BASC
Health & Safety
GUIDANCE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Why does my shoot need a Health and Safety Policy?

If your shoot has five or more employees at any one time it is a legal requirement to have a written Health and Safety Policy. You may be liable to criminal prosecution, leading to a significant fine and/or imprisonment if you do not have one.

Even if the shoot does not have employees, it still makes sense to document your Health and Safety policy:

- ◊ For the avoidance of criminal prosecution and civil proceedings - if anyone is injured on your shoot, then the Health and Safety Division of the local Environmental Health Department may investigate the incident. If you can prove you have taken all reasonable steps to avoid accidents you are far less likely to be taken to court.
- ◊ To secure shooting opportunity – if not now, at some time in the future you could find your lease requiring you to have documented risk assessments.
- ◊ To make you think about all the risks, not just gun-related risks, entailed in running any form of shoot.
- ◊ To maintain the good name of the sport – not just among politicians and government agencies, but also within the non-shooting public. Shooting's safety record is good, we must all do our bit to keep it that way.

Greater safety consciousness will reduce accidents and no one wants their day spoilt by an avoidable accident.

But my shoot doesn't have employees

Employees don't have to work full time or on a regular basis, they don't even have to be paid. If people act under the supervision and control of somebody else then they are employees.

If at any time your shoot has people working for it (such as keepers, beaters, pickers up, other helpers – including shoot working parties) then it has employees.

If you have employees, you have to have Employer's Liability insurance cover, which is why this is included in the BASC members' policy. And if, at any one time, you have five or more employees, the law says you must also have a written Health and Safety policy.

So I need to carry out a Risk Assessment and write a Health and Safety policy, how do I do that?

Let's start by looking at what a Health and Safety policy is:

1. A written statement of Health and Safety principles

- **Your health and safety policy statement sets out how you manage health and safety in your shoot. It is a unique document that shows who does what, and when, and how they do it.**
- We have included a blank policy statement in the pack we have sent you. In it we have clearly indicated the boxes that you need to fill in.

2. A set of written Health and Safety procedures

- These detail what procedures you have in place to reduce or remove the risks from the Hazards that you have identified in your Risk Assessment.
- Copies of your Risk Assessment documents.
- Copies of other supporting documents such as letters, safety notices, the text of your pre-shoot talk etc.

Creating a Health and Safety policy is not difficult, the chances are that you have already identified most of the main hazards, and have taken steps to prevent accidents. All you need to do now is to document it– this booklet will take you through the process.

Important - keep it as simple as possible

RISK ASSESSMENT - WHAT IS IT?

Many of you may be aware of risk assessment, in terms of health and safety, because of your work. You may have seen safety professionals, safety representatives, managers, engineers or consultants walking around the workplace assessing the risks to health and safety. Hopefully, you may have participated in these.

Risk assessments have become a legal requirement for work activities since the introduction of legislation in the UK in 1992. However, the concept is nothing new - we have been doing them informally for years, devising safe ways of working as a consequence.

The legislation now requires us to specifically conduct assessments and record any significant findings. The reasoning behind all this is to demonstrate that employers are doing all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all people who may be affected by work activities, thus avoiding prosecution and litigation.

The shoot needs to appoint first aid personnel or an appointed person who will be responsible for the provision of first aid boxes and their replenishment. They will also be responsible for recording accidents in the accident book and carrying out accident investigations. They will also be responsible for reporting injuries, human diseases and dangerous occurrences under RIDDOR http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/

Why us?

You may be wondering what all this has to do with BASC member clubs, syndicates and their activities. After all, isn't risk assessment restricted to work? The answer is no.

The precise legal situation affecting us in this sense is somewhat complicated. However, our sporting activities could, if uncontrolled, affect the safety not only of participants, but also that of spectators, volunteers and members of the public. It therefore goes without saying that we should demonstrate that we go about our business in a safe, controlled manner.

The consequences of not doing this could be criminal prosecution and civil proceedings – bearing in mind also that **individuals** may be singled out. Remember the Selby train disaster?

The mechanism for achieving and demonstrating control is **risk assessment**.

Don't panic!!

We all conduct risk assessments every day without knowing it. Let's do one -
Imagine that you are carrying two heavy bags of shopping, and that you are waiting to cross a busy trunk road with a 70-mph speed limit. You look both ways and see two speeding lorries approaching on both sides of the carriageway. Both are about 25 yards away from you. Do you step out to cross the road?

