

## *Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying*

### Section ①

#### A. Introduction

This risk assessment tool complements [DI\(G\) PERS 35-3 Management and Reporting of Unacceptable Behaviour](#) and [COMCARE Bullying in the Workplace - A guide to prevention for managers and supervisors](#). It is not intended to be used in the context of specific identifying allegations of bullying. The Defence Instruction outlines the procedures for managing complaints. This tool is aimed at the prevention of bullying in Australian Department of Defence.

Managers should identify, regularly assess and control the potential for workplace bullying that may be present in any activity under their control. This includes social activities that occur external to the workplace; the process prescribed by Defence is outlined in Section ② of this document – *HIRAC Table for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying*:

- in the first and second columns: identify and assess the risks specifically associated with Workplace Bullying;
- in the third column: identify the risk control measures that will effectively and practicably eliminate or minimise the potential for workplace bullying (see B & C below), and implement them in consultation with all stakeholders; and
- in the fourth column: verify that the risks have been eliminated or reduced to LOW.

#### B. Note on Assessing Risks

Risks can usually be assessed through a consultative process that makes use of the participants' experience and judgement. Where necessary, risks can be assessed more formally on the basis of 2 key factors: (a) the likely severity of any potential injury/illness resulting from the hazard and (b) the likelihood that the injury/illness will actually occur. For more information, refer to Section ③ of this document.

#### C. Note on Controlling Risks

Section ③ defines risk categories and risks assessed in category A or B are not acceptable. Effective risk control measures must be implemented to eliminate the risk or bring the residual risk down to category C. The risk control options below are provided as examples. Risk control measures should address the root cause of risks as much as possible. The effective control of any given risk generally involves a number of measures drawn from the various options. A problem-solving approach, flexibility, creativity, and commitment are often required in the development and implementation of bullying prevention plans.

**Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is located on the [FR](#) website.**



## **Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying** continued.../.

### **Risk Control Options:**

Examples:

- providing appropriate training, particularly to those with supervisory responsibilities
- consulting employees and health and safety representatives prior to and during organisational change
- redesigning and clearly defining jobs
- developing a conflict management process
- reducing excessive working hours
- reviewing resource availability
- reviewing staffing levels
- reinforcing 'no bullying' policy during induction period and resources available to seek assistance.

Consultation with unit/organisational health and safety representatives and the health and safety committee (where appropriate) should precede all proposed action to reduce the risk of bullying.

Where personnel have been identified as being at a higher risk of bullying, such as apprentices, trainees the manager/supervisor may want to consider additional measures, such as:

- a 'buddy' system for new staff
- workplace relationships monitoring
- additional training (e.g. workplace diversity and tolerance)
- specific training for supervisors/managers
- developing special prevention programs for personnel at higher risk.

Where it is identified that there is evidence of conflict in the workplace, supervisors and managers should seek further guidance from the Directorate of Alternative Resolutions and Equity (ARE), Fairness and Resolution Branch. ARE manage the Alternative Dispute Resolution program across Defence and coordinate the provision of conflict coaching, mediation and workplace conferencing. Additionally they provide advice on training in conflict resolution and unacceptable behaviour management.

**Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is located on the [FR](#) website.**

**Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying** continued.../.

**Section 2**

**HIRAC Table for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying**

Unit/Base/Location Under Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Personnel Conducting Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify Risk Factors	Risks Identified in this workplace	Initial Risk Assessment (High/Med/Low)	Implemented Control Measures	Residual Risk
<i>Are there factors that may contribute to the risk of bullying in the workplace?</i>				
Organisational change, either restructuring or technological change				
Role conflict				
Ineffective management styles				
Workforce characteristics (e.g. personnel in a minority due to age, gender, ethnicity, disability, parental status, religion or political views; new staff; trainees; apprentices; casuals or contractors.)				
Reports that workplace relationships are unsatisfactory				

**Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is located on the [FR](#) website.**

## Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying continued.../.

Identify Risk Factors	Risks Identified in this workplace	Initial Risk Assessment (High/Med/Low)	Implemented Control Measures	Residual Risk
Reports that workplace communication is poor				
Reports of improper behaviour at social functions				
Tolerance of teasing, practical jokes, or initiation practices				
Lack of appropriate policies and procedures				
High rate and intensity of work, or staff shortages				
Poorly defined jobs or uncertainty about work requirements				
Staff shortages or lack of experience and/or skill				
<i>Are there indirect signs of bullying present?</i>				
Exit interviews that report dissatisfaction with working relationships				
Localised high levels of absenteeism or staff turnover				
Increase in workplace grievances or complaints				
Incident reports or workers compensation claims that allege bullying				

Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is located on the [FR](#) website.

**Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying** continued.../.

Identify Risk Factors	Risks Identified in this workplace	Initial Risk Assessment (High/Med/Low)	Implemented Control Measures	Residual Risk
Negative results from staff climate surveys				
Issues raised at staff meetings				
Number of requests for transfer in particular areas				
Deterioration in work performance				
Deterioration of relationships between colleagues, students or management				
Regular damage to personal effects, clothing, work tools, etc				
Personnel experiencing a number of minor workplace injuries				
Personnel becoming withdrawn or isolated				

Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is located on the [FR](#) website.

**Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for the Prevention of Workplace Bullying** continued.../.

**Section 3**

**Risk Assessment Table**

Risk assessments are based on 2 key factors:

- the likely severity of any injury/illness resulting from the hazard and
- the likelihood that the injury/illness will actually occur

**A - high risk**  
**B - medium risk**  
**C - low risk**

		LIKELIHOOD			
		Almost Certain Could happen any time	Likely Could happen sometime	Possible Could happen, but very rarely	Unlikely Could happen, but probably never will
Severity	<b>Severe</b> Death or permanent disability	A	A	A	B
	<b>Major</b> Long-term illness or serious injury	A	A	B	B
	<b>Moderate</b> Medical attention and short-term incapacity	A	B	B	C
	<b>Minor</b> First aid needed	B	B	C	C

**Table 1: Assessment of risk based on likely severity and likelihood of harm**

Uncontrolled when printed. The current version of this document is located on the [FR](#) website.