Guide for Writing a Risk Assessment Procedure

1. Start with the procedure template specific to your company.
   - Most procedures include beginning sections on the purpose and scope of the procedure, the people responsible for implementing it, forms referenced, definitions, etc.
   - AWO defines Risk Assessment as "A process that includes identifying hazards and analyzing or evaluating the risk associated with those hazards to determine if existing controls are adequate, or if additional controls to eliminate or reduce the risk to an acceptable level to the organization are needed."
2. Risk Discovery/Identification
   - Your procedure should begin by explaining how you will identify risks to assess. Use the RCP language as a guide: it requires that the procedure assesses risks to personnel, vessels, the environment, and that are introduced by changes to equipment, staffing, or procedures. Therefore, some examples of ways risks may be discovered/identified include changes to boat crews, new hires in the office, incident investigation findings, and updating procedures as a result of a new regulation or audit findings.
   - A formal Risk Assessment is related to, but not the same as, other risk evaluation tools that you may have procedures for, such as Job Safety Analyses (JSAs), toolbox talks, pre-job huddles, and last minute risk assessments (such as Stop Assess Focus Execute, or SAFE)
   - When you select a risk to assess, be as specific as possible about describing it. It's usually easiest to describe a detailed scenario.
3. Primary Risk Evaluation/Assessment
   - Next, explain how you will evaluate or assess the risk that has been discovered and selected.
   - Usually, this is done by first listing the existing controls that you currently have in place for mitigating the risk.
   - Then, explain the categories of risk you will use. Some common categories are risk to people, risk to the environment, and risk to property.
   - Next, explain how you will assess the risk. Common methods include assessing the likelihood of the risk occurring and the severity of the consequences of the risk. Be explicit about the criteria you will use.
     - For example, for likelihood, you could have categories that include unlikely, somewhat likely, and very likely.
     - For severity, you could have categories that include inconsequential, moderate, and severe.
     - Define what these mean (ex: very likely means will occur at least once a week, severe means loss of life or large oil spill/equipment damage).
     - Also, consider developing a Risk Matrix. This will help you determine the overall level of risk based on the categories you choose. See below for a generic example.

		Severity of Consequence		
		Inconsequential	Moderate	Severe
Likelihood of Occurrence	**Unlikely**	Low Risk	Medium Risk	Medium Risk
	Somewhat Likely	Medium Risk	Medium Risk	High Risk
	Very Likely	Medium Risk	High Risk	High Risk

- Then, state that you will evaluate if the existing controls are acceptable in mitigating the risk. If they are, the Risk Assessment is over.

4. Secondary Risk Evaluation/Assessment
   - If the existing controls are not acceptable in mitigating the risk, state that you will develop additional controls. You should state that these controls will be documented and implemented.
   - Also explain that, based on these new controls, the risk will either be deemed acceptable or not acceptable. State that, if controls cannot be implemented to reduce the risk to an acceptable level, the action/activitywill not be performed any longer.

5. Other Items
   - Other items you may want to explain in your procedure include:
     - How the Risk Assessment team members will be selected, and their roles (facilitator, note taker, technical expert, etc.)
     - Evaluating multiple categories of risk that may be present in one scenario (ex: risk to environment AND risk to property)
     - The level of risk that is automatically deemed acceptable and/or unacceptable. For example, you may want to say that all risks deemed High Risk are automatically not acceptable and require either additional controls or halting the action.
     - Guidelines on when Risk Assessments should be done
     - Informing relevant managers about the Risk Assessment and new controls
     - Requiring manager approval of Risk Assessments
     - Re-assessing risk after implementing the new controls
     - Developing a way to track the implementation of the new controls

6. Risk Assessment Form
   - Develop a form where you document your Risk Assessments.
   - It should include fields for the all of the elements of the procedure.

Risk Assessment Flow Chart

Summary of the steps taken during a Risk Assessment.

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│     Risk Discovery/Identification    │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Select Risk to Assess (Scenario) │
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│             Identify Risk            │
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│         List Existing Controls       │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Primary Risk Evaluation/Assessment │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Determine if Risk is Acceptable  │
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│    Develop New Risk Control Measures │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Secondary Risk Evaluation/Assessment│
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Determine if Risk Is Acceptable  │
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