BRITISH MODEL FLYING ASSOCIATION

Guide to Risk Assessments

(Revised Sept 2020)

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What is a risk assessment?
3. Why do a risk assessment?
4. Who should do the risk assessment?
5. Definitions: Hazard – Risk
6. The 5 steps to assessing risk
7. COVID Risk Assessments
8. Risk Assessment Example
9. Useful links

We would like to thank Kevin A Watson for his invaluable assistance in producing this guidance.

1. Introduction

It is not unreasonable for a landowner to delegate the task of Risk Assessment to the organisations which use this land for sporting activities.

Indeed, it may be a condition of “use” that the event organiser or club committee must agree to a regular Health & Safety review and audit process This is especially true where the landowner is a Local Authority, a Government Body or Trust and where the flying site has shared usage or public access.

Also, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) through certain articles in the Air Navigation Order (ANO) places a responsibility on individual model aircraft flyers to conduct a risk assessment before each flight.:-

Article 94 of the ANO states:

The remote pilot of a small unmanned aircraft may only fly the aircraft if reasonably satisfied that the flight can safely be made.

The BMFA Members Handbook (Section 18.2) provides guidance to the individual on an informal risk assessment process that we should all conduct on arrival at any flying site and consider before every flight.

Think **S.W.E.E.T.S.**

S – Sun

W – Wind

E – Eventualities

E – Emergencies (Inc. Failsafes)

T – Transmitter Control

S – Site Rules

https://handbook.bmfa.uk/18-general-model-safety

2. What is a risk assessment?

“The combined effort of: identifying and analysing potential events that may negatively impact people, property, and/or the environment; and making a decision "on the tolerability of the risk on the basis of a risk analysis" while considering influencing factors.”

Put simply a risk assessment is a tool by which we can manage Risk.

A risk assessment is not about creating huge amounts of paperwork, but rather about identifying sensible measures to control the risks at a model flying site. You are probably already taking steps to protect your members and the general public, but a risk assessment can help you decide whether you have covered all you need to.

Think about how accidents and ill health could happen and concentrate on real risks – those that are most likely, and which will cause the most harm.

3. Why do a risk assessment?

Clubs and event organisers have a responsibility to take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of those around them. Risk assessments are a necessary step in ensuring a safe model flying club site or event.

If individuals do not know or understand the hazards around them, they are putting themselves, fellow flyers and the public at risk.

4. Who should do the risk assessment?

There is a belief from some that risk assessments can only be conducted by professional assessors, this is not the case.

We are all experienced risk assessors who conduct risk assessments many times every day, every time we cross the road, climb a ladder, have a hot drink or climb into a hot bath we conduct an informal risk assessment. The process we use to assess the risk while carrying out many mundane daily tasks is exactly the same as the process when assessing the risks involved with model aircraft flying, we just do it on an informal basis.

Any knowledgeable and competent individual can conduct an effective risk assessment, experienced model flyers are the ideal persons to assesses risk at a model flying event or club site.

5. Definitions

Hazard:- A hazard is something that can cause harm, e.g. electricity, chemicals, working up a ladder, noise, a propeller, a bully, stress, etc

Risk:- A risk is the chance, high or low, that any hazard will actually cause somebody harm.

6. The 5 steps to assessing risk

1. Identify the hazards

Look around your flying site and consider your activities and think what may cause harm

- How members operate and how they use their equipment
- What fuels and hazardous materials are being used?
  see BMFA Members Handbook, Section 10
  https://handbook.bmfa.uk/10-hazardous-materials
- What safe or unsafe practices exist?
  e.g. Model starting procedures, are models restrained safely etc
- The general state of your flying site
  e.g. trip hazards
- Members flying skills
  e.g. are members operating aircraft beyond their abilities?

2. Assess the risks

Once you have identified the hazards, decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how serious it could be.
This is assessing the level of risk.

Consider:

- Who might be harmed and how?
- What you are already doing to control the risks
  e.g. Club rules, training
- What further action you need to take to control the risks
- Who needs to carry out the action?
- When the action is needed by

3. Control the risk

Look at what you're already doing, and the controls you already have in place. Ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely

If you need further controls, consider:

- Identifying and implementing practical measures needed
- Training and educating members
- Redesigning site layouts and features

Put the controls you have identified in place.

You're not expected to eliminate all risks

Do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm

4. Record your findings

Record all significant findings, including:

- The hazards (things that can cause harm)
- Who might be harmed and how?
- What you are doing to control the risks
- What further action do you need to take?
- Who needs to carry out the action?
- When is the action needed by?
- When the action has been completed

A risk assessment template is available from https://clubsupport.bmfa.uk/risk to record your findings.

N.B Ensure you share your findings with all club members.

5. Review the controls

You should regularly review the controls you have put in place to ensure they are working
Also review them if:

- They may no longer be effective
- After any incident leading to harm/damage
- After any near misses
- If members raise concerns

Update your risk assessment record with any changes you make

7. COVID-19 Risk Assessments

Where event organisers or club officials would like their events and flying sites to be considered as COVID Secure it is a requirement to conduct a COVID-19 risk assessment. These involve exactly the same 5 steps as previously mentioned however the assessment is targeted at hazards that may cause transmission of the COVID virus.

You can download a COVID Risk Assessment template from
https://clubsupport.bmfa.uk/6-steps-to-covid-secure

Risk assessment

Club Name: Example Model Flying Club

Assessment carried out by: Club Safety Officer

Date of next review: 01/07/2020

Date assessment was carried out: 01/01/2020

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Public entering exclusion zone during flying session, possible impact with models	General public	Safety marshals appointed, police exclusion zones, ground models if problem persists	Warning signs to be erected Purchase megaphone	Club Officials	ASAP	
Model control loss, resultant injury or damage to persons or property.	General public, club members	Strict flight patterns, model exclusion areas delineated.	Ensure members follow safety guidance and equipment manufacturers instructions	All	Immediate	
Impact by any model into flight line / pits	Club members	Unrestrained models banned at all times, restraint needed prior to start-up and up to take-off - club rules, control pits and start up area,	None identified	N/A	N/A	
Loss of control (pilot error - student / novice)	General public, club members	Club rules, promote BMFA achievement scheme, increase registered and	None identified	N/A	N/A	

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
		approved instructors, only allow B cert. pilots to instruct, No novices to fly without supervision. Promote dual control				
Loss of control - model structural / radio failures	General public, club members.	Club rules, promote BMFA achievement schemes, strict scrutiny of "new" models, safety / stress checks, education as in 10 above, promote battery checkers and cycling, obseervance of sensible flying practices and pre / post flight checks. Ground any suspect models.	None identified	N/A	N/A	
Fly away models	General public, club members.	Education to fly closer in, maintenance and observance of club safety rules	Education about proper maintenance of aircraft batteries and transmitters	All	ASAP	
Model impact with vehicles	General public, club members.	Control car parking areas, strict flight pattern and control of exclusion areas.	None identified	N/A	N/A	

More information on managing risk: www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/

9. Useful links

BMFA Members Handbook
https://handbook.bmfa.uk

BMFA Club Support
https://clubsupport.bmfa.uk

Health & Safety Executive Risk Assessment guidance
https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm

Health & Safety Executive COVID-19 Risk Assessment guidance
https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/risk-assessment.htm

BRITISH MODEL FLYING ASSOCIATION
SMAE Ltd
Chacksfield House, 31 St Andrews Road, Leicester, LE2 8RE
Telephone - 0116 2440028
E-Mail - admin@bmfa.org Website - http://www.bmfa.org