# Risk Assessment Introduction

Why do we need a risk assessment and what is its purpose? From the point of view of the SAA, risk assessments are required to identify the hazards present in all aspects of model flying and to help manage the risks of something going wrong which could endanger people, animals, property, or the environment, down to an acceptable level.

It is not our intention to create unnecessary paperwork, but merely to have a means to record what could go wrong and the likelihood that it will go wrong. This will then enable you to design measures that can be put in place to reduce the likelihood of something going wrong and indeed the severity of the outcome.

Club officials and event organisers have a responsibility to ensure that all necessary measures are put in place, as far as is reasonably practicable, to enable model flying to be carried out in manner that is safe for all pilots, helpers, visitors involved as well as members of the public, and animals in the vicinity. Producing a risk assessment will enable club officials to discharge their duty in that respect.

# Responsibility for producing the risk assessment

The person who completes the risk assessment should be an experienced model flyer who has a thorough understanding of the hazards that model flying presents. Very often, they would be a club official or a member of the event organising team. Due diligence in identification of the risks must be applied and there is no reason why others cannot aid the identification of perceived risks.

# Hazard definition

**So again, from an SAA perspective, a hazard is anything that has the potential to cause harm whilst engaged in the sport of model flying.**

# Identifying the Hazards

First you must identify the potential hazards that may be present as a result of the activity being undertaken. Every part of the activity must be considered, along with other persons and animals in the area involved as well as the environment itself.

# Risk Definition

**The definition of a risk is the likelihood that an identified hazard will cause harm**

# Categorising the Risk

Next, once you have identified all the hazards, you must identify the likelihood of that hazard causing harm. You must consider: -

* Who or what could be harmed and how.
* What measures are currently in place, to minimise the risk.
* Decide if the risk level is acceptable.

If at this point, the risk level is deemed to be unacceptable, the following should be considered: -

* Would it be possible to remove any of the hazards, either permanently or temporarily.
* If this is not possible, what further measures can be put in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.
* Who is responsible for implementing any additional measures required.
* When do these additional measures need to be implemented by.

Note it will never be possible to remove all risks but minimising them is essential!

It is essential to record the findings of hazards that may cause harm, who and what could be harmed and any measures that are in place or additional measures that are being implemented to reduce or control the risks.

The Risk Assessment and the measures that have been put in place to mitigate against risk should be periodically reviewed to ensure they are effectively controlling the risks, and that are up dated with any new risk due to occurrences over time.

# Article 16 and Required Risk Assessments

The SAA Article 16 Authorisation requires risk assessments to be completed by clubs in certain circumstances. These are defined below: -

* An established model club which is in a built-up area.
* A flying site in a built-up area which is considered suitable for model flying but in an area which is only used for recreational purposes.
* As part of a request for a display permit.
* When applying for a permit to fly MTOM models >7.5kg above 400ft.

## Hazards to be identified

The hazards that a risk assessment must identify can be extensive, typical hazards may include, but are not limited to the following: -

* Chemicals – Fuels, glues etc.
* Batteries – Charging/Discharging, connecting etc.
* Electrical systems – Connections incorrect or insecure.
* Aircraft – Structural integrity, mechanical linkages, maintenance etc.
* Engines – Starting, noise, propellers, heat etc.
* Flying – Pilot ability, pilot error, structural failure, radio failure etc.
* Uninvolved persons or animals/livestock etc.
* Other airspace users manned or unmanned close to the model location.
* Weather – Sun, wind strength and direction, rain, lightning
* Flying site – Buildings, trees, power lines etc.

Note this list should be treated as a starting point, every flying site is unique, and many will have particular hazards of their own. If in doubt seek help from the SAA Safety Committee.