The sane ones amongst you will have answered no to this question, but why? The reason is simple. You know that if you step out onto the road, the chances of you being hit by a lorry are very high indeed. You also know that the consequences of impact do not bear thinking about. You have put the two together and decided that the risk is too high. You have done a risk assessment.

Definitions - Hazard and Risk

Before we proceed, we need to be absolutely certain about two very important definitions, namely those of HAZARD and RISK.

A HAZARD is defined as SOMETHING WITH THE POTENTIAL TO CAUSE HARM. In the previous road-crossing scenario, a speeding lorry is therefore a hazard since it *could* run someone over or cause damage in some other way.

A RISK is a combination of two things. It is defined as the LIKELIHOOD that harm will be caused by the hazard, together with the SEVERITY of the outcome. In doing your risk assessment above, you've concluded that the likelihood of being hit by a lorry is very high, and that the outcome is likely to be your death. Crossing the road in this situation is therefore a high risk.
If you find yourself with two heavy bags of shopping, standing by the same road on a quiet Sunday, the situation may be totally different. You look both ways again, and the only vehicle you see is a slow-moving bicycle approaching you, and it's about 200 yards away. Do you cross the road? Of course you do, because you have

decided that the likelihood of being hit by the bicycle is very low, and even if it did hit you, your life insurance policy is hardly likely to be called on to pay out. It's a low risk situation, isn't it?

What is an Assessment

An assessment is therefore a judgement, and it's important to realise that not everyone has the same opinion on the exact level of risk, since this is founded on experience and other personal factors.

It is also important to realise that in life, there is no such thing as a risk-free situation. Risks have to be evaluated and controlled, the high risk ones taking priority in terms of the time, effort and expense needed to control them. This is the basis of the term 'reasonably practicable', and this is the defence in both criminal and civil proceedings.

We need to show that we have evaluated the risks from our activities and are working to control these risks on a priority basis – the trivial risks may not even warrant specific action to reduce them. Hence the law requires us to document 'the significant findings' of our assessments and what we are doing to reduce them.

Once these actions have been put into effect, we then document that they are being controlled. It is not an exact science, and in our situation, it's not rocket science either - we are probably managing our risks during our activities anyway, it's just a matter of proving that we are.

It is important not to over-complicate things and generate too much paperwork. From what has been written above, you may have noticed that if there are no hazards present in a given situation, it follows that there are no resultant risks, doesn't it? Therefore the first stage in *avoiding* having to do risk assessments is to identify and remove hazards at source. For instance, a deep hole in a clubhouse access road is a hazard (someone could trip or damage occur to a car), but by filling in the hole there and then, a documented risk assessment is avoided, although we would advise that you keep a note of the date this was done. This highlights the importance of regular hazard spotting tours/inspections. Do you carry these out?

The identification of hazards is therefore crucial to everyday hazard removal. If they cannot be removed, then this identification forms the basis of risk assessment and the evaluation of the level of risk. We can prioritise our actions to introduce control measures to reduce the level of risk to an acceptable level.

Hazards

As we have seen, a hazard is something with the *potential* to cause harm. Again, whether it actually *will* cause harm depends on the circumstances. The world is full of hazards, but let us concentrate on those inherent on our sporting activities.

A team approach is a powerful aid in hazard identification, and it is often useful to consult a categorised checklist as an aide-memoire. Therefore, possible hazards and hazardous operations in relation to our activities can be grouped together. A hazard identification and profiling list is given on 11 to assist you .

Assessment of Risks

The next step in the risk assessment process is to identify who could possibly be harmed and how. This entails the evaluation of the risk posed by the hazards that cannot be dealt with on the spot or soon after. It is a good idea to break down activities/hazards into groups, as above, (don't forget the more detailed lost on page 11) and assess these in turn.

We need to ascertain whether the risk is High, Medium or Low so that a priority action plan can be drawn up. The evaluation has to take into account the adequacy of controls already in place.

We have seen that risk is a combination of the likelihood of the hazard being realised, together with the foreseeable severity of the outcome. A useful tool for evaluating the level of risk is a matrix diagram which combines them.

