

Toyakwai Karate Association



Risk Assessment

Statement

Introduction to Risk Assessment

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1. What are generic risk assessments?

Generic Risk Assessments highlight commonly identified hazards (i.e. things with the potential to cause harm)

and control measures (i.e. ways of reducing the likelihood of the hazard causing harm)

associated with general locations, events or activities (e.g. visits to coasts).

The main aim of this Risk Assessment statement is to help raise overall safety standards on educational visits.

They aim to fulfil the Local Authority's legal responsibility to provide employees with relevant written risk assessments.

They are not mandatory, but are made available as helpful tools for all those who have responsibility for the organisation and leadership of educational visits.

2. How can generic risk assessments for educational visits help?

Generic Risk Assessments should help all those responsible for the organisation and leadership of educational visits by:
raising awareness of possible hazards and control measures that might have previously not been considered;
promoting recommended good practice;
providing information that can easily be shared with, and adapted by, all leaders (and group members) to ensure a common understanding of expected standards and responsibilities during a visit.

Generic Risk Assessments should therefore help to:
protect young people, by highlighting ways of improving safety standards on educational visits;
safeguard leaders from the threat of litigation, by providing clear written evidence of the risk assessment and management measures that have been taken (as required by law); save considerable time and effort, by providing an initial framework of ideas for discussion (rather than starting with a blank sheet of paper! - it is generally easier to cross out the suggestions that may not apply, rather than to think from the start of all the issues that do).

3. How should generic risk assessments be used?

Generic Risk Assessments provide a useful starting point for discussion and consideration, BUT they must never be regarded as: foolproof - accidents can still happen! (but the risk assessments do give written evidence to help show that leaders have given reasonable prior thought to the risks and control measures involved!); comprehensive - whilst generic risk assessments seek to identify and highlight key hazards and control measures, it should never be assumed that all significant issues have been recognised and included.

It is still up to the leaders to identify and add any other hazards or control measures that may be appropriate; rigid - generic risk assessment forms are flexible, and must be adapted to each group's own circumstances by adding further hazards/control measures that may be relevant, or deleting those hazards/control measures that are not appropriate or acceptable, or cannot practically be implemented for some reason. Indeed, whilst the control measures suggested might all be worthy of consideration, it is understood that they are not all universally applicable for all groups and situations.

However, if an accident were to occur as a consequence of a control measure not being adopted, a court of law might expect the leader to justify that decision!; one person's sole responsibility - all risk assessments should be shared and discussed in advance with all the other leaders (including volunteer helpers).

Wherever possible, the young people from the group should also be involved in this process; an opt out - whilst Risk Assessments should significantly ease the workload of leaders, considerable thought, discussion, and interaction are still required to complete the forms.

3. How should generic risk assessments be used? (cont)

A risk assessment is not complete unless it has been suitably adapted (see above), the residual level of risk evaluated, and the hazards, control measures, and risk ratings agreed as acceptable by all those responsible for the visit (evidenced by written and dated signatures); complete - in addition to using relevant risk assessments, a 'Specific Visit Risk Assessment' form should be completed to identify hazards and control measures that are unique to precise locations, activities, and individuals within the group (see the blank 'Risk Assessment' form).

Furthermore, it must be clearly understood by all leaders that risk assessment and management is an ongoing process that involves far more than written documents.

Therefore, during a visit, all leaders must maintain a 'Dynamic or Ongoing Risk Assessment' (this is NOT a form!!!) by remaining alert to, and responding to, changing circumstances or additional unforeseen hazards; static - At the bottom of each form is the name of the person who initially wrote the risk assessment, together with the date it was last updated. Inevitably, during the course of time, various changes, corrections and improvements will be made.

Users of the forms are encouraged to notify the Association of any mistakes or suggested amendments, so that the forms can be steadily improved, and thus become increasingly useful and effective tools for developing safe practice on educational visits.

The forms may also need to be amended in the light of accidents, incidents or near-misses during visits. It is important therefore that leaders review visits after they return and, as part of the risk assessment and monitoring process, record and pass on to others lessons that can be learned for future visits. In particular it may be helpful to raise awareness of newly identified hazards or of management strategies that were not effective, or indeed to share with others successful strategies and good practice.

Leaders should therefore note changes that do occur (by checking on the date of the last update), and regularly update any hard copies of these forms.

4. Who needs to see and check completed generic risk assessments?

Completed risk assessments should be available for inspection, if requested, By The Toyakwai Karate Association and the Karate Governing Body (Karate England).

5. How often, should generic risk assessments be completed?

For risk assessments that are used frequently and/or regularly (e.g. 'All Training Sessions and All Travel'), it may be appropriate and acceptable for the form to be completed, signed and updated annually by all those to whom it might have relevance (i.e. staff who wish to be involved in visits during the year).

It is suggested that staff are directed to read the standard forms online, and then to sign a hard copy that is kept for reference in a clearly marked file.

Staff can always download or scan additional individual copies for themselves if required.

For any other specific, non-routine visits, the relevant risk assessments should be completed and signed in addition.

New staff arrivals and prospective new leaders should be made aware of any risk assessments that are used regularly, and should be asked to read and add their signatures, in acceptance of the recognised and adopted safety measures.

6. When should the generic risk assessments for outdoor or adventurous activities (e.g. Competitions) be used?

The generic risk assessments for outdoor or adventurous activities should be used only on those occasions when members of your own staff are directly responsible for the leadership or instruction of the activities (e.g. your own staff are leading/instructing a raining session).

If external service providers (e.g. instructors from a residential outdoor centre) are directly responsible for the leadership/instruction of activities, the Overall Group Leader is not responsible for completing generic risk assessments for each activity, and therefore the generic risk assessments are not applicable.

However, the Overall Group Leader has a duty to check that the external activity provider has full safety management systems in place, and it would be appropriate to obtain a written assurance from the providers that they have their own generic risk assessments for each activity, and that these are available for inspection if required.

7. Where should generic risk assessments be stored, and for how long?

It is suggested that hard copies of all risk assessments are kept for reference in a clearly marked file. It is important that staff can easily access and remind themselves of recommended safe practice. Staff can always download or scan additional individual copies for themselves, if required.

Hard copies of completed and signed risk assessments should be retained by those responsible (i.e. Club Chef Instructor), at least until such time that they are confident that all issues/incidents arising from the visit have been dealt with fully. Whilst a young person might theoretically bring legal action until they are aged 21, it is recommended that, for practical reasons, documentation is stored only for a period of 6 years, unless there is good reason to suspect that further legal action might be taken.

8. Are these generic risk assessments compulsory?

By law, those who are responsible for organising and leading visits should be able to show evidence of the risk assessments they have undertaken, and of the preventative control measures they have established to safeguard those in their care.

There is no single acceptable method for this, and it would ultimately be up to the law courts to decide what level of risk assessment and management is deemed 'reasonable'.

These risk assessments reflect the Associations ultimate responsibility in law (see 'The Health and Safety at Work Regulations' 1999) to assess the risks of activities, and to pass on to its members recommended measures that it should consider adopting.

It is not mandatory for staff to use these exact forms, and it is perfectly acceptable for leaders to complete their own risk assessments in a different format, if preferred. However, in the event of an investigated incident, leaders clearly might need to justify why they had chosen not to adopt the forms provided by Association