



Risk Assessment Workshop Guide for Public Power Utilities

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Introduction

Welcome to the risk assessment workshop guide. This guide offers a comprehensive approach to facilitating risk assessment workshops specifically tailored for public power utilities. It provides recommendations on planning, facilitating, and preparing for risk assessment workshops, ensuring that participants, regardless of their experience level, can effectively evaluate and prioritize risks.

Risk assessment workshops are crucial for enhancing an enterprise risk management (ERM) program. They engage stakeholders in evaluating identified risks and contribute to a more informed and proactive risk management culture within the utility.

Keywords Explained

A **workshop** is an interactive session where participants collaborate to achieve specific goals. In risk management, a workshop helps identify and assess potential risks.

Facilitation is guiding group interactions during workshops. Facilitators ensure focused discussions and comprehensive risk assessment.

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating identified risks to determine their likelihood of occurring and potential impact on the utility. This step helps prioritize risks and develop appropriate mitigation strategies.

Likelihood is the probability that a particular risk will occur. It is typically rated on a scale (e.g., low, medium, high) to quantify the risk's chance of happening.

Impact is the potential consequences or severity of a risk if it occurs. Impact is assessed based on how significantly the risk could affect the utility's operations, finances, or reputation.

Risk scores are numerical values derived from combining the assessed likelihood and impact of a risk. This score helps prioritize risks by indicating their overall significance and urgency. Risk scores are typically used to rank risks and guide decision-making regarding mitigation efforts.

Controls are measures and procedures currently in place to manage or mitigate identified risks. Controls are evaluated to determine their effectiveness in reducing the likelihood or impact of risks.

Mitigation strategies are actions planned or implemented to reduce the likelihood or impact of risks. These strategies are developed based on the assessment of risks and aim to minimize potential negative outcomes.

Risk owners are individuals or teams responsible for monitoring and managing specific risks. They ensure that mitigation strategies are effectively implemented and that the risk is managed within acceptable limits.

Planning the Workshop

Before the Workshop

The following checklist outlines preparations to consider prior to the workshop.

Before Workshop Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Identify workshop facilitators and planning team members<input type="checkbox"/> Define workshop objectives<input type="checkbox"/> Create a budget<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain leadership support for the workshop (obtain funding approval if requested)<input type="checkbox"/> Identify workshop participants and ideal number of participants<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule the workshop and send out all calendar invitations<input type="checkbox"/> Design workshop<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Workshop format○ Activities (e.g., table activities, discussion questions, etc.)○ Internal and/or external speakers○ Assign facilitators○ Facilitation approach and strategies○ Assign notetakers○ Develop a contingency plan<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare logistics<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Venue○ Seating arrangements○ Food/beverage supplies○ Equipment, audio, visual, etc.○ Printed materials○ Other supplies (e.g., pen, markers, notepads, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare the risk register as pre-workshop material<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Update the risk register as needed○ Share the risk register with participants before the workshop to allow them time to review and familiarize themselves with the risks○ Additional reference materials<input type="checkbox"/> Close to workshop date<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Practice workshop and timing○ Send out reminders○ Confirm logistics and speakers

During the Workshop

The following checklist details steps to consider during the workshop

During Workshop Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Logistics and Set-Up<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Form small groups or tables to seat 4-6 participants each○ Food/beverage set up○ Audio/video and equipment check○ Set out printed materials○ Participation check-in<input type="checkbox"/> Break into Small Groups<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Based on the chosen method (dividing risks or rotating), assign each group a set of risks or topics to assess<input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate the Discussion<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ensure each group has a facilitator to guide discussions, keep track of time, and assist with scoring and planning○ Have each group document their findings and recommendations on a Risk Assessment Form<input type="checkbox"/> Group Reporting<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Have each group present their risk scores, mitigation strategies, and any notable observations or concerns○ Facilitate a discussion to align scores and strategies, addressing any discrepancies between groups

After the Workshop

The following checklist outlines activities to consider after the workshop.

After Workshop Checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Review Results<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Collect the completed Risk Assessment Forms from each table or group○ Integrate the final risk scores and mitigation plans into the updated risk register<input type="checkbox"/> Follow-Up<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Distribute the updated risk register and action plans to all participants○ Schedule follow-up meetings to track the implementation of mitigation actions and review progress<input type="checkbox"/> Brief senior leadership on workshop outcomes and next steps

Dividing Participants for the Risk Assessment Workshop

Facilitating a risk assessment workshop requires a shift from the objectives of the risk assessment workshop. The focus here is on evaluating and scoring risks that have already been identified. To ensure the most accurate and insightful risk assessment, it is crucial to involve participants who have detailed knowledge and experience related to these risks. Typically, this would include middle management roles such as operations managers, customer service managers, utility operations supervisors, safety officers, and similar positions. These individuals oversee day-to-day operations and are well-acquainted with the identified risks.

