Risk Assessments using Riskware

At James Cook University it is a requirement that all research projects are assessed for their risk prior to commencement of the project. Risk assessments should be submitted to the online risk management software called *Riskware* which can be found on the JCU website. Online *Riskware* training can be found here: RISKWARE TRAINING VIDEO

What is a risk assessment?

Risk assessment is the process where you:

- Identify hazards.
- Evaluate the risk associated with that hazard.
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control the hazard.

What is the goal of risk assessment?

The aim of the risk assessment process is to remove a hazard or reduce the level of its risk by adding precautions or control measures, as necessary. By doing so, you have created a safer and healthier workplace. Hooray!

What is a hazard?

A hazard is anything in the workplace that has the potential to harm people.

Hazards can include objects in the workplace, such as machinery or dangerous chemicals.

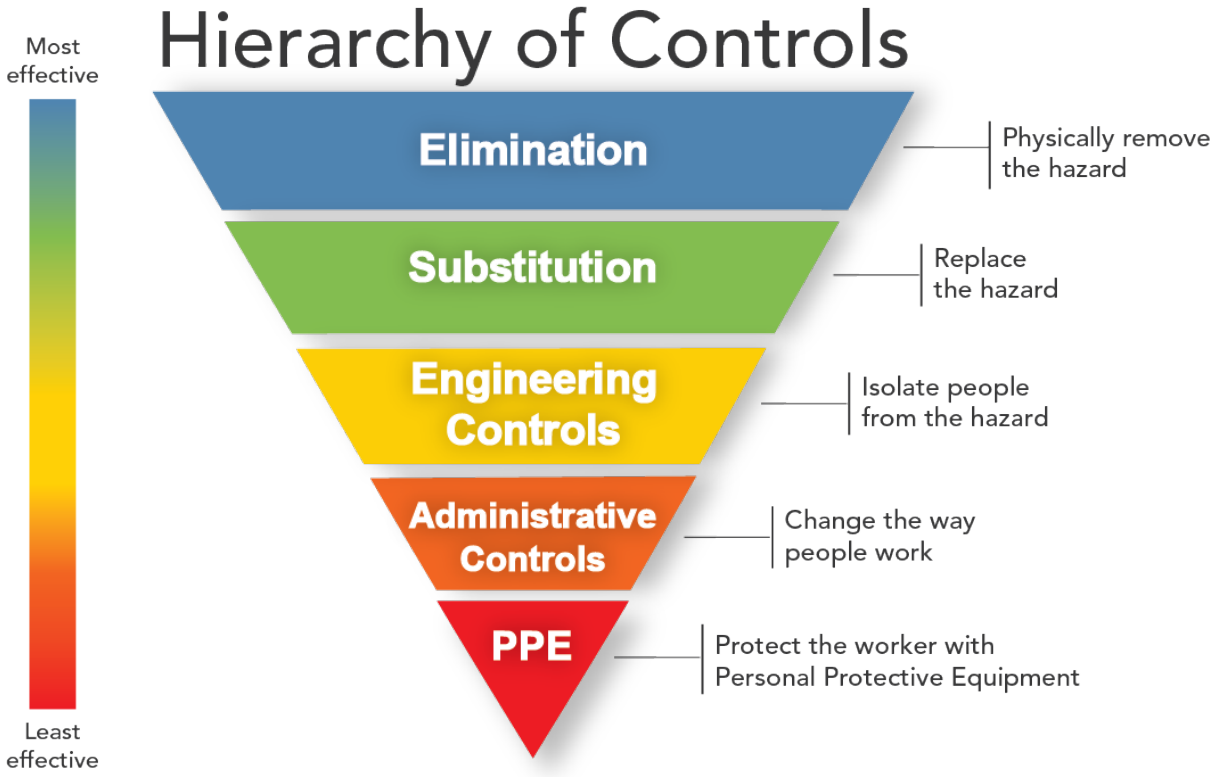
Other hazards relate to the way work is done. For instance, hazards on a production line could include manual handling, excessive noise and fatigue caused by the pace of work.

What is a control measure?

Control measures are actions that can be taken to reduce the potential of exposure to the hazard, the severity of the hazard or the control measure could be to remove the hazard all together. The effectiveness of different control measures is shown in the following Hierarchy of Controls chart.

Electrical hazards at MARFU

Due to the regular use of electrical equipment in wet labs at MARFU we require all electrical equipment to be suitable for wet areas (an IP rating of 56 or higher). This is a control measure that JCU has implemented on behalf of everyone who works in wet areas.



An example of a risk assessment is as follows:

Project – Dissecting fish to remove their otoliths

What potential hazards could be encountered during this work? The fish will be cut up using a scalpel blade so one potential hazard is laceration.

What control measure can we use to minimise the risk of laceration?

Unfortunately the need to use a scalpel blade cannot be eliminated or substituted as there is no other way to dissect a fish.

An engineering control is not suitable either as it would be unfeasible to get robots to do the dissection for you.

A good example of an administrative control is to ensure all people doing the dissections have been trained on how to do this safely and how to appropriately dispose of used scalpel blades. A "Safe Work Method Statement" is a good administrative control.

A good example of PPE is making sure a chain mail glove is worn to protect the worker.

Please note – "Being careful" is not a control measure!

Happy and Safe Researching! ☺