

Resource C. Calculating Environmental Risk

The amount of accumulation, the types of items it includes, and how the items are stored determines the risk that the accumulation represents. When you rate the degree of accumulation you or a loved one are living with, think of what it represents as a risk. Think of the entire house as a box, and each room in the house as a smaller box.

Section A. Area-by-Area Risk

Instructions

1. Imagine each room or area in your environment listed in column 1 and ask yourself, How full is this area three-dimensionally? Imagine that all the contents in each area is piled up at one side of the room. What percentage (%) of the room (floor to ceiling) would be filled? Imagine the items as they are typically used in the room; for example, a table should remain upright, although chairs and boxes can be piled on and under the table.
2. In column 2, enter the percentage that the three-dimensional pattern of accumulation represents.
3. If you answer “no” to a question in column 3, add 2% in the “Risk” column.
4. Now add column 2 and column 3 together, and place the *total* percentage in column 4. Do this for each area in your home.
5. Add up all percentages in column 4 and place the total in the “Section A total” row.
6. *Note:* For any rooms not listed here, the test for problematic clutter is whether you can use the room for its intended purpose and not as a multipurpose space because of clutter in this or other rooms.

7. This tool is based on the core areas where activities of daily living occurs such sleeping, eating, preparing food, performing personal hygiene, and sitting/relaxing or socializing. There will also be a defacto route for entering and exiting the unit whether it is marked by walls, stairs, or walkways; there must be a minimum path from the entrance to the exit for safety (whether the exit is a door or window). Whichever rooms you might not have in your existing home, the ones you do have become increasingly important with respect to safety and risk. For that reason, take the percentage of risk and 3-dimensional accumulation in the room(s) you do not have, and add it to the space that you do have, where that activity of daily living occurs.

Use this as an *example*:

I estimate that my entryway is 70 percent filled three-dimensionally, so I place 70 percent in column 2. Then I look at the questions in column 3. Because I can open the door completely, I put a 0% risk in the “Risk” box. I cannot walk through the entryway without having to step on or over things (2%), and I cannot get to the front door without having to move something (2%), so my score for additional risks is 4%. I add column 2 + column 3 (70 + 2 + 2), and place the *total* for this area (74%) in column 4.

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks (If you answer “no” to a question below, add 2% to the “Risk” column.)	4. Total % (total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)
		Risk	
Entryway	<u>70%</u>	Can you open the door completely? If not, add 2%.	<u>0%</u>
		Can you walk through the entry way without having to step on or over things to get to the front door? If not, add 2%.	<u>2%</u>
		Can you get to the front door without having to move anything? If not, add 2%.	<u>2%</u>
			<u>74%</u>

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks <i>(If you answer "no" to a question below, add 2% to the "Risk" column.)</i>	4. Total % <i>(total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)</i>
			Risk
Entryway	____%	<p>Can you open the door completely? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Can you walk through the entryway without having to step on or over something? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Can you get to the front door without having to move anything? If not, add 2%.</p>	____%
Living room	____%	<p>Is there a place for you and one or more guests to sit? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Is the entrance to this room clear of clutter? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Are the majority of tabletops and other flat surfaces clear of clutter? If not, add 2%.</p>	____%
Kitchen	____%	<p>Is the floor clear of clutter? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Are foods in the fridge newer than their expiration date? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Are the spaces on both sides of the stove clear, so that nothing can catch fire or topple onto the stove while it is hot or operational? If not, add 2%.</p>	____%

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks (If you answer "no" to a question below, add 2% to the "Risk" column.)	4. Total % (total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)
			Risk
		Does the plumbing work? If not, add 2%.	
		Is the water in the kitchen drinkable? If not, add 2%.	
Dining area or room	____%	Are flat surfaces clear of clutter? If not, add 2%.	____%
		Is the floor clear? If not, add 2%.	
Main level hallway	____%	Are there two unobstructed <i>approved</i> ways to exit your home in case of emergency? (Check your local fire code for minimum path width or use 33-36 inches.) If not, add 2%.	____%
Half bathroom	____%	Does the plumbing work in the bathroom? If not, add 2%.	____%
		Are all fixtures (sink, toilet) working and uncluttered? If not, add 2%.	
		Can you use the sink or toilet without having to move items? If not, add 2%.	
Staircase to second level	____%	Are stairs entirely clear of obstruction? If not, add 2%.	____%

