

Designing for Risk: Applying the Hierarchy of Risk Management Strategies in Public Spaces

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Use the hierarchy to make clear, consistent decisions.
- Connect design, access decisions, communication, and documentation.
- Apply this approach across departments.
- Document decisions and revisit them over time.

Hierarchy of Risk Management Strategies



Applying the Hierarchy in Practice

Level	When to Use	Example
Avoid	When exposure outweighs benefit	Close high-risk areas during extreme storms
Reduce/Mitigate	When risks can be controlled through design	Improve drainage or tree maintenance
Transfer	When third parties assume responsibility	Use event permits or contractor insurance
Accept/Retain	When risk is inherent and manageable	Allow limited trail use with clear signage
Monitor/ Communicate	For dynamic or seasonal risks	Regular inspections, updates, and signage

Resources

- Explore blog posts, webinars, the Risk & Insurance Tool for Contracts, policy development toolkits, and more on the MIABC website: www.miabc.org
- Looking for additional support? Contact our team at AskUsAnything@miabc.org