Here are two effective strategies for organizing participants during the risk assessment workshop:

	Step	Activities	Example
Option 1: Divide Risks by Table	Assign Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribute the list of risks among different tables or groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table 1 reviews operational risks, Table 2 reviews safety risks, Table 3 reviews financial risks Complex risks like regulatory changes go to senior managers
	Provide Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give detailed instructions for assigned risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a scoring scale (e.g., Likelihood: 1-5) and a mitigation template Include guiding questions (e.g., "What controls are in place?")
	Facilitate Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a facilitator or note-taker to each table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitators keep discussions on track and address questions Facilitators ensure all risks are evaluated thoroughly
Option 2: Rotate Participants	Initial Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with a collective or smaller group discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with a full-group discussion on all risks Use breakout sessions for initial assessments
	Rotate Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotate participants to different tables or groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotate participants to review and refine previous group's work Each rotation includes new details or additional risks
	Consolidate Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect feedback from all groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather completed Risk Assessment Forms Final session where tables present findings and integrate feedback

Sample Risk Assessment Questions

Below are some questions to ask the participants during the risk assessment workshop.

Category	Questions
General Risk Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you assess the significance of the risks your team encounters daily, in terms of their potential impact on operations? Based on recent incidents, how would you evaluate the effectiveness of our current risk management strategies?
Likelihood and Impact Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you rate the likelihood of this risk occurring within the next year, and what evidence supports this assessment? If this risk were to materialize, what would be the projected impact on our operations, and how would it affect our key performance indicators?
Existing Mitigation Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How effective are our current mitigation measures in reducing the risk, and what metrics do we use to evaluate their performance? Are there any observable gaps or areas for improvement in our existing risk management strategies?
Developing Mitigation Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What additional measures could we implement to enhance our mitigation efforts for this risk, and how would we prioritize these measures? Are there emerging technologies or innovative processes that could improve our risk management strategies?
Responsibility and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who should be assigned the responsibility for implementing and overseeing the new mitigation strategies, and how will their effectiveness be evaluated? What methods and frequency should we use to monitor and assess the effectiveness of our risk mitigation strategies over time?
Post-Event Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflecting on past incidents where this risk materialized, how would you evaluate our response and the lessons learned? What changes should be made to improve our risk management practices? How can the insights from previous incidents be applied to enhance our current risk assessment and mitigation approaches?
Safety-Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of safety, which risks are assessed as most critical in your daily operations, and how do these risks influence our overall safety strategy? How effective are the immediate actions taken in response to identified safety risks, and what improvements could be made?
Utility Operations-Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key operational risks that could potentially disrupt our ability to provide reliable service, and how would you assess their impact on service delivery? How effective are our current methods for managing and monitoring these operational risks, and where could enhancements be made?
IT and Cybersecurity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What cybersecurity threats are assessed as posing the greatest risk to our systems, and how do we evaluate the potential impact of these threats? How regularly are our cybersecurity protocols updated and vulnerability assessments conducted, and how do we measure their effectiveness?
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What environmental risks are currently assessed as impacting our operations, and how do these risks influence our environmental management strategy? How effective are our current measures for ensuring compliance with environmental regulations, and where can we improve?
Emergency Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How would you assess our preparedness to respond to natural disasters such as hurricanes or wildfires, and what factors contribute to this assessment? What improvements could be made to our emergency response plans to enhance our readiness and effectiveness in managing such events?

Virtual Risk Assessment Workshop

Utilities can consider hosting the risk assessment workshop virtually if schedules or resources do not permit an in-person workshop.

Virtual Risk Assessment Workshop Considerations
<p>Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set clear goals for the workshop, such as finalizing risk scores and mitigation plans. • Select Platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Choose a reliable virtual meeting platform (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams) that supports breakout rooms and screen sharing. • Prepare Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create and distribute a digital risk register to all participants. ○ Develop and share templates for scoring and mitigation planning. • Invite Participants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure the right stakeholders are invited, including those with detailed knowledge of the risks.
<p>During the Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brief introduction by the facilitator, overview of workshop goals, and instructions for the virtual format. • Review Risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share the risk register and key details via screen share or in a shared document. • Breakout Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Divide participants into breakout rooms, each assigned a subset of risks to evaluate. • Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bring participants back to the main session and discuss preliminary findings from each breakout room. • Scoring and Mitigation Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use shared documents or virtual whiteboards for collaborative scoring and planning. • Review and Consolidation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Present consolidated findings and discuss any discrepancies or additional insights. • Wrap-Up and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review action items, assign responsibilities, and schedule follow-up meetings if necessary.
<p>Post-Workshop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Compile notes and final risk scores from the workshop. ○ Share a summary report with all participants. • Follow-Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address any outstanding issues or additional feedback. ○ Schedule follow-up meetings or sessions as needed to finalize risk management plans.