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks <i>(If you answer "no" to a question below, add 2% to the "Risk" column.)</i>	4. Total % <i>(total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)</i>
			Risk

Master bedroom	____%	Are all landings at the top, midway, and bottom clear? If not, add 2%.	
		Is there a clear, unobstructed path into each room? (Check your local fire code for minimum path width or use 33-36 inches.) If not, add 2%.	
		Is the floor clear of tripping hazards? If not, add 2%	____%
		Is the bed entirely clear of clutter and available for sleeping? If not, add 2%.	
		Can you access the bed from all sides that the placement of it would normally permit? If not, add 2%.	
Bedroom 2 (if one exists)	____%	Is there a clear, unobstructed path into each room? (Check your local fire code for minimum path, width, or use 33-36 inches.) If not, add 2%.	____%
		Is the floor clear of tripping hazards? If not, add 2%.	
		Is the bed entirely clear of clutter and available for sleeping? If not, add 2%.	

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks <i>(If you answer "no" to a question below, add 2% to the "Risk" column.)</i>	4. Total % <i>(total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)</i>
			Risk
Bedroom 3 (if one exists)	____%	Can you access the bed from all sides that the placement of it would normally permit? If not, add 2%.	____%
		Is there a clear, unobstructed path into each room? (Check your local fire code for minimum path width or use 33-36 inches.) If not, add 2%.	
		Is the floor clear of tripping hazards? If not, add 2%.	
		Is the bed entirely clear of clutter and available for sleeping? If not, add 2%.	
		Can you access the bed from all sides that the placement of it would normally permit? If not, add 2%.	
Main bathroom (and each additional bathroom)	____%	Does the plumbing work? If not, add 2%.	
		Are all fixtures (sink, toilet, bathtub, shower stall) working and uncluttered? If not, add 2%.	____%
		Can you use the sink, bathtub, or shower without having to move items? If not, add 2%.	

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks <i>(If you answer "no" to a question below, add 2% to the "Risk" column.)</i>	4. Total % <i>(total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)</i>
			Risk
Other room 1 (e.g., laundry room, TV room, den, exercise room, library, additional bedroom)	____%	<p>Is there a clear, unobstructed path into this room? (Check your local fire code for minimum path width, or use 33-36 inches.) If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Is the floor clear of tripping hazards? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Can this room be used for its intended purpose? If not, add 2%.</p>	____%
Upstairs hall	____%	<p>Is there a clear, unobstructed path into each room? (Check your local fire code for minimum path width or use 33-36 inches). If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Can you walk down the entire hallway without having to step on or over anything? If not, add 2%.</p> <p>Are stairs entirely clear of obstruction? If not, add 2%.</p>	____%
Staircase to basement	____%	Is there a clear path through the basement? If not, add 2%.	____%
Basement	____%	Does clutter block the entrance or exit to the basement? If not, add 2%.	____%

1. Area	2. Three-dimensional accumulation	3. Additional risks <i>(If you answer "no" to a question below, add 2% to the "Risk" column.)</i>	4. Total % <i>(total of column 2 + all risks in column 3)</i>
Risk			
<i>Add up column 4 and put your total in the box to the right.</i>			Section A total _____

Section B. Risk from Heat Sources

Instructions

1. If you have an accumulation of combustible material (anything that can smolder, catch fire, and burn) *near* or *on* any of the heat sources listed below, check the "Yes" box beside the heat source.
2. Complete all areas in Section B that apply to your environment. If a heat source does not apply in your environment, check the "No" box beside the heat source.

3. Give yourself 5 points for every “Yes” answer and place the total in “Section B total” box at the bottom of the page.

Risks from heat sources
1. Is the accumulation within 33-36 inches of (or *on*) this heat source? (*Note: Check with your local fire code.*)
2. Do you have to step *on* or *over* anything that is in your path to get to this heat source?

