How do I know if the Low-Risk Contractor requires a risk assessment?

If there is a foreseeable risk that any person could potentially incur illness or injury as a direct result of the work done by a Contractor, they will require a Risk Assessment. This Risk Assessment must detail any controls they will implement to reduce the level of risk (eg a guest lecturer where there is no practical involvement of those attending the lecture would not require a risk assessment). If this were a workshop where attendees had to be involved in a physical or practical component where there is a potential for injury, a risk assessment would be required. An event vendor or a musical band (ie selling food), would not require a risk assessment. A performer who juggles fire and/or encourages audience participation will need a risk assessment.

What information should be included in a risk assessment?

What is included in a risk assessment will be determined by the level of risk involved.

Basically a risk assessment must contain:

- a list of hazards identified associated with the work to be undertaken
- the controls that are to be implemented to reduce the risk associated with these hazards

For a performer juggling fire torches, the risk identified may be the dropping of a torch and the accidental burning of the performer and/or a member of the audience. Controlling this risk may include: using experienced performers, erecting a barrier to prevent the audience from getting too close; ensuring there are first aid facilities; locating the performance to ensure performer has ample room; cancellation in the event of strong winds etc.

What do I do with the risk assessment once it has been submitted?

You should be familiar with the work you are engaging the Contractor to do, so ensure that the work is covered in the risk assessment. Check that the controls the Contractor has listed are actually designed to reduce the risk—eg lifting a large pin board “carefully” is not a good control; using two people to lift or a lifting device is more likely to prevent injury. Think about what you would want in place to prevent injury if you were doing the task. If you are not sure, consult with HR HSW and/or your colleagues. If the risk assessment is not satisfactory discuss your concerns with the Contractor and if necessary request that they resubmit the risk assessment (addressing your concerns). You should keep the risk assessment on file for at least twelve months post completion of the work (in most circumstances, work cover claims must be lodged within twelve months of injury, so it is good to keep a copy of the risk assessment for this purpose).

Does a Contractor need to submit a risk assessment every time they come to work at USC?

If the work they are doing is different from what is on their previously submitted risk assessment—yes. If the risk assessment is over twelve months old it must be reviewed by the Contractor and resubmitted (all risk assessments must be reviewed every twelve months, or if there is any change to the activities/tasks and/or work environment). If the work the Contractor is doing is similar (in that it has the same hazards and controls) to the work on their previous risk assessment; there are no new hazards in the environment they are to work in and the risk assessment is dated less than twelve months ago, they do not need to submit a new risk assessment.

What do I do if the Contractor is doing work that is not specified in their risk assessment?

This is considered a Safety Breach, treat accordingly. You may have to request that the Contractor resubmit more detailed safety documents.

How do I know that the Contractor has done the online induction?

You can do this by:

- Sighting a copy of their completion certificate, or
- Contacting HR HSW to check the database

Why do I need to do a site induction if the Contractor has already done the online induction and has the Contractor Induction Guide?

The online induction and the Induction Guide give general USC information, not necessarily specific to the area where the Contractor is going to be working. They need to know specific emergency escape routes, location of the emergency evacuation assembly area for where they are working, location of nearest amenities and if there are any specific hazards in the area they are to be working (eg they may be setting up a display outside a full lecture theatre, from which 200 students will leave whilst they are working; there may be other Contractors in the area that could affect their work and/or access; there might be exams in progress; USC might have a planned utilities outage during the day that they should know about). For some Contractors you may be able to convey this information in a letter or email, detailing any required information and including a map indicating any emergency information and the location of amenities. In some situations, particularly if there are other hazards to be considered or it is the Contractor’s first time at USC, you will need to conduct the site induction.

What actions do I take if there is a safety breach?

If you are alerted to a safety breach you are to ask the Contractor to cease work. Make them aware of the breach and indicate that it is not in accordance with the details of their contract, and that they must rectify the breach before they are to recommence work. If the Contractor does not comply with your request, contact both Security and HR HSW. If they do comply but further breaches are observed, request that they cease work and contact both Security and HR HSW.
What do I do if the work specifications of the contract change?

If the specifications of the contract change you should revisit the USC Contractors Health and Safety Guidelines and associated documents to ensure that both you and the Contractor have fulfilled your obligations. You may need to reclassify the Contractor and hence additional documentation may be required. Most importantly you must ensure that the safety documents the Contractor has submitted cover the new work they are doing; if not they may have to update their documents.

Are Contractors and their workers required to complete the online induction every time they work at USC?

Completion of the induction is required on an annual basis. If you are unsure if the Contractor you have engaged is up to date with the induction you can contact HR HSW as they have a record of Contractor inductions.

What do I do if the Contractor I wish to engage will not complete the induction and/or will not submit the required safety documents?

It must be emphasised to Contractors that USC’s Contractor induction training and the requirement for specific safety documents are legislative requirements. Contractors who refuse to complete USC’s safety requirements cannot be engaged to work at USC. Engaging a Contractor who has not completed the Induction and/or will not submit the required safety documents, means that, not only is the Contractor not fulfilling their legislative requirements, neither is the person engaging their services.

What is high risk work?

As defined by Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011, is any work that involves any of the following:

- a risk of a person falling more than 2m
- work carried out on a telecommunication tower
- demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing or otherwise related to the physical integrity of the structure
- is likely to involve, the disturbance of asbestos
- involves structural alterations or repairs that require temporary support to prevent collapse
- work carried out in or near a confined space
- work carried out in or near a shaft or trench with an excavated depth greater than 1.5m, or
  - a tunnel
- involves the use of explosives
- work carried out on or near pressurised gas distribution mains or piping
- work carried out on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines
- work carried out on or near energised electrical installations or services
- work carried out in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
- involves tilt-up or precast concrete
- work carried out on, in or adjacent to a road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor that is in use by traffic other than pedestrians
- work carried out in an area at a workplace in which there is any movement of powered mobile plant
- work carried out in an area in which there are artificial extremes of temperature
- work carried out in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning
- involves diving work

Are all workers involved in the contract required to do the USC online induction, even if they are only involved in a minor part of the work at USC?

Yes – ALL workers are required to do the induction; this is a legal requirement.

Are Contractors that are engaged by USC but not actually working at USC still required to do the Contractor induction?

Yes – ALL Contractors working at or for USC are required to have a safety induction.

What do I do if the Contractor arrives at USC to do urgent work, or work that cannot be done at another time and they have not completed their induction?

Work cannot commence if the induction has not been done. The USC Contact Person must arrange for the Contractor to complete the induction prior to starting work, even if the work is urgent. Ideally Contractors who have already completed the induction will be engaged to undertake such work.