what risks you might encounter, (and maybe flick the light switch on to see what you're doing, with the latter example above) - and we conduct them all the time.

For instance: You wouldn't cross the road if there was a speeding vehicle hurtling towards you (not if you was sensible anyway)... you would judge in your head rapidly the hazard coming towards you and the possibility of being ran over, and would usually (we would hope) wait for the vehicle to pass by before attempting to cross the road - and if so, congratulations, you have just completed a Risk Assessment (albeit a very basic "mental" and undocumented one) - with an example of ULTRA ACCESS's one below.

ULTRA ACCESS Risk Assessment Table

	 High Risk	 Serious Risk	 Medium Risk	 Low Risk	 Negligible / Eliminated Risk	
Severity						
Probability						
Extreme Severity (Fatality)	High Risk	High Risk	Serious Risk	Medium Risk		 "Lone Working" is automatically included in any Risk Assessment due to it being a constant (and mostly unavoidable) risk
High Severity (RIDDOR)	High Risk	Serious Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk		 First Aid Kit always to be carried on persons (and with suitable training)
Medium Severity	High Risk	Serious Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk		 Mandatory 3-Points of PPE (usually) worn as a minimum (with additional PPE being project / task specific)
Low Severity	Serious Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Low Risk		
Negligible	Eliminated Risk - (all but, and within acceptable parameters)					

Now, with regards to scaffolding, we work in a high risk activity, and one where **YOU** as the scaffolder (or scaffolding contractor, or any other contractor) would be expected to adhere to your LEGALLY obligated **"duty of care"** and not put yourself or others at risk of injury or harm. A mental Risk Assessment / done in your head of the situation in front of you, if you do not have anything official from your employer for you to read or sign, would be the minimum that you should do under **"duty of care"**.

The **FIRST** question you should ask yourself should be (before carrying out the work):

- Is there anyone (or anything) that could be affected, injured, (or in worst cases) killed by **YOUR** actions whilst **YOU** are carrying out **YOUR** scaffolding operations?
- What is the probability of the risk, and how severe would it affect those impacted?
- Is the risk to them, and yourself worth the reward of completing the task?

Something to consider...

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Scaffold Technical Support

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