Suggested likelihood levels are:-

♦	Low	Unlikely
♦	Medium	Foreseeable
♦	High	Expected

Suggested severity levels are:-

♦	Low	Minor injury
♦	Medium	Hospital Treatment
♦	High	Life Threatening Injury/Fatality

By combining these in a matrix we can evaluate the foreseeable level of risk -:

♦ *Likelihood*				
H	M	H	H	
M	L	M	H	
L	L	L	M	
	L	M	H	
		♦ *Severity*		

Remember that the evaluation process takes into account the adequacy of control measures already in place.

For example, you may identify that there is a risk to beaters from approaching too near to guns, where the likelihood of being shot may be high and the severity of the outcome similar. But in reality, what's the risk? No doubt you'll have arrangements in place to prevent this, such as supervision, adequate 2-way feedback, pre-shoot

planning talks, visibility aids, identification of demarcation areas and the like, and these can be taken into account when assessing the adequacy of existing control measures. These control measures have probably been put into effect over the years to ensure that this aspect of your shoot is safe.

But is this a formal system or ad-hoc? How do you organise this aspect? Is there a formal shoot safety protocol, contained within a written procedure or rule book which not only states what needs to be done but also designates specific responsibilities for ensuring that it is done? Or is it less safe, based on custom and practice, where you *expect* people to know what to do?
Organisational hazards were mentioned beforehand and will be a crucial factor in the risk assessment process. The methods by which you control shoot safety are, in effect, risk control measures which in many cases may be well understood but informal.

Remember, you have to *prove* that risks are controlled. It is therefore anticipated that a major outcome of shoot risk assessments for the larger organised shoots will be *the documentation of shoot safety procedures and guidance*, together with written responsibilities for administering them. The action/recommendation section of the risk assessment form can be used to state whether or not this is required.

Control Measures

It may well be that you decide that more needs to be done, apart from developing documented shoot safety protocols and guidance, to control other risks.

The selection and implementation of the most appropriate method of risk or hazard control is a crucial part of the risk assessment process. It is important to remember the term **'reasonably practicable',** which is effectively a cost benefit analysis - the higher the risk level, then the more expense in terms of time, money and effort may need to be spent on reducing that risk. Hence trivial risks may be sometimes ignored.

There is an order of priority of control measures/precautions, often called the hierarchy of controls. These are set out in the list below and it is always preferable to start at the top even if you know, in many cases, that the preferred control will be somewhere in the middle or near the bottom. In many cases there may be more than one control option available for a similar degree of control of risk. In many cases more than one control option will be the correct choice. The hierarchy of precautions are :

Item No.	*Hierarchy of Precautions*	*Comments*
1.	Elimination	Do we need to do this at all or do we need to do it this way? Can we get rid of it?
2.	Substitution	By something less hazardous or risky

3.	Enclose	Enclose it in a way that eliminates or controls the risk
4.	Segregation of People	Barriers, fences, markers on the ground
5.	A Safe System of Work that reduces the risk to an acceptable level	May not always be possible to eliminate ALL risks –but have you done all you reasonably can?
6.	Written Procedures that are known and understood by those affected.	Keep it simple, get everyone involved
7.	Adequate Supervision	Who makes sure the guns stand where they should, or the beaters start & finish where they should or the pickers up stand where they should and so on.
8.	The identification of Training Needs	Use of pesticides, chainsaws or other equipment may all require training
9.	The Provision of Information and Instruction such as signs, handouts etc.	Chemical storage (pesticides, herbicides) Warning signs on footpaths, warning signs when pesticides have been used for example
10.	Personal Protective Equipment	Heads, eyes, ears, hands, fingers, toes etc

5 to 9 of the above can be seen as representing shoot safety control procedures. They can also be used as risk control measures for other risks, such as control of members of the public at events, site transport/vehicle movement etc.

You may be wondering why they are positioned below where you'd expect them in the hierarchy, given all that's been stated previously. The reason is simple - human behaviour. Procedures, supervision and the like are only effective if they are put into effect, and, after all, shooting is a leisure activity which many follow to escape the regulatory rigours of the outside world.

Shoot Procedures

As previously mentioned, many of you will have these in place. If these are documented, then your risk assessment will take these into account as (hopefully!) adequately controlled resulting in a 'low risk' evaluation. It may be that your assessment reveals that improvements are needed. It may also be that your assessment recommendations include that procedures need to be documented. A suggested framework for the documentation of procedures follows. It is not exhaustive, but a key issue for you will be in deciding specific responsibilities for

their management. You will see that they bear a resemblance to the list of hazards and hazardous operations given at page 15.