Facilitation Tips

Facilitating a successful risk assessment workshop requires skillful guidance and thoughtful planning. As the facilitator, consider the following tips to ensure a productive and engaging session:

Facilitation Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a Positive Atmosphere <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Begin the workshop with a friendly introduction and an overview of what to expect○ Foster an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing their insights○ Use interactive tools (like polls or chat) to engage participants throughout the workshop
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clearly Define Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Clearly state the goals of the workshop — assessing and scoring identified risks○ Make sure everyone knows why evaluating these risks is crucial for the utility's operations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Use Structured Techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use virtual whiteboards or shared documents for collaborative brainstorming○ Prompt participants to explore various risk scenarios and solutions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ask Probing Questions (<i>refer to page 6 of this guide</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use prepared questions to delve deeper into each risk's likelihood and impact
<input type="checkbox"/>	Active Listening <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Focus on participants' contributions and respond to their input○ Address any unclear points and summarize key ideas to ensure understanding○ Record scoring and assessment details on virtual whiteboards or collaborative documents○ Ensure clarity by grouping related assessment outcomes together
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage Diverse Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ensure participants from various departments and expertise levels are included○ Encourage contributions from both technical and non-technical participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Manage Time Wisely <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Stick to the agenda○ Allocate sufficient time for each agenda item○ If discussions veer off track, gently guide participants back to the topic
<input type="checkbox"/>	Prioritize Risks Collaboratively <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use virtual voting tools or consensus-building methods to prioritize risks based on their impact and likelihood
<input type="checkbox"/>	Document Everything <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Assign a notetaker to capture discussions, decisions, and action items○ Ensure accurate documentation for future reference
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stay Neutral and Objective <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ As the facilitator, avoid expressing personal opinions○ Focus on the process and outcomes rather than advocating for specific risks
<input type="checkbox"/>	End on a Positive Note <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Summarize key takeaways○ Express gratitude for participants' contributions

Workshop Agenda

Date:

Location:

Timing	Activity	Purpose of the Activity	Preparation and Materials

Risk Assessment Workshop – Facilitator’s Guide

Event: Date: Time: Facilitators:
Workshop Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert objective here]</i> • <i>[Insert objective here]</i> • <i>[Insert objective here]</i> • <i>[Insert objective here]</i>

Timing	Activity	Purpose	Materials	Lead(s)
[1 hour]	<u>Set-up</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move tables and chairs to sit 10 per table • Put writing materials on each table • Food/beverage set up • <i>[Insert set-up activities]</i> • <i>[Insert set-up activities]</i> • <i>[Insert set-up activities]</i> 	Ensure workshop location is ready. <i>[insert purpose]</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tablecloths • Pens/markers/paper • Utensils/cups/napkins • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[15 mins]	<u>Introduction</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader’s welcome • Workshop team introduction • Workshop objectives • Agenda walk-through • Participation introductions • Clarify participants’ role • Housekeeping (bathroom, breaks, etc.) 	Establish rapport and clarify workshop goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projector • Computer/laptop • Screen • Slides • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[20 mins]	<u>Review of Risk Identification Results</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present and discuss the risk register and any updates • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> 	Ensure a shared understanding of identified risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed risk register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[45 mins]	<u>1st Activity Review: Discussion and Scoring of Risks</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss risks in small groups, score them, and reconcile scores with the full group • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> 	Assess and score the likelihood and impact of each risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing materials • Post-it notepads • Tape • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[15 mins]	<u>Break</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food/beverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[30 mins]	<u>2nd Activity: Existing Mitigation Strategies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing strategies and discuss their effectiveness and any gaps 	Evaluate current mitigation efforts and identify gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides • Writing materials • Printed materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>

Timing	Activity	Purpose	Materials	Lead(s)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide time for participants to fill out rest of the form and discuss with the table • Focus on bottom half of the form (e.g., risk rating, current mitigations in place, proposed mitigations) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> 	
[45 mins]	<p>3rd Activity: Developing Mitigation Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorm and prioritize mitigation actions, assign responsibilities • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> 	Create and prioritize new mitigation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides • Writing materials • Printed materials • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[15 mins]	Break		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food/beverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[20 mins]	<p>4th Activity: Finalizing the Risk Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and agree on final scores and plans, update the risk register • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> • <i>[Insert additional activities]</i> 	Confirm risk scores and finalize mitigation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides • Writing materials • Printed materials • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> • <i>[Insert materials]</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>
[10 mins]	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize key findings, discuss next steps, and express appreciation • Next Steps 	Summarize outcomes and outline next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>[Insert individual names]</i>

Risk Assessment Form for Table Discussion/Group Discussion

Table Instructions

With your table, review the assigned risks and complete the rest of the form.

Risk ID	Risk Description	Risk Category	Likelihood (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Initial Risk Score (Likelihood x Impact)	Current Controls/ Mitigation Measures	Proposed Risk Owner	Adjusted Likelihood (1-5)	Adjusted Impact (1-5)	Residual Risk Score (Adjusted Likelihood x Adjusted Impact)
1	[insert assigned risk here]	[Insert category here]								
2	[insert assigned risk here]	[Insert category here]								
3	[insert assigned risk here]	[Insert category here]								
4	[insert assigned risk here]	[Insert category here]								
5	[insert assigned risk here]	[Insert category here]								
9	[insert assigned risk here]	[Insert category here]								

Note for Planning Team: Prefill the risk assessment forms with information from the risk register for Risk ID, Risk Description, and Risk Category. Participants should complete the rest of the form based on their insights.