1 Carrying Out a Risk Assessment

1.1 Introduction

A risk assessment is required for every activity which is carried out in the society's name, whether that be a show, training meeting, banquet or even just an advertising stall at a re-enactors market.

It should be noted that events in the name the local group (Herred/Lethang) or individual members utilising our PLI are still "The Vikings" society events.

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what in the course of our activities, could cause harm to people, so that we can determine whether we have taken enough precautions, or actions we must take, to prevent this.

This document lays out the procedure for completing and recording the formal risk assessment.

To assist with this a template document is available in "The Vikings" on-line document store;

http://docs.thevikings.org.uk/departments/24/files

The law states that we must do everything reasonably practicable to make our events safe.

The important thing we have to determine is whether a hazard is significant, and ensure that there are sufficient controls in place to eliminate or minimise the risk.

1.2 Five Steps to Risk Assessment

There are five basic steps to carrying out a risk assessment detailed below;

1.2.1 Step 1: Identify the Hazards

Look for things that could potentially cause people harm.

Example: If an event is taking place in a field which is pockmarked by numerous rabbit burrows, these are a **hazard**.

1.2.2 Step 2: Nature of Harm

For each of the Hazards, decide who may be harmed, and the severity of any potential injury.

Severity may be categorised on a scale as follows;

Category	Definition
1.	Minor Injury
2.	3 Day Injury Injury which prevents the injured person from carrying out their normal work for a period of up to 3 days.
3.	Reportable Injury Injury which prevents the injured person from carrying out their normal work for a period in excess of 3 calendar days, not including the day of the injury itself.
4.	Major Injury a. Any fracture, other than to the fingers, thumbs or toes. b. Any amputation. c. Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine. d. Loss of sight (either temporary or permanent). e. A chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye. f. Any injury which leads to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or to unconsciousness. g. Any injury requiring resuscitation. h. Any injury requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours. i. Loss of consciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent. j. Acute illness which requires medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or toxins or infected material.
5.	Fatality

Example: Everybody who enters the field is at **Risk** of tripping over a hole and sustaining a major injury (i.e. fracturing a limb); this gives the hazard a category 4 rating.

1.2.3 Step 3: Evaluate Risks

For each hazard, the frequency/duration/likelihood of exposure and the likelihood of an injury being sustained should be evaluated. Again, this can be given a category;

Category	Definition
1.	Little or No Exposure / Very Unlikely
2.	Occasional Exposure / Unlikely
3.	Regular Exposure / Likely
4.	Prolonged Exposure / Very Likely
5.	Continuous Exposure / Certain

Example: As our field has numerous holes, and the show site is occupied for three days, the exposure is Regular, and it is Likely that someone will trip and fall, possibly resulting in a major injury; Category 3.

Each hazard is given a cumulative risk rating on a scale of 1 to 25 by multiplying the severity by the likelihood. The rating will then determine which band the hazard falls into.

Risk Rating	Band
01 – 05	Low
06 – 09	Medium
10 – 25	High

Example: Our Severity is category 4, Exposure is category 3; this gives a cumulative Risk Rating of 12 which translates to a “High” Risk banding.

The object is to make all risks small, that is, in the “Low” band. This is achieved by putting controls in place. Typical controls are;

- Remove the Hazard completely (the ideal).
- Prevent access to the Hazard.
- Organise activities to reduce the exposure to the Hazard.
- Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Provision of welfare facilities (wash facilities, first aid etc)

Each Hazard should be re-evaluated with the controls in place, and a residual risk banding established. Ideally, all Hazards should fall into the Low band when controlled.

Example: We could simply fill in the rabbit holes, which would remove the risk entirely, but if it's a big field, this is impractical.

The solution is to limit access using fences and marshalling, and fill in the holes in the areas into which people are allowed. As rabbits tend to re-dig their holes, regular inspection is also required.

This does not reduce the severity of the injury which may be sustained, but it limits the exposure to the risk to category 1.

The residual risk is there for Severity 3 x Exposure 1 = Cumulative factor of 3 i.e. Low.

1.2.4 Step 4: Recording Findings

Significant risks and their controls should be logged on a risk assessment form, and all members must be made aware of the findings.

A risk assessment must be “suitable and sufficient”. We must be able to show that;

- A proper check was made.
- We evaluated who may be affected.
- We have dealt with the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved.
- The controls are reasonable and the residual risk is Low.

The written records will be supplied to and kept by the Health & Safety Officer for future reference or use; they can help us if we are asked what precautions we have taken, or, if we become involved in any action for civil liability.

Risk Assessments for particular events will be kept on record for a period of 5 years from the date of the event.

It is not necessary to restate information contained in other society documents (e.g. the combat rules specify PPE for combatants), but a reference to that document must be included.

1.2.5 Step 5: Review

Risk Assessments are living documents, and each hazard should be re-evaluated on a regular basis, or, when a change in circumstances dictates.

1.3 Submission

The completed risk assessment form should be submitted online by email to;

Vikehs@goose-eg.com

If you have any queries regarding the completion or submission of risk assessment, contact the health and safety team at the addresses in the Runestaff.