Items for consideration -:

Shoot Days -

- During the season
- Close season (i.e. pest control days)

Pre-Shoot Talk, e.g.:

- What is to be shot
- Signals
- Retrieval of quarry, wounded quarry, quarry fall
- Dogs on pegs
- Cartridges and disposal of cases
- Slips/unloading
- Local hazards
- Low birds
- Alcohol
- Direction of guns
- Public rights of way
- Property
- Weather
- Transport of guns, beaters, pickers up and dogs

Other relevant points, e.g.:

- Public warnings/access etc
- Transport of people, dogs, equipment, chemicals and feeds
- Conservation work and land management
- Responsibilities
- Supervision
- Training
- Use and storage of chemicals, feeds, pesticides etc.
- Insurance
- Pens and electric fences
- Catering and food safety

The lists are not exhaustive but can be used as a hazard framework to start your risk assessments in conjunction with the hazard/hazardous Identification & Profiling list.

Hazard Identification

You now need to look at the hazards you have identified and think about the likelihood of them causing an accident, how severe the outcome could be, and, finally, how high is the risk. If you are using the format below simply write in the column the rating (low, medium or high) you have assessed.

Do bear in mind that depending on the type of shoot you operate, the hazards may be different. For example:

- If all or part of your shooting activities involves wildfowling you will need to assess the risks of drowning, being lost on the foreshore and hypothermia, for example.
- If you clay pigeon shoot, think where broken clays (both kills and no birds) may land.
- If your shoot involves the use of small or full bore rifles for shooting vermin, foxes or deer you will need to assess backstops.

Again, this list is not exhaustive but it should give you some ideas.

Where the risk is low you will probably not need to carry out a risk assessment. Simply mark on your list of identified hazards that you have assessed this as low risk and add the date. An example of a hazard identification list is given below:

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND PROFILING

- **Identify all hazards and rate these and note whether a risk assessment is required. Date this form as a record of having assessed the hazards.**
- **If you have identified a hazard in more than one area (e.g. slips/trips in building and slips/trips in the car park) add to the bottom of the list.**
- **This list is not exhaustive, you may find other hazards relevant to your shoot**

You can copy these pages or use the headings to produce your own profiling forms

Hazard	Likelihood of it happening L, M, H	Severity of outcome L, M H	Rating	Date & comment (hazard removed/reduced or brief action to be taken. Transfer item to Risk Assessment Form)
Gun safety e.g.				
Safe use of guns				
Loading and unloading				
Use of slips/cases				
Supervision				
New and young shots				
Alcohol / drugs				
Disciplinary procedures for unsafe shooters				
Low birds				
Ground game				
Dogs running loose				
Members of the public				
Emergencies e.g.				
Communication / notification				
Responsibilities				
Control point				
Briefings				
Contact numbers				
Pedestrian Access – To site, indoors & outdoor activities				
Slip/trip				
Fall of person				
Fall of object				
Obstruction				
Projection				
Confined/enclosed space				
Poor housekeeping				
Organisational				
Poor training/instruction				
No procedures				
Poor supervision				
No line of command				
Discipline				
Accountability				

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND PROFILING

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Hazard	Likelihood of it happening L, M, H	Severity of outcome L, M H	Rating	Date & comment (hazard removed/reduced or brief action to be taken. Transfer item to Risk Assessment Form)
Pre – shoot talks				
Security e.g.				
Ammunition				
Demonstrators/activists				
Welfare e.g.				
Drinking water				
First aid provision				
Accident reporting				
Transport e.g. –				
Collision				
Access				
Condition of roads				
Parking				
Speeding				
Vehicle suitability				
ATVs				
Trailers – loading and manoeuvre				
Driver competence				
Transport of dogs				
Transport of guns and ammunition				
Catering e.g.				
No hygiene training				
Food storage				
Cleanliness				
Personal hygiene				
Temperature control				
Raw/cooked food storage				
Selection of caterers				
Washing facilities				
Quarry into food chain				
Protective equipment PPE e.g.				
Unsuitable				
Not worn				
Not maintained				
Incompatible				
Waste disposal e.g.				
Waste at pegs				

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND PROFILING

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- **This list is not exhaustive, you may find other hazards relevant to your shoot**