Hot water tank Yes No

Electrical panel Yes No

Fireplace Yes No

Baseboard heaters Yes No

Furnace Yes No

Clothes dryer Yes No

Woodstove Yes No

Uncovered lightbulbs Yes No

Stove Yes No

Toaster oven Yes No

Portable ceramic heater<TH>/<TH>space heater Yes No

Kettle or coffee maker without auto-shutoff Yes No

Heating pads Yes No

BBQ Yes No

Candles (normally used) Yes No

Hot plate Yes No

Other small appliances Yes No

Christmas tree (natural or synthetic) Yes No

Curling or flattening iron Yes No

Score 5 points for every “Yes” answer above and put your total in the box to the right.

Section B total

Section C: Risk from Other Sources

Instructions

1. Answer all questions in Section C.
2. For each “Yes” answer, *enter 2%* in column 2. Otherwise *enter 0%* in column 2.
3. Add up column 2 and place the total in the “Section C total” box.

1. Other risks	2. Percentage risk
Is your accumulation combustible (i.e., will it catch fire or give off toxic gases when exposed to sufficient heat or flames)?	____ %
Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis?	____ %
Is there evidence of mice or other rodents in your environment (e.g., residual scat, chewing)?	____ %
<i>Add up column 2 and put your total in the box to the right.</i>	Section C total _____

Section D. Bonus Points for Reducing Your Risk

Instructions

1. If you answer “yes” to any of the questions in column 1 below, *enter 2% in column 2.*
2. Add up column 2 and place the total in the “Section D total” box.

1. Reducing your risk	2. Total risk reduction
Do you have working smoke alarms, and are they installed in accordance with local fire regulations? If “yes,” enter 2% in column 2.	_____ %
Do you have carbon monoxide detectors installed according to local fire regulations if you have wood, gas, or propane as a fuel source? If “yes,” enter 2% in column 2	_____ %
<i>Add up column 2 and put your total in the box to the right.</i>	Section D total _____

Your Final Risk Score

Instructions

1. Enter your totals from Sections A, B, and C, omitting the percentage symbol (%).
2. Add all three to get your subtotal.
3. Enter your total from Section D (omitting the percentage symbol).

4. Subtract the Section D total from your subtotal to get your “Final risk score.”
5. Find your score in the ranges given in the table that follows (based on the number of bedrooms in your home).

Enter your total from Section A	_____
Add your total from Section B	+ _____
Add your total from Section C	+ _____
<hr/>	
<i>Subtotal</i>	_____
Subtract your total from Section D	- _____
<hr/>	
<i>Final risk score</i>	_____
<hr/>	

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
One Bedroom Unit with NO Additional Space Maximum accumulation possible: 1566			
	0-157	No Issues – (10% or less)	You probably have a mild clutter situation in your home. Welcome to the real world.
	158-313	Mild (11 to 20%)	You are probably in a normal range of accumulation and have to pay special attention from time to time to get back to uncluttered. It's time to have a closer look at why it keeps happening.
	314-611	Moderate (21 to 39%)	Unless you have moved in the past 3 to 4 months, the situation is getting serious. Before you get any more overwhelmed, ask someone you trust (see characteristics of a good clutter coach in chapter 1 of <i>Conquer the Clutter</i> for help to get out from under the piles and or boxes). Be aware, the accumulation in your home is approaching a severe level. This is about more than being “messy” or “too busy.” Would you agree that you are overwhelmed? Do you repeatedly start but get nowhere? It's time to get the help you need. Do it sooner rather than later. <i>Overwhelmed</i> is a destructive place to stay in.

