

Social Crofting TOOLKITS



Risk Management (and why we need to do it)

Author: Sarah Asher, Darach Croft

Risk Management involves assessing hazards and evaluating what you can do to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of harm occurring. By completing this process, you are demonstrating good practice, and this will help to keep people safe, keep your croft businesses safe and meet the requirements of funders, insurers, commissioners and, depending on how many people you employ, Health and Safety legislation.

Risk management is not about creating unnecessary paperwork, it is about identifying practical ways of reducing the risk of harm. Risk management is about making sure that hazards have been considered and measures taken to reduce the risk of harm occurring, enabling activities to go ahead as safely as possible. In a social crofting context, risk management includes ensuring people who visit your croft or project can do things as safely as possible, it is not about stopping people participating in activities.

Hazards, Risks, Harm and Risk Reduction

What is a 'Hazard'?

A hazard can be described as a situation involving exposure to danger that can cause harm.

What is 'Harm'?

Harm is the negative impact that the activity or environment may cause. This can include physical injury (or potentially death) or infection transmission, but it can also include feeling excluded if people are not able to participate or access activities that others are doing.

What is a 'Risk'?

A risk is how likely harm is to occur during an activity or situation.

Examples of hazards in Social Crofting may include:

- Movement of vehicles such as quad bikes, tractors and delivery vehicles
- Getting trodden on, kicked or knocked over by livestock
- Toxoplasmosis at lambing time is a risk, especially for pregnant women

Social Crofting TOOLKITS



Risk Management (and why we need to do it)

Author: Sarah Asher, Darach Croft

These are things that you probably already manage without even thinking about it, but your visitors may not be aware of some of these potential dangers. As such you need to manage the risks to create an environment that is as safe as possible.

Assessing risk is about identifying situations, environments, activities and equipment with the potential to cause harm, and assessing the likelihood and possible impact of the hazard.

Reducing Risk or Mitigating Risk

The first step is to think about the activity and the environment where it will be carried out, then you can start to consider ways to reduce the hazards and the likelihood of harm occurring. It is important that the ideas you have here are practical and you can actually implement them. If your risk reduction ideas are practical then you will be more likely to implement them - if you have ideas which for example may be costly or require too many people then they will not be practical to put in place.

There are many risk assessment systems and approaches, with some that 'score' risk, or classify them using a traffic light system, by evaluating the likelihood and the potential impact of the risks. Likelihood is the probability of the situation or incident occurring and the impact is the effect that it could have. Once you have identified your social croft risks, consider the likelihood and impact of the risk, as this will help you assess if it is low risk, medium risk or high risk.

An example of a hazard – You need to keep a bull through summer as you want calves in spring, but it is potentially unsafe for people to be in the field with the bull.

An example of a practical solution - Ensure that the bull is adequately housed or fenced; that all gates are secure; and plan for activities to be completed in a field away from the bull. If your activity involves the bull, then ensure that your handling systems are suitable and fit for purpose, that you or your team have adequate training and experience and that the bull you are planning to work with has a suitable temperament.

Social Crofting TOOLKITS



Risk Management (and why we need to do it)

Author: Sarah Asher, Darach Croft

Useful Resources

www.gov.uk/guidance/farm-health-and-safety

www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/pdf/childsafetyce.pdf>

<https://www.yellowwellies.org/>