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Hazard	Likelihood of it happening L, M, H	Severity of outcome L, M H	Rating	Date & comment (hazard removed/reduced or brief action to be taken. Transfer item to Risk Assessment Form)
Disposal of cartridge cases				
Toxic waste and fumes				
Feed and chemical containers				
Quarry and shot fall e.g.				
Direction of guns				
Wind conditions				
Cartridge cases				
Topography e.g.				
Ground conditions				
Condition of roads and parking places				
Proximity of public footpaths				
Proximity of livestock				
Barriers / fencing / signage				
Weather effects - ice, flooding, fire risk				
Noise e.g.				
Proximity of neighbours				
Effect of wind direction				
Guns				
Vehicles				
Services e.g.				
Overhead / underground electrical supply				
Water supply – pipe work, valves etc.				
Surface water drains				
Foul pipes, drains and septic tanks				
Telephone cables				
Electricity e.g.				
Damaged wiring				
Poor switches				
Use in hazardous environment				
Access to live equipment				
Poor maintenance				
Not tested				
Exposure to weather				
Handling of loads e.g.				
Too heavy				
Awkward postures				

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND PROFILING

- **Identify all hazards and rate these and note whether a risk assessment is required. Date this form as a record of having assessed the hazards.**
- **If you have identified a hazard in more than one area (e.g. slips/trips in building and slips/trips in the car park) add to the bottom of the list.**
- **This list is not exhaustive, you may find other hazards relevant to your shoot**

You can copy these pages or use the headings to produce your own profiling forms

Hazard	Likelihood of it happening L, M, H	Severity of outcome L, M H	Rating	Date & comment (hazard removed/reduced or brief action to be taken. Transfer item to Risk Assessment Form)
Repetitive movement				
Stooping, twisting				
Poor grip				
No mechanical assistance				
Awkward, bulky				
Chemicals/substances e.g.				
Poor storage				
Poor information				
Training				
Dust, fume exposure				
Pesticides				
Labelling				
Protective equipment				
Tools e.g. –				
Unsuitable				
Modified				
Training for use				
Animals e.g.				
Kennelling				
Handling				
Waste				
Rat/vermin control				
Weil's disease				
Fire /explosion e.g.				
Waste accumulation				
Fuels and flammable liquids				
Chemical storage				
Welding, grinding				
Maintenance/contractors				
Smoking				

The above listing is presented as a guide, it is not comprehensive and should be considered in the context of your ground and the activities taking place on it.

The Risk Assessment Process

As a starting point, split the hazards you have already identified as requiring attention into two parts. The first part should concentrate on what takes place on an average shoot day. The second will look at the management/game keeping aspects of your shoot.

Let's start by looking at a typical shoot day.

By far the most significant risk involved in all shooting sports is a person being shot. So, the first thing you should do is sit down and think about your typical shooting day and what could cause someone to be accidentally shot.

Almost all incidents of people being shot are the result of a Gun taking a low shot or not seeing that someone is in the line of fire. So, start with the first hazard –use of guns – on your hazard identification profile and list all the situations likely to put someone at this risk, such as:

- Guns taking a low shot
- Guns not seeing beaters / pickers up
- Guns swinging through the line
- Inexperienced Guns
- Guns not familiar with the shoot
- Guns under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Taking a loaded gun out of, or putting a loaded gun into a gun slip
- Closing a loaded gun with the barrels pointing upwards
- Leaving a loaded gun propped up against something
- Dogs running loose and tripping up Guns
- Members of the public wandering into the firing line

(This list is not exhaustive – but from the claims experience on the BASC members' liability policy, these are the most common events that result in people on a shoot being injured).

As you can see, nothing too difficult so far. Believe it or not , when you have done this with all the hazards you will have completed the first part of your Risk Assessment – and arguably the most difficult – identifying the Hazards.

Now you can start to fill in your Risk Assessment forms.