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
	612-924	Severe (40-59%)	At this point, your situation is serious. Normally, people living in such severe conditions are very overwhelmed by the clutter, and they cope by blocking out their awareness, by just not seeing it, avoiding coming home except to sleep, denying the reality exists, and so forth. Almost certainly, you cannot remedy the situation alone. If you are telling yourself that you should be able to, or want to do it alone, try one last time for 2 weeks. If you have not been successful in that time, don't wait. Two weeks easily becomes a year. Find out where you can get the help you need.
	925-1566	Extreme (60% +)	The accumulation in your home has reached an extreme point. Make no mistake: The people (and animals) in your or near your home may be in danger. If you live in attached housing, your neighbors share your risk. Without a doubt, it is time to get help before the situation gets worse and becomes an enforcement issue. If you delay until your situation is discovered, enforcement officials will have to apply regulations and deadlines that will add to your stress. <i>Please make the call for help now!</i>
	0-167	No issues (10% or less)	You probably have a mild clutter situation in your home. Welcome to the real world.

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
Two Bedroom Unit with NO Additional Space Maximum accumulation possible: 1672	168-334	Mild (11 to 20%)	You are probably in a normal range of accumulation and have to pay special attention from time to time to get back to uncluttered. It's time to have a closer look at why it keeps happening.
	335-652	Moderate (21 to 39%)	Unless you have moved in the past 3 to 4 months, the situation is getting serious. Before you get any more overwhelmed, ask someone you trust (see characteristics of a good clutter coach in chapter 1 of <i>Conquer the Clutter</i> for help to get out from under the piles and or boxes). Be aware, the accumulation in your home is approaching a severe level. This is about more than being "messy" or "too busy." Would you agree that you are overwhelmed? Do you repeatedly start but get nowhere? It's time to get the help you need. Do it sooner rather than later. <i>Overwhelmed</i> is a destructive place to stay in.

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
	653-986	Severe (40 to 59%)	At this point, your situation is serious. Normally, people living in such severe conditions are very overwhelmed by the clutter, and they cope by blocking out their awareness, by just not seeing it, avoiding coming home except to sleep, denying the reality exists, and so forth. Almost certainly, you cannot remedy the situation alone. If you are telling yourself that you should be able to, or want to do it alone, try one last time for 2 weeks. If you have not been successful in that time, don't wait. Two weeks easily becomes a year. Find out where you can get the help you need.
	987-1672	Extreme (60%+)	The accumulation in your home has reached an extreme point. Make no mistake: The people (and animals) in your or near your home may be in danger. If you live in attached housing, your neighbors share your risk. Without a doubt, it is time to get help before the situation gets worse and becomes an enforcement issue. If you delay until your situation is discovered, enforcement officials will have to apply regulations and deadlines that will add to your stress. <i>Please make the call for help now!</i>

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Three Bedroom Unit with NO Additional Space Maximum accumulation possible: 1778	0-178	No issues (10% or less)	You probably have a mild clutter situation in your home. Welcome to the real world.
	179-356	Mild (11 to 20%)	You are probably in a normal range of accumulation and have to pay special attention from time to time to get back to uncluttered. It's time to have a closer look at why it keeps happening.
	357-693	Moderate (21 to 39%)	Unless you have moved in the past 3 to 4 months, the situation is getting serious. Before you get any more overwhelmed, ask someone you trust (see characteristics of a good clutter coach in chapter 1 of <i>Conquer the Clutter</i> for help to get out from under the piles and or boxes). Be aware, the accumulation in your home is approaching a severe level. This is about more than being "messy" or "too busy." Would you agree that you are overwhelmed? Do you repeatedly start but get nowhere? It's time to get the help you need. Do it sooner rather than later. <i>Overwhelmed</i> is a destructive place to stay in.

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
	694-1049	Severe (40 to 59%)	<p>At this point, your situation is serious. Normally, people living in such severe conditions are very overwhelmed by the clutter, and they cope by blocking out their awareness, by just not seeing it, avoiding coming home except to sleep, denying the reality exists, and so forth. Almost certainly, you cannot remedy the situation alone. If you are telling yourself that you should be able to, or want to do it alone, try one last time for 2 weeks. If you have not been successful in that time, don't wait. Two weeks easily becomes a year. Find out where you can get the help you need.</p>
	1050-1778	Extreme (60%+)	<p>The accumulation in your home has reached an extreme point. Make no mistake: The people (and animals) in your or near your home may be in danger. If you live in attached housing, your neighbors share your risk. Without a doubt, it is time to get help before the situation gets worse and becomes an enforcement issue. If you delay until your situation is discovered, enforcement officials will have to apply regulations and deadlines that will add to your stress. <i>Please make the call for help now!</i></p>

