

DECISION MAKING



Sycamore Gap, Northumberland



Poynton Pond, Cheshire

How people make decisions involving safety

	Approach 1: Follow an established protocol	Approach 2: Eliminate or minimise risk	Approach 3: Accept risk in exchange for benefits
Examples	Poynton Pond	Forgiving roadsides; Vision zero	Children's playgrounds
Type of decision	It depends on details of protocol	Non-compensatory	Compensatory

Non-compensatory decisions

- Only one attribute of a decision is considered and the solution which maximises that attribute is chosen

“Even though your cheese is magnificent I will not buy it because it is too expensive”

Compensatory decisions

- All attributes of interest are considered. Positive attributes can compensate for negative ones

“Even though this wine is expensive I will buy it because it is so good”

Playgrounds and safety – an example



Risky but exciting

Risk of harm is compensated by fun and developmental opportunity



Safe but boring

What counts is minimising risk



Recent Development: ISO 4980 (May 2023)

“Benefit-risk assessment for sports and recreational facilities, activities etc”

“A key issue identified is the differentiation of sports and recreational activities from a work activity. Sports and recreational activities are designed for the public good; therefore, public interests are paramount.

The public good can include the social, physical, psychological health and welfare of the participant and society. Participation in sport and recreation involves exposure to risk which is not necessarily a bad thing and can be of benefit to the public good.”

Conclusion

- In public life many things are valued
- Safety is important but so may be these other things
- Risk assessment which focusses on risk reduction needs to be replaced with benefit-risk assessment