Make some copies of the General Risk Assessment form on Page xxx of the 'Guide to Risk Assessment'

In the example below, a small walk and stand game shoot has been used – so if you were filling in a risk assessment form for this shoot it would now look like this:

- the '*Activity*' box show the activity you are assessing – e.g. driven game shooting, rough shooting, roost shooting, wildfowling etc. (one activity per sheet!)
- In the Location box state the venue for the activity
- Put the name of the person taking responsibility for Health and Safety in the '*Assessment produced by '* Box
- Indicate whether or not special waste is involved
- In the "*R.A. Identification No*" box, you can simply write the page number
- In the box 'is the work covered by an existing instruction (is this a new risk assessment or a review) indicate yes or no
- State the review date in the 'Assessment Review Date' box
- Sign and date the assessment form

BASC RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Activity Description: *Walk and stand game shooting in and around woodland, involving walking guns, standing guns, beaters and pickers up*	R.A. Identification No: *1*
Location: *Abbey Wood, Slough, Buckinghamshire*	Date of Event: *3rd January 2008*
Are other specialist Assessments required - **Yes/No** *(if Yes please attach current copy)*	Is the work covered by an existing instruction - **Yes/No** *(if Yes please specify number)*
Assessment produced by: *John Smith*	Assessment Review Date:
Are special waste involved **-Yes/No** (if Yes please attach current copy)	Signature: Date:

Now you need to transfer the main Hazards identified on your Hazards Identification and Ratings form, and list who could be effected by them.

1 Hazard and hazard effect **List here:**	2 Who might be harmed? **List groups of people who are especially at risk from the significant hazards which you have identified:**	3 Is the risk adequately controlled? **List existing controls here or note where the information may be found:**	4 What further action is necessary to control the risk? **List the risks which are not adequately controlled and the action you will take where it is reasonably practicable to do more. You are entitled to take cost into account, unless the risk is high:**	5 Who is responsible for the actions? **Person responsible and by when:** Person / Date for completion / Date completed
1. *Guns taking low shots / not seeing beaters* 2. *Guns swinging through the line* 3. *Taking loaded guns out of the gun slip* 4. *Closing a loaded gun with the barrels pointing upwards*	1. ***Members of the shoot*** 2. ***Beaters*** 3. ***Pickers up*** 4. ***Members of the public***			

Now you need to think about what you are already doing to prevent people from getting hurt on a shoot day. This will help you fill in the box *'What Control measures are in place and are they effective?'*

Looking at the Hazards identified above, think what you are doing (and what more you could do) to prevent people from getting hurt.

As we said earlier, you are probably doing a lot already – so let's write it down:

- Do you write to all your members before the start of the shooting season (perhaps to give them the shoot dates)? If you do, then you should include in this mailing some basic points on safe behaviour in the field (a list is shown later in these notes).
- Do you give a talk to everyone at the start of the day's shooting? If so, this is another good opportunity to reiterate the main points on safe behaviour.
- How could you help your guns to see the beaters? How about issuing them with High Visibility tabards? These are easily and cheaply available, and effective.
- Does someone, who is not shooting, supervise the standing Guns (particularly new and novice Guns) to ensure they comply with the rules?
- Who supervises the walking Guns / beaters?
- How can you communicate with one another if there is a problem? For example, the beating line could be a long way off from the standing Guns – what can they do if they see something that could cause a problem for the standing Guns?
- Do you have mobile phones or radios? Can you get a mobile phone signal?
- Is there an "emergency" signal that differs from that used at the start and end of the drive?
- Can the Guns actually hear the signals?
- Do you have a first aid kit – does anyone know how to use it?
- Could an ambulance find you?

Now you have started to build a list of what you are already doing to minimise the risk from the Hazards you have identified, so put these into the '*Controls*' box:

1 Hazard and hazard effect **List here:**	2 Who might be harmed? **List groups of people who are especially at risk from the significant hazards which you have identified:**	3 Is the risk adequately controlled? **List existing controls here or note where the information may be found:**	4 What further action is necessary to control the risk? **List the risks which are not adequately controlled and the action you will take where it is reasonably practicable to do more. You are entitled to take cost into account, unless the risk is high:**	5 Who is responsible for the actions? **Person responsible and by when:** Person	Date for completion	Date completed
1. *Guns taking low shots / not seeing beaters* 2. *Guns swinging through the line* 3. *Taking loaded guns out of the gun slip* 4. *Closing a loaded gun with the barrels pointing upwards*	*Members of the shoot* *Beaters* *Pickers up* *Members of the public*	*Pre-season letter to all members – see protocol 1* *Pre shoot talk – see protocol 2* *Standing guns supervision – see protocol 3* *Walking guns / beaters supervision – see protocol 4*				

You will see that the 'controls' are now being cross-referenced to written protocols. The protocols themselves will provide more detail on the control measures you have in place to minimise accidents. We will look at this in more detail a little later.

