

RISKY BUSINESS

How to assess and
manage risks when
planning and taking
action

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What is Risk?

When we are talking about risks, we are talking about something (often bad) that might happen.

$$\text{Consequence} \times \text{Likelihood} = \text{Risk}$$

Risk can be estimated based on the likelihood and consequence of the situation occurring.

Consequence: If the situation we have thought of would happen - what would result? Harm to people, environment, reputation?

Likelihood: How likely is it that this situation will unfold?

Using this we can estimate risk by considering both these on a scale of 1-5. This leads us to a simple risk matrix.

Risk Matrix

Consequence	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Likelihood				

A matrix like this can be used to approximate risk in your planning and decision making. By attempting to quantify risks, it becomes easier to identify priorities and important issues.

Example: Banner Drop on Bridge

	Consequence (1-5)	Likelihood (1-5)	Risk (1-25)
Stopped by security	2: Whole thing would be cancelled but no physical confrontation	3: Good chance it might happen	6
Hit by vehicle	4: Serious injury from being hit by car	2: Calm traffic area, so unlikely	8
Someone falls off the bridge	5: Severe injury or death from fall	3: There is a railing, but possible when stressed or mid drop	15

Why do we care about risks?

MITIGATIONS

Some risks we can decrease or even eliminate when we know about them

SAFETY CULTURE

How we think about and act around risks can affect the risk itself a lot. One way to decrease the risk is to ensure the group has a good safety culture

This means people feeling that they can and should inform others when there are signs of danger or risks.

INFORMED DECISIONS

Taking risks is a part of life, but if one is to take a risk it should be an informed decision.

This is the actual and most important reason that we do risk assessments!

Risk assessments are only a tool to allow us to have informed discussions and make informed decisions.

There is no rule on how much residual risk (leftover risk) can be allowed, but it is always good to be aware of any risk so that one can decide on if one is willing to take it.

Add Mitigations to Your Risk Assessment

When we have information about a risk, we can put mitigations in place to decrease the risk. The mitigations can either be hard/physical mitigations, like a fence. Or they can be soft mitigations, like informing people that they should not go near a steep cliff.

One mitigation can help with more than one risk.

In the example below and in the exercise sheet you can see that after identifying your mitigation, you once again estimate the new consequence (1-5) and likelihood (1-5) after mitigation. You can place them in the columns marked C and L to the right of the Mitigation column. This leads to the new leftover risk on the right.

Example: Banner Drop on Bridge

	C (1-5)	L (1-5)	Risk (1-25)	Mitigation	C	L	R
Stopped by security	2	3	6	Have dialogue people or blockers to handle security	1	3	3
Hit by vehicle	4	2	8	Remind people to be careful in traffic	4	1	4
Someone falls off the bridge	5	3	15	Do a briefing on how to behave in heights. Agree in advance to not go over the railing.	5	1	5

Leftover Risk

The residual risk is the amount of risk that is left after our planned mitigation measures are in place. We seldom do things risk free even after mitigation measures.

RISK + MITIGATIONS = RESIDUAL RISK

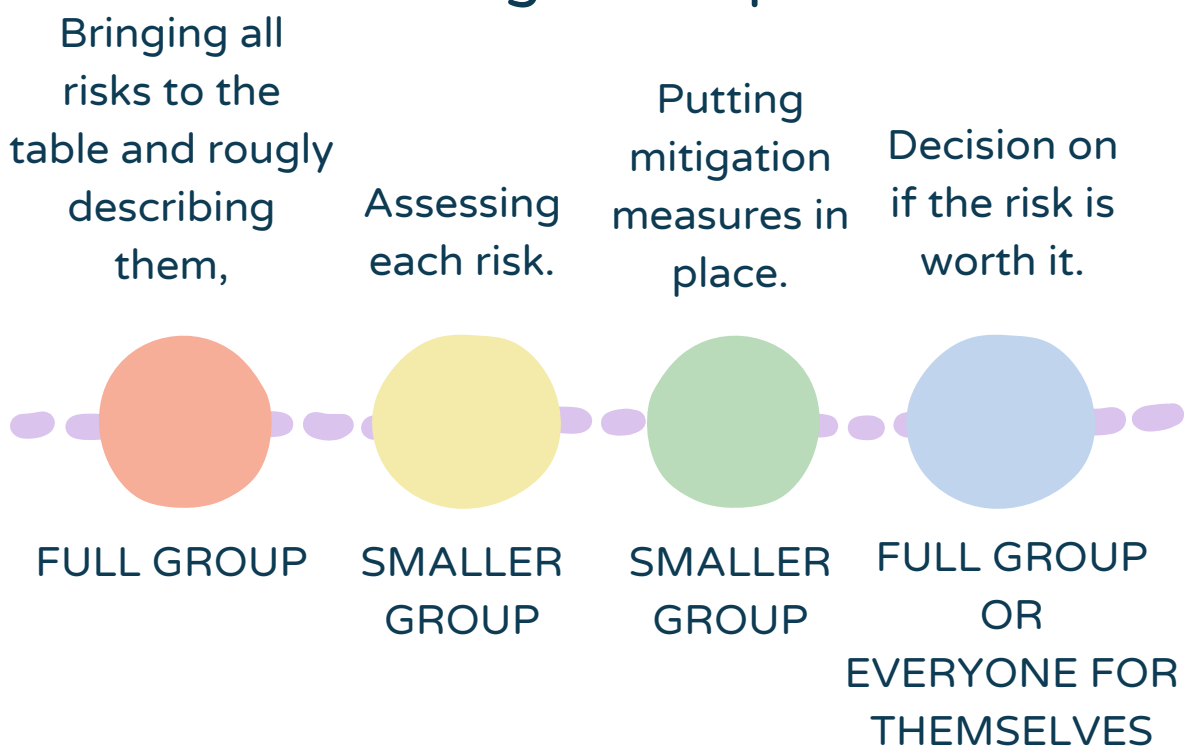
Risk management is no one person show

RISK management is best done INCLUSIVELY
The best risk assessments for actions are done if the whole group gets to join in.

If it is a very big group it can be good to have the group involved at certain parts of the risk assessment, and have a good representation of the group in all parts.

A minimum for any group should be that all are informed about the risk they take and any uncertainties. This of course has to be balanced by info-security depending on your action and how that information is transmitted. Keep this in mind while at the same time giving people all the information they need to take informed risks.

How a Risk Assessment Could Look with a Large Group



About The Movement Hub

The Movement Hub was founded in 2018 from within Greenpeace and Civil Rights Defenders to bring together European activists working on social and climate justice

The Movement Hub empowers anyone fighting for positive change in the world – by providing a platform for learning and sharing stories, tools and techniques.

Visit themovementhub.org to learn more or email us at info@themovementhub.org