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
Four Bedroom Unit with NO Additional Space Maximum accumulation possible: 1884	0-188	No issues (10% or less)	You probably have a mild clutter situation in your home. Welcome to the real world.
	189-377	Mild (11 to 20%)	You are probably in a normal range of accumulation and have to pay special attention from time to time to get back to uncluttered. It's time to have a closer look at why it keeps happening.
	378-735	Moderate (21 to 39%)	Unless you have moved in the past 3 to 4 months, the situation is getting serious. Before you get any more overwhelmed, ask someone you trust (see characteristics of a good clutter coach in chapter 1 of <i>Conquer the Clutter</i> for help to get out from under the piles and or boxes). Be aware, the accumulation in your home is approaching a severe level. This is about more than being "messy" or "too busy." Would you agree that you are overwhelmed? Do you repeatedly start but get nowhere? It's time to get the help you need. Do it sooner rather than later. <i>Overwhelmed</i> is a destructive place to stay in.

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
	736-1112	Severe (40 to 59%)	<p>At this point, your situation is serious. Normally, people living in such severe conditions are very overwhelmed by the clutter, and they cope by blocking out their awareness, by just not seeing it, avoiding coming home except to sleep, denying the reality exists, and so forth. Almost certainly, you cannot remedy the situation alone. If you are telling yourself that you should be able to, or want to do it alone, try one last time for 2 weeks. If you have not been successful in that time, don't wait. Two weeks easily becomes a year. Find out where you can get the help you need.</p>
	1113-1884	Extreme (60%+)	<p>The accumulation in your home has reached an extreme point. Make no mistake: The people (and animals) in your or near your home may be in danger. If you live in attached housing, your neighbors share your risk. Without a doubt, it is time to get help before the situation gets worse and becomes an enforcement issue. If you delay until your situation is discovered, enforcement officials will have to apply regulations and deadlines that will add to your stress. <i>Please make the call for help now!</i></p>

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
Five Bedroom Unit with NO Additional Space Maximum accumulation possible: 1990	0-199	No issues (10% or less)	You probably have a mild clutter situation in your home. Welcome to the real world.
	200-398	Mild (11 to 20%)	You are probably in a normal range of accumulation and have to pay special attention from time to time to get back to uncluttered. It's time to have a closer look at why it keeps happening.
	399-776	Moderate (21 to 39%)	Unless you have moved in the past 3 to 4 months, the situation is getting serious. Before you get any more overwhelmed, ask someone you trust (see characteristics of a good clutter coach in chapter 1 of <i>Conquer the Clutter</i> for help to get out from under the piles and or boxes). Be aware, the accumulation in your home is approaching a severe level. This is about more than being "messy" or "too busy." Would you agree that you are overwhelmed? Do you repeatedly start but get nowhere? It's time to get the help you need. Do it sooner rather than later. <i>Overwhelmed</i> is a destructive place to stay in.

	Your Final Level of Risk Score	Your Hoarding Level	What this Hoarding Level Means
	777-1174	Severe (40 to 59%)	At this point, your situation is serious. Normally, people living in such severe conditions are very overwhelmed by the clutter, and they cope by blocking out their awareness, by just not seeing it, avoiding coming home except to sleep, denying the reality exists, and so forth. Almost certainly, you cannot remedy the situation alone. If you are telling yourself that you should be able to, or want to do it alone, try one last time for 2 weeks. If you have not been successful in that time, don't wait. Two weeks easily becomes a year. Find out where you can get the help you need.
	1175-1990	Extreme (60%+)	The accumulation in your home has reached an extreme point. Make no mistake: The people (and animals) in your or near your home may be in danger. If you live in attached housing, your neighbors share your risk. Without a doubt, it is time to get help before the situation gets worse and becomes an enforcement issue. If you delay until your situation is discovered, enforcement officials will have to apply regulations and deadlines that will add to your stress. <i>Please make the call for help now!</i>

* Add 160 points to your Final Risk Score for each additional bedroom above 5.