The higher the risk, the greater the importance for control measures.

It is quite possible that you may not be doing all that is necessary to minimise accidents, and that you have now identified other things you could do. If so, you must enter these into the *'what further action is necessary to control the risk?'* box.

For example, you may decide to issue your beaters with High Visibility jackets to reduce the risk of their being shot because the guns can't see them. Or, you may think it would be a good idea to issue all your beaters with eye protection.

When you identify things to be done, it is important not only to fill in the appropriate box but also to identify who is going to make it happen and to set a date by which the job should be done. The responsible individual needs to be told too! The final stage in this process is to check that the job has been done and to enter it on the form.

It is important to regularly review the Hazards you have identified and the Control measures that you have, or need to, put in place. Use the boxes at the bottom of the form to keep track of when you need to review your Risk Assessment.

You have almost completed this part of your Risk Assessment and have started building you Health and Safety document.

Your Risk Assessment form should now look something like this:

1 Hazard and hazard effect **List here:**	2 Who might be harmed? **List groups of people who are especially at risk from the significant hazards which you have identified:**	3 Is the risk adequately controlled? **List existing controls here or note where the information may be found:**	4 What further action is necessary to control the risk? **List the risks which are not adequately controlled and the action you will take where it is reasonably practicable to do more. You are entitled to take cost into account, unless the risk is high:**	5 Who is responsible for the actions? **Person responsible and by when:**		
				Person	Date for completion	Date completed
1. Guns taking low shots / not seeing beaters *2. Guns swinging through the line* *3. Taking loaded guns out of the gun slip* *4. Closing a loaded gun with the barrels pointing upwards*	*Members of the shoot* *Beaters* *Pickers up* *Members of the public*	*Pre-season letter to all members – see protocol 1* *Pre shoot talk – see protocol 2* *Standing guns supervision – see protocol 3* *Walking guns / beaters supervision – see protocol 4*	*1. Issue all beaters with eye protection*	*Bill Brown*	**1 February 08**	

Risk assessment is nothing to be frightened of. A common sense, simple approach works best. The process need not be bureaucratic or time consuming, but it is necessary to demonstrate that you have paid adequate attention to safety.

Once you have your risk assessment in place you will need to check its relevance on each shoot or work days, if there are no differences follow the procedures. If there are differences – for example a different type of terrain – you will need to carry out a risk assessment of the differences.

One final point – remember to review your assessments if any significant changes to your shoot occur. It's good practice to review them every year in any case.

Once you have completed your risk assessment – the next step is to use this to create a Health & Safety Policy.

Creating your Health and Safety Policy

As we said earlier, you have probably long since identified most of the main Hazards on your shoot and put procedures in place to help minimise the risks. However, you need to put details of these procedures in writing in a single document or file. **This is your Health and Safety Policy**.

It is very important that you do all that you can to make sure that everyone in your shoot is aware of the Heath and Safety Policy, and that they comply with it.

Also, people involved in your shoot must be encouraged to put forward ideas and suggestions that will help ensure their health and safety and that of others involved in the shoot.

Let's see how using the Risk Assessment you have conducted can help you create your Health and Safety Policy.

Looking at the first four main hazards in our example:

1. *Guns taking low shots / not seeing beaters*
2. *Guns swinging through the line*
3. *Taking loaded guns out of the gun slip*
4. *Closing a loaded gun with the barrels pointing upward*

You wrote down what you could do to minimise the risks from these hazards:

1. *Pre-season letter to all members – see protocol 1*
2. *Pre shoot talk – see protocol 2*
3. *Standing guns supervision – see protocol 3*
4. *Walking guns / beaters supervision – see protocol 4*

Now you can write your first protocol:

Health and Safety Protocol No 1 - Abbey Wood Shoot

Date: 30th November 2007

All members of the shoot will be written to before the start of the shooting season.

Included within this letter will be points of safety and safe behaviour – these will include:

- No shot to be taken at birds below the tree line
- Shots will only be taken in front or behind – not to the side
- No ground game
- Signals for the start and end of the drive
- Signals for emergencies
- Notification that any unsafe or inappropriate behaviour will result in instant dismissal from that day's shooting
- Need to declare any medical condition that may affect their co-ordination
- Guns to be unloaded when not in use
- After loading, guns must be closed with the barrels pointing to the ground

A copy of the current season's letter is attached

As you can see, the Health and Safety protocols that you write do not have to be complicated. Indeed, the simpler the better, as they are more likely to be read and understood.

