

Brush Cutter Risk Assessment

Business Name:	ABN:	
Business Address:		
Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:

THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU ON THE PROJECT

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulation (WHS Regulation), a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) is required to ensure that a RISK ASSESSMENT is prepared before the proposed work starts.

Full Name:		
Signature:	Title:	Date:

CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

Client:	SCOPE OF WORKS
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Project Manager:	
Contact Phone:	
Date Risk Assessment supplied to Project Manager:	

RISK MATRIX									
LIKELIHOOD	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC	SCORE	ACTION	HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS	
ALMOST CERTAIN	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE			Elimination Remove the hazard.	
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	Substitution Replace the hazard.	
POSSIBLE	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	3H HIGH	Review before work starts.	Isolation Isolate People from the hazard	
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	2M MODERATE	Ensure control measures in place.	Engineering Isolate the hazard	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	Administrative Change	
								PPE	

Risk Rating & Required Action:

4A	Stop work. The risk is intolerable. Eliminate the hazard or redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or higher-level authorisation is required.
3H	Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
2M	Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.
1L	Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.

Consequence Scale:

Consequence	People (injury/illness)	Project / Assets	Compliance / Reputation
Catastrophic	Fatality or permanent total disability	project shutdown	Significant regulator intervention; criminal prosecution
Major	Serious injury/illness (hospital > 5 days)	critical delay	Improvement notice; major media coverage
Moderate	Medical-treatment injury; lost-time > 1 day	moderate delay	Minor breach; adverse client comment
Minor	First-aid only, no lost time	negligible delay	Isolated non-conformance
Insignificant	No injury	no schedule impact	Deviation caught and corrected on site

Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:

Remember to apply controls in the preferred order shown by the coloured pyramid:

- Eliminate**
- Substitute
- Isolate
- Engineering
- Administrative
- PPE

Always document **why** a lower-order control is accepted if elimination or substitution is not reasonably practicable.

aligned with Safe Work Australia's Managing the risk of fatigue at work (2023) and ISO 45001:2018 clauses 6–8.

JOB STEP	POTENTIAL HAZARDS	IR	CONTROL MEASURES	RR
SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
1. Preparation	poor planning, inadequate training	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure all operators are trained and competent in brush cutter operation - Review the task and environmental conditions prior to starting work - Plan the work sequence to minimise risks - Conduct a toolbox talk to discuss hazards and controls - Ensure appropriate PPE (hearing protection, safety glasses, gloves) is available and used - Ensure first aid equipment is available on-site - Check weather conditions to avoid extreme temperatures or storms - Follow the manufacturer's instructions and safety guidelines - Assess the work area for specific hazards (rocks, debris) - Establish emergency contacts and procedures 	2M
2. Inspect Equipment	defective parts, incorrect assembly	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct a pre-start inspection focusing on blades, guards, and handles - Ensure all components are correctly assembled and secured - Repair or replace defective parts before use - Check fuel lines for leaks and ensure the fuel cap is secure - Verify that throttle, stop switch, and other controls function properly - Ensure blades are sharp and suitable for the task - Confirm there are no loose fasteners - Conduct routine maintenance checks as per manufacturer guidelines - Keep a maintenance log for the brush cutter - Ensure spare parts and tools are available on-site 	1L
3. Area Inspection	hidden objects, uneven terrain	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Walk around the area to identify obstacles, uneven surfaces or holes - Remove or mark potential hazards such as rocks, sticks, and wires - Clear the area of bystanders and ensure a safe perimeter - Investigate the area for wildlife that could pose a risk - Ensure visibility by wearing high-visibility clothing - Assess the risk of encountering underground utilities - Use a metal detector if necessary to locate hidden objects - Implement control measures for working on slopes 	2M

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use signage or barriers to warn others of the operational area - Plan the cutting path to avoid high-risk areas 	
4. Fuel Handling	fire, toxic exposure	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear appropriate PPE (fire-resistant clothing, gloves, eye protection) - Ensure proper ventilation - Use approved fuel storage and handling procedures - Have fire extinguishers readily available - Avoid open flames or sparks near fuel - Use spill containment measures - Follow manufacturer's instructions for fuel handling - Implement a permit-to-work system for high-risk areas - Conduct regular safety training for personnel - Establish clear exclusion zones - Use non-sparking tools 	2M
5. Starting Equipment	kickback, noise	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear appropriate PPE (earplugs, eye protection) - Ensure proper guarding is in place - Follow manufacturer's instructions for starting procedures - Avoid standing directly in front of the equipment - Use remote starting methods where possible - Implement a lockout/tagout procedure - Conduct regular maintenance on starting equipment - Establish a safe distance from the equipment - Use proper hand signals for communication - Avoid overloading the equipment - Implement a permit-to-work system 	1L
6. Cutting Operations	projectiles, cuts	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wear appropriate PPE (hard hat, safety glasses, gloves) - Ensure proper guarding is in place - Use approved cutting tools and techniques - Avoid cutting near people or structures - Implement a permit-to-work system - Establish a safe distance from the cutting area - Use proper hand signals for communication - Avoid overloading the cutting equipment - Conduct regular safety training for personnel - Implement a spill containment plan - Use non-sparking tools 	2M

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7. Managing Fatigue	reduced concentration, muscle strain	3H		2M
8. Environmental Considerations	dust, wildlife disturbance	3H		1L
9. Equipment Shutdown	residual energy, injury from moving parts	3H		1L

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10. Maintenance and Cleaning	chemical exposure, mechanical failure	3H		2M
11. Incident Reporting	delayed response, incomplete records	2M		1L
12. Emergency Response	inadequate first aid, panic	3H		2M

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13. Personal Protective Equipment	equipment failure, ineffective PPE	3H		2M
14. Review and Feedback	outdated procedures, incomplete feedback channels	2M		1L
15. Decommissioning Equipment	uncontrolled release of energy, improper disposal	3H		1L

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SAMPLE

EMERGENCY RESPONSE – CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES

Ensure to have an Emergency Management Plan in place as well as adequate numbers of trained first aid staff with easy access to fully stocked first aid kits, rescue equipment, material safety data sheets, adequate access to emergency communication equipment and fire-fighting equipment suitable for all classes of fire and ignition sources.

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES OF PRACTICE. DELETE THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES IF ANY STATE THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE

Queensland & Australian Capital Territory

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

Legislation QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws>

Codes of Practice QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Legislation ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>

Codes of Practice ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Victoria

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

Legislation VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations>

Codes of Practice VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/compliance-codes-and-codes-practice>

New South Wales

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2017

Legislation NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation>

Codes of Practice NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-codes-of-practice>

Western Australia

Work Health and Safety Act 2020

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022

Legislation Western Australia: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/legislation>

Codes of Practice WA: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/codes-practice>

Northern Territory

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011

Legislation NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws>

Codes of Practice NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Safe Work Australia Links

Law and Regulation (All States): <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation>

Model Codes of Practice: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-publications/model-codes-of-practice>

Model Codes of Practice

- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Confined spaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Welding processes
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Demolition work
- Excavation work
- Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- How to manage work health and safety risks
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace
- Construction work

South Australia

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)

Legislation for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/legislation>

Codes of Practice for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/codes-of-practice#COPs>

Tasmania

Work Health and Safety Act 2012

Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012

Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012

Work Health and Safety (Transitional) Regulations 2012

Legislation for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>

Codes of Practice for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Details of permits, licenses or access required by regulatory bodies (add or delete as required):

- Permits from local council
- Authorisation to commence work
- Any required documents.