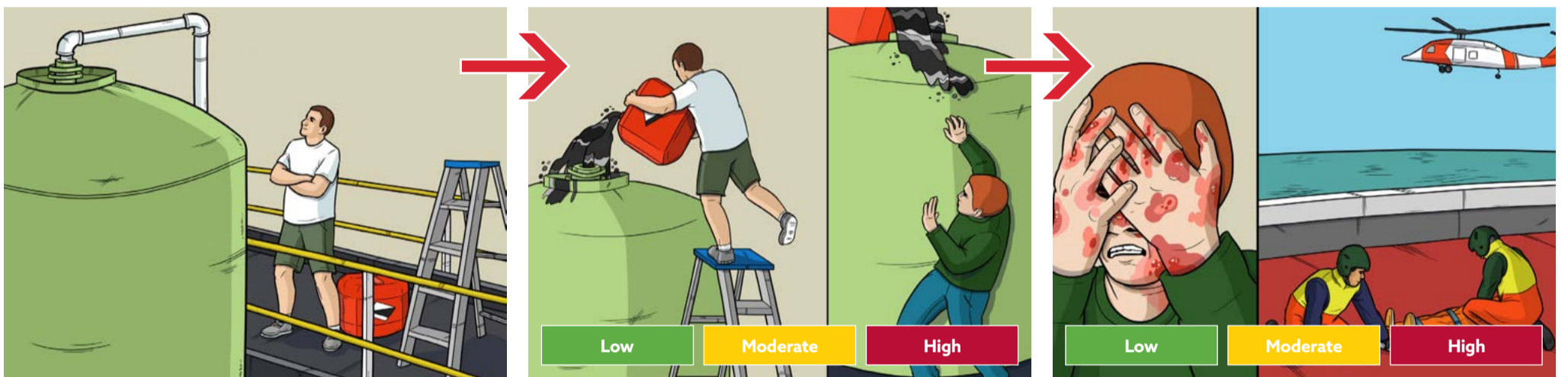


Safe Home

Think Safe: Risk Assessment

People carry out risk assessments all the time without even knowing it. Crossing the road? You assess the risk and then you decide how, where and when it is safe to cross. So why is it difficult to transfer this natural and simple process into safe working practices? Risk assessments do not have to be complicated - keep it simple.



1. Think about the task: What can go wrong?

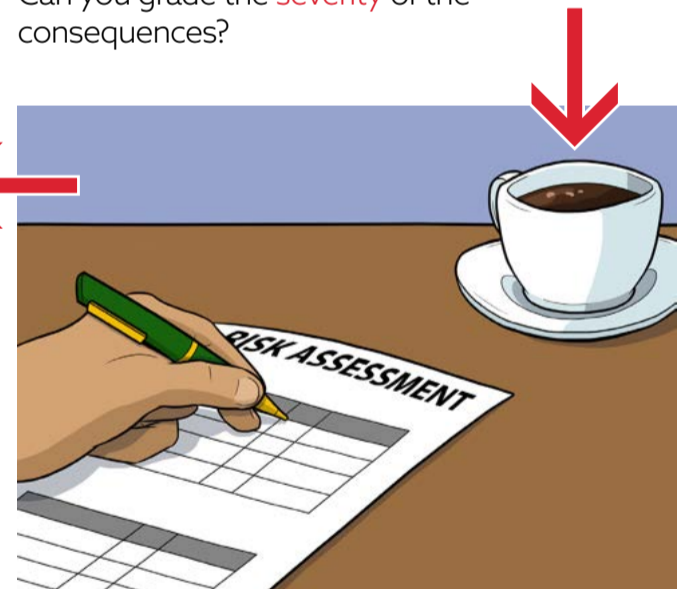
This is the **hazard**.

2. Think: What is the chance of it happening?

Can you grade the **likelihood** of something bad happening?

3. Think: How bad can it hurt me, others or the vessel?

Can you grade the **severity** of the consequences?



6. Think again: Is it now safe to carry out the task?

With the control measures in place, calculate the risk again.

Risk = Likelihood of hazard occurring x severity of consequences. YES or NO? If the answer is 'NO' think again.

5. Think: What can I do about this?

How can I prevent it from happening? If it does happen, how can I limit the effects? These are control measures.

4. Think: is it safe to carry out the task?

Risk = Likelihood of hazard occurring x severity of consequences.

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Continued overleaf

Drinking a cup of coffee. A risky operation?

Having difficulty applying the process? Try and think about an everyday situation, then transfer the process.



You have a cup of hot coffee. You place it at the edge of a table. What could go wrong?

- The most obvious thing that could go wrong is that the coffee could be knocked from the table and spill out.

Therefore the hazard is coffee spill. A hazard is something that can cause you or others harm.



What is the chance of it happening?

- Quite likely if it is close to the edge of the table. It's even more likely if there are people passing close by regularly.
- The likelihood can be higher still if you are on board a vessel that is moving in heavy seas.



How badly will it hurt you or others if it spills out?

- It could scald you or someone nearby.
- The severity of the scald depends on the temperature of the coffee.
- It also depends on if the cup is completely full or nearly empty.
- It might be worse if you are wearing shorts and t-shirt.
- Is your mobile phone, radio or laptop on the table and could they be damaged? Could someone slip on the spilled coffee?



What can I do to reduce the chances of it happening?

- The simplest thing to do is to move the cup away from the edge of the table and away from your electronic devices!

These are known as preventative control measures.



If a spill does happen, what could I do to limit the effects and prevent it from getting worse?

- Is there a first aid kit nearby that is properly stocked and regularly checked? Is there a first aider available to help?
- Would the type of clothes you are wearing make a difference?
- A spill that is cleaned up quickly or immediately removing the wet clothes might reduce the impact.

These are known as mitigating control measures.



Are these reasonable measures?

- Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) or using safety barriers are clearly not reasonable measures for drinking coffee.
- Use common sense!
- Think about the tasks you do in your job – when would PPE or guards be reasonable to make sure you and others stay safe?

Is the risk acceptable? If not, THINK AGAIN!