For example, the pre shoot talk (protocol No 2), should include the main safety points that you wrote in protocol 1. It's a good idea to have a printed sheet of these safety points to which you can refer when giving a pre shoot talk, a copy of this can also be attached to the back of the protocol in your Health and Safety file.

Protocols 3 and 4 look at supervision. It is advisable to have a person who is not shooting, supervising the guns to make sure they comply with the safety points you raised. In particular, new and inexperienced Guns should be closely supervised. Similarly you should put a responsible person in charge of the beating/walking Guns.

Don't be afraid to delegate responsibility to others, particularly the more experienced members of the shoot – be they Guns, pickers up, or beaters - but keep a record of who has been delegated which responsibility.

All you need to do now is write protocols for the other Hazards you have identified.

Keep all the protocols together in a file with your Health and Safety Policy document. Remember to include supporting evidence that the procedures are being followed (such as letters, certificates, even receipts for safety equipment) and attach this to the relevant protocol.

Shoot management

Don't forget that you will also need to do Risk Assessments and write Health and Safety protocols for the gamekeeping and management aspects of your shoot. You should, of course, keep these protocols with the ones you have written for your shooting activities – you do not need two health and safety policies.

All shoots will be different, but based on our experience, some of the main points you will need to cover will be:

- Dust in hatcheries / brooders
- Gas bottle storage
- Gas connections and pipe work
- Power – remember that all mains electricity powered equipment must be checked by a qualified electrician every 12 months
- Power tools
- Lifting (feed for example)
- Pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals – remember, all chemicals are potentially dangerous. The Commission on Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) has issued strict guidelines regarding the storage and handling of harmful chemicals and the labelling that must accompany them. And, under these guidelines, your suppliers have extensive obligations to provide you with information.

- Working alone
- Hygiene – washing facilities for example
- Catering - if you use caterers for shot lunches for example, make sure they have the appropriate food hygiene certificates
- Structures such as bridges, stiles and high seats
- Transport of beaters, Guns, equipment etc. including trailers and ATV's

You will find that the Health and Safety Executive has produced a wide range of information and advice sheets on issues surrounding the use of power tools, chemicals, manual work etc. Lists of these can be found on the HSE web site, or by visiting any of The Stationery Office stores.

First Aid

In the Health and Safety policy BASC recommends that every shoot has at least one trained appointed person[1]. However, think about the terrain over which you shoot; the distances between the beating line, the Guns and the pickers up as well as your means of communication. Take into consideration the regularity with which your appointed person/first aider can be relied upon to attend - even the best can succumb to a bout of 'flu - and, with all this in mind, consider the need for having more than one person trained in first aid.

If you do this, one of them should be designated as responsible for appropriately stocking the first aid kit (i.e. making sure it's properly replenished, possibly including more specialist items such as a trauma bandage), which should be available on every shoot day and every time members of the shoot gather together.

A word about alcohol

It may be that you have a break for lunch during the day. Is alcohol served/ available? Obviously, you would not, indeed should not, allow anyone who is obviously drunk anywhere near a gun. But where to you draw the line?

Alcohol is a powerful drug (a depressant) and affects different people in different ways.

Our advice is simple – guns and alcohol (and drugs for that matter) do not mix!

Would you let a surgeon who had just had a couple of glasses of wine operate on your child? No! Nor would I.

The safest option is for all Guns to not take alcohol during the shoot.

Now I've got a health and safety policy, what do I do with it?

Once it is written, all members of your shoot, helpers, volunteers, beaters, pickers up must be made aware that there is a Health and Safety Policy, and must have access to it.

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[1] An "appointed person" will have completed a four hour basic training course in first aid. Becoming a fully trained first aider entails a four day course culminating in an examination.

Remember to keep your policy up to date – don't just file it away and forget about it.

Some of the Hazards that you have identified will need to be checked on a frequent basis, others may only need to be checked annually.

Remember to add new procedures as you identify new Hazards.

Want more help?

If you need further help and advice then the following may help you.

BASC Web site www.basc.org.uk

Contact BASC Sporting Services on 01244 573 018

HSE web site www.HSE.gov.org.uk