BWB RISK ASSESSMENT CLASSIFICATION (AFTER CIRIA REPORT C552, CONTAMINATED LAND RISK ASSESSMENT: A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE, 2001)

CIRIA Report C552, Contaminated Land Risk Assessment A Guide to Good Practice, 2001 sets out a methodology for estimating risk. The methodology for risk evaluation is a qualitative method for interpreting the output for the risk estimation stage of the assessment. It involves the classification of the:

- Magnitude of the potential consequence (severity) of risk occurring
- Magnitude of the probability (likelihood) of the risk occurring

The classification of consequence and probability are set out in table A1 and A2 below

Table A1 Classification of Consequence

Classification	Definition	Examples
Severe (Sv)	Short term (acute) risk to human health likely to result in "significant harm" as defined by the Environment protection Act 1990, Part IIA. Short term risk of pollution of controlled waters. Catastrophic damage to buildings/property. A short-term risk to a particular ecosystem, or organism forming part of such ecosystem	High concentrations of cyanide on the surface of an informal recreation area Major spillage of contaminants from site into controlled water. Explosion causing building collapse (can also equate to a short term human health risk if buildings are occupied.)
Medium (Md)	Chronic damage to Human Health ("significant harm"). Pollution of controlled waters. A significant change in a particular ecosystem, or organism forming part of such ecosystem.	Concentrations of contaminants from site exceeding generic or site specific screening criteria Leaching of contaminants into a major or minor aquifer. Death of species within a designated nature reserve.
Mild (Mi)	Pollution of non-sensitive water resources. Significant damage to crops, buildings, structures and services. Damage to sensitive buildings/structures/services or the environment	Pollution of non-classified groundwater Damage to building rendering it unsafe to occupy. (e.g. foundation damage resulting in instability)
Minor (Mr)	Harm, although not necessarily significant harm, which may result in a financial loss, or expenditure to resolve. Non-permanent health effects to human health (easily prevented by measures such as protective clothing etc). Easily reparable effects of damage to buildings, structures and services	The presence of contaminants at such concentration that protective equipment is required during site works. The loss of plants in a landscaping scheme. Discolouration of concrete.

The classification of consequence does not take into account the probability of the consequence being realised. Therefore there may be more than one consequence for a particular pollutant linkage. Both a severe and medium classification can result in death. Severe relates to short term (acute) risk while medium relates to long term (chronic) risk. Mild relates to significant harm but to less sensitive receptors. Minor classification relates to harm which is not significant but could have a financial cost.

Table A2 Classification of Probability

Classification	Definition
High likelihood (Hi)	There is a pollutant linkage and an event that either appears very likely in the short term and almost inevitable in the long term, or there is evidence at the receptor or harm or pollution
Likely (Li)	There is a pollutant linkage and all the elements are present and in the right place, which means that it is probable that an event will occur. Circumstances are such that an event is not inevitable, but possible in the short term and likely over the long term.
Low likelihood (Lw)	There is a pollutant linkage and circumstances are possible under which an event could occur. However, it is by no means certain that even over a longer period such event would take place and is less likely in the short term.
Unlikely (Ul)	There is a pollutant linkage but circumstances are such that it is improbable that an event would occur even in the very long term.

The classification gives a guide as to the severity and consequence of identified risk when compared with other risk presented on the site. It should be noted that if a risk is identified it cannot be classified as "no risk" but as "very low risk". Differing stakeholders may have a different view on the acceptability of a risk.

Once the consequence and probability have been classified these can be compared using a matrix(Table A3) to identify an overall risk category. These categories and the actions required are categorised in Table A4

Table A3 Risk Evaluation Matrix

		Consequence			
		Severe (Sv)	Medium (Md)	Mild (Mi)	Minor (Mr)
Probability	High likelihood (Hi)	Very high risk (VH)	High Risk (H)	Moderate Risk (M)	Mod/low risk (M/L)
	Likely (Li)	High risk (H)	Moderate risk (M)	Mod/low risk (M/L)	Low risk (L)
	Low likelihood (Lw)	Moderate risk (M)	Mod/low risk (M/L)	Low risk (L)	Very low risk (VL)
	Unlikely (Ul)	Mod/low risk (M/L)	Low risk (L)	Very low risk (VL)	Very low risk (VL)

Table A4 Risk Categorisations

Very high risk (VH)	There is a high probability that severe harm could arise to a designated receptor from an identified hazard, OR, there is evidence that severe harm to a designated receptor is currently happening. This risk, if realised, is likely to result in a substantial liability. Urgent investigation (if not undertaken already) and remediation are likely to be required.
High risk (H)	Harm is likely to arise to a designated receptor from an identified hazard. Realisation of the risk is likely to present a substantial liability. Urgent investigation (if not undertaken already) is required and remedial works may be necessary in the short-term and are likely over the longer-term.
Moderate risk (M)	It is possible that harm could arise to a designated receptor from an identified hazard. However, it is either relatively unlikely that any such harm would be severe, or if any harm were to occur it is more likely that the harm would be relatively mild. Investigation (if not already undertaken) is normally required to clarify the risk and to determine the potential liability. Some remedial works may be required in the longer-term.
Low risk (L)	It is possible that harm could arise to a designated receptor from an identified hazard, but it is likely that this harm, if realised, would at worst normally be mild.
Very low risk (VL)	There is a low possibility that harm could arise to a receptor. In the event of such harm being realised it is not likely to be severe.

Reference

Rudland, D J, Lancefield, R M, Mayell, P N; 2001; Contaminated land Risk Assessment. A guide to Good Practice; CIRIA Report C552.