

Access Egress and Walking on Uneven Surfaces

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

THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU ON THIS 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:

1. **Eliminate**
2. **Substitute**
3. **Isolate**
4. **Engineering**
5. **Administrative**
6. **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. WHS Governance, Policies and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a documented access and egress policy addressing uneven and unstable surfaces WHS responsibilities for managing walking and stairway risks not clearly assigned to officers, managers and supervisors Failure to align workplace procedures with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations (plant, falls, hazard management) No systematic process to identify and control slip, trip and fall hazards across sites (including temporary work areas and tile-laying zones) Inadequate consultation with workers and HSRs regarding access, egress and stairway risks 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a company-wide Access, Egress and Walking Surface Management Procedure that explicitly covers stairs, loose sand, uneven ground, tile-laying work areas and unstable surfaces Define and document WHS governance structures, including the diligence obligations of officers for fall prevention and walking surface safety Embed legal requirements from WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations (e.g. managing the risk of falls, safe means of entry and exit, plant and structures) into policies and procedures Establish a formal hazard identification and risk management process specific to slips, trips and falls on uneven and unstable surfaces, including during construction and maintenance activities Implement a WHS consultation procedure that requires worker and HSR input when designing, altering or reviewing access and egress routes and stairways 	3H
2. Design of Access, Egress and Walkway Layout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly planned site layout resulting workers having to walk across uneven sloping or unstable surfaces as the primary access route Insufficient allowance for safe, separate pedestrian routes away from construction work faces, tile-laying zones and vehicle movement Narrow, congested or indirect walkways increasing exposure time on uneven terrain Uncontrolled pedestrian movement through areas containing loose sand, rubble, temporary ramps or unformed ground Inadequate design of temporary access routes during staging of works, leading to ad hoc shortcuts across unstable surfaces 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate access and egress design into project planning so that, wherever reasonably practicable, primary routes are level, firm, slip-resistant and segregated from workfaces Establish and document formal pedestrian route plans, including temporary diversions, showing controlled access around uneven ground and tile-laying zones Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and universal design principles to ensure walkways are wide enough, well-defined and free from unnecessary obstacles Require engineering review and approval for any temporary access paths over unstable ground, including compaction, edging and surfacing requirements Include clear criteria in design briefs specifying that workers are not to rely on informal shortcuts across loose sand or unformed areas as standard access 	2M
3. Stairway and Step Design, Construction and Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-compliant stair geometry (riser and going dimensions) increasing trip and mis-step risk when ascending or descending 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify compliance of all permanent and temporary stairs with relevant Australian Standards and Building Code of Australia requirements (e.g. consistent riser heights, goings, nosings, landings and headroom) 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of, or poorly designed, handrails and balustrades reducing stability and fall protection on stairs Inconsistent stair design across the site causing users to misjudge steps, particularly when carrying materials Stair surfaces without adequate slip resistance, especially where dust, water, grout or sand may be present Temporary or makeshift stairs (e.g. timber or site-built steps) not engineered or certified for load and slip resistance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate installation of compliant handrails and balustrades on both sides of primary stairways, designed to suit predictable loads and usage patterns Standardise stair design types as far as reasonably practicable across new installations to reduce variability for regular users Specify slip-resistant stair treads and nosings suitable for the environment, including performance under wet and contaminated conditions Require engineering design review and, where necessary, certification for any temporary stair systems, including clear procedures for inspection before use 	
4. Walking Surface Specification, Materials and Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection of floor or ground finishes with inadequate slip resistance for the intended use (e.g. smooth tiles in areas exposed to water or sand) Substandard substrate preparation leading to lipping, uneven tiles or subsidence during tile laying activities Use of loose aggregate, uncompