MANAGEMENT SYSTEM · GT-HSE-PRO-010

Risk assessment and method statement procedure

Revision	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Next review
A	[date]	[name]	[name — the owner]	[date + 12 months]

Status. The RAMS is not paperwork that permits the job. It is the plan for how the job is actually done, and the only test that matters is whether the people doing the work recognise it.

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1. Purpose

1.1.1 No work starts until its risks have been assessed, the controls decided, and the people doing the work briefed on both. The RAMS is not paperwork that permits the job; it is the plan for how the job is actually done.

2. When a RAMS is required

- Every site task beyond routine, established low-risk work — and always where the client or Principal Contractor requires one.
- Always for: work at height, excavations, lifting operations, hot works, work near live services, confined spaces, work on or near the public highway or water.
- A generic assessment may cover a routine recurring task, but it is reviewed against the specific site before each use — a generic RAMS used unread is worse than none, because it looks like control.

3. Who writes it, who approves it

The RAMS is written by the person who plans the work, because they are the one who knows the sequence. It is approved by the HSE lead, who is checking two things only: that the hazards are honestly identified, and that the controls are ones this workforce can actually achieve on this site.

Where the work is beyond our experience — a lift plan, temporary works, a confined space entry — competent external help writes or checks that part, and is named on the document. Buying that advice is cheaper than the alternative every single time.

4. The procedure

Assess. The person planning the work identifies the hazards, who could be harmed and how, and rates the risk (likelihood × severity on the 5×5 matrix in the template). Competent help is brought in where the work is beyond our experience.

Control. Controls follow the hierarchy: eliminate first, then reduce, isolate, control, and only then PPE — PPE is the last line, never the plan.

Method. The method statement sets the sequence of work, plant and people, in the order the work happens, written so the person doing it can follow it.

Approve. The HSE lead reviews and approves before work starts. Client approval is obtained where the contract requires it.

Brief. Everyone doing the work is briefed and signs the briefing record. Unbriefed people do not work on the task.

Review. The RAMS is reviewed when the work, the site or the people change, after any incident on the task, and at any point a person doing the work says it does not match reality — that report is thanked, not resented.

5. The hierarchy of control, in practice

Eliminate: design the hazard out — precast instead of in-situ work at height, service isolation instead of working live, off-site fabrication instead of hot works on site.

Reduce: a smaller quantity, a lower voltage, a lighter lift, a shorter exposure.

Isolate: barriers, exclusion zones, guarding, separation of plant and people — the hazard stays, the people are kept from it.

Control: safe systems of work, permits, competence requirements, supervision — administrative controls that depend on being followed.

PPE: the last line. If the plan is a hard hat and hope, the plan is not finished — go back up the list.

6. Briefing it properly

A briefing is a conversation, not a signature round. Walk the sequence in the order the work happens, point at the actual location where you can, name the controls that matter most, and finish by asking two or three questions back. Then everyone signs.

Anyone who joins the task later gets the same briefing before they start — not a second-hand account from another operative. The briefing record is the proof, and a name on it that never heard the briefing is worse than no record at all.

7. When conditions change on the day

Weather turns, ground differs from the drawing, another trade appears in the work area: the supervisor stops, reassesses against the RAMS, and either confirms the controls still hold or stops the task until the RAMS is amended. The change and the decision are noted on the RAMS. Working on regardless is the single commonest thread in incident investigations — the plan changed and the paperwork did not.

8. Records

Completed RAMS and briefing records are kept in the project file for six years (GT-GOV-PRO-010). The template is GT-HSE-TEM-010.

9. What good looks like, and what it is worth

9.1.1 Three signs, and none of them is the state of the folder. The RAMS on site matches the work being done, and the people doing it can describe the controls without reading them. At least one task has been stopped and re-planned because conditions changed — and nobody was blamed for stopping it, because the first person punished for stopping a job is the last person who ever will. And a generic RAMS has been rejected as unsuitable for a specific site in the last year, which is the only evidence that generic assessments are being read rather than reprinted.

9.1.2 The commercial case sits behind every one of those. The RAMS is the document a Principal Contractor reads before deciding whether to let the business on site at all, and it is the first thing an investigator asks for afterwards — not to see whether one existed, but to compare what it said with what was happening. That comparison is where businesses lose. A RAMS that describes a method nobody used is worse than no document, because it proves the hazard was foreseen and the control was abandoned. Conversely a RAMS that matches the work, with a briefing record signed by the people who were actually there and a note of the day the plan changed, closes most investigations quickly and settles most arguments about who agreed to what. The quality of these documents is also, in practice, how a client forms its opinion of the business before it has seen any of the work.

9.1.3 The one-line test of this whole procedure, asked at management review: if we walked onto our busiest site unannounced and asked the crew to describe the sequence and the controls, would what they said match the RAMS in the folder — and if it did not, which one would we change?

10. Related documents

GT-HSE-TEM-010 · RAMS template

GT-HSE-PRO-020 · Incident reporting and investigation