

Title	Reducing risks, protecting people	
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Executive Summary	<p>We are pleased to present the document Reducing risks, protecting people revised in the light of comments on the discussion document.</p> <p>The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published the original discussion document Reducing risks, protecting people in May 1999. It set out how the statutory bodies responsible for the administration of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ('the HSW Act') approached those decisions about the management of risk that are required of them under the Act. For the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) these include making arrangements to secure the health, safety and welfare of people at work, and the health and safety of the public, in the way undertakings are conducted – including proposing new laws and standards, conducting research and providing information and advice. HSE advises and assists HSC in its functions, including the preparation of draft regulations and Approved Codes of Practice. It has some specific statutory responsibilities of its own, notably for the enforcement of health and safety law, the licensing of nuclear power stations and dealing with a variety of safety case regimes etc. Local authorities also have statutory responsibilities for enforcement of health and safety law, mainly in the distribution, retail, office, leisure and catering sectors.</p> <p>A major purpose of the document was to set out an overall framework for decision taking by HSE which would ensure consistency and coherence across the full range of risks falling within the scope of the Health and Safety at Work Act. This framework was based on the method which HSE applies to the control of risk at nuclear power stations, originally published in 1988 as The tolerability of risks from nuclear power stations (TOR).²</p> <p>Events since the publication of the discussion document have reinforced the need to publish a description of HSE's decision-making process. Over recent years, public concern over such matters as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), railway safety and food safety has intensified the call for openness about how decisions are taken on the regulation of risks. The public is also more aware that, given few activities are without any risk, there must be a balance between the health and safety measures introduced to eliminate or control risks, and the costs arising or benefits forgone when the measures are introduced. Hence the recent lively debate about where that balance lies.</p> <p>Not surprisingly, there was great interest in the discussion document. It was widely distributed both in print and electronically in a portable format. We received over 150 responses, many of them representing consolidated replies from a number of interested parties, and around 10 000 hits on the Internet site. We thank all those who have responded.</p> <p>Your comments have proved invaluable and the new version has taken them into account.</p>	
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