

Example

Risk assessment for a service business

This example reviews a fictitious consulting firm risk assessment. It looks at driving-related hazards and how the organization can rate them. The information is used to create a list of priorities for reducing risk. Use this example to help understand the risk assessment process.



The organization and its work driving needs

Top Notch Consultants provides geotechnical services to the oil and gas and pipeline sectors. Its 3 senior partners periodically travel BC to meet with clients, deliver reports, and conduct site works. They use late-model SUVs owned by Top Notch. Four staff work at the main office and don't drive for work. Top Notch's 24 engineers and assistants are mainly in the field and use their own vehicles for work. Most days each drives 100 to 200 km of highways and resource roads, where they encounter logging trucks, low beds, tanker trucks, and road maintenance crews.

Top Notch requires employee-owned work vehicles to be half ton or three-quarter ton 4-wheel drive pickups, with not more than 250,000 km.

The organization's risk assessment

One risk assessment covers the various driving hazards, even with the differences in city versus highway and resource road driving.

Top Notch's senior partners do far more city driving than any of the engineers and far few kilometres overall. Field employees need to be prepared for city driving, and the senior partners for bush roads, when they are in those situations.

Top Notch first decided which hazards and contributing factors apply to its driving needs. With help from drivers, the company assigns a High, Medium, or Low" ranking to each, based on probability and severity.

From the 50 hazards and contributing factors they identified, the 5 highest-ranking hazards in each category were chosen as priorities to address.

The table on the next page shows their results.

Road safety hazard identification and risk assessment

Hazard category	Hazard / contributing factor	Probability of occurrence	Severity of consequences	Risk ranking
Driver	Doesn't recognize driving hazards or hazardous conditions and/or adapt driving accordingly	High	High	9
Driver	Distraction (texting or talking on cell phone, other electronic device such as GPS, radio, etc.	High	High	9
Driver	Insufficient orientation or training. Driver lacks necessary competencies or is unfamiliar with operating procedures	Medium	High	6
Driver	Fatigue, reduced vigilance, slower reactions, poor decisions	Medium	High	6
Driver	Failure to pay attention to driving responsibilities	Medium	Medium	4
Journey	Poor traction conditions in transition between seasons: freeze / thaw cycles, shaded corners, etc.	Medium	High	6
Journey	Poor visibility due to fog, excessive dust, driving at sunset / sunrise	High	Medium	6
Journey	No check-in procedure, emergency procedures, or communications device	Medium	High	6
Journey	Aggressive or high-risk driving (failing to yield, passing when unsafe) by others	Medium	High	6
Journey	Collision with oncoming vehicle	Medium	High	6
Vehicle	Improperly adjusted seat and headrest (MSI strain, visibility)	High	Medium	6
Vehicle	Loose items in cab, disorganized driving workspace	Medium	High	6
Vehicle	Vehicle not equipped with winter equipment such as chains, windshield washer fluid, blankets, shovel, etc.	Medium	High	6
Vehicle	Vehicle not equipped with year-round emergency equipment such as first aid kits, tools, hi-vis vest, etc.	Medium	High	6
Vehicle	Vehicle not regularly inspected	Medium	Medium	4

The organization's actions

With their road safety priorities set, Top Notch Consultants started thinking about how to address each of the hazards and contributing factors. For several of those, the answers seemed clear:

- A distracted driving policy prohibiting phone use
- A more diligent approach to existing check-in procedures
- A process to ensure vehicle inspections, included checking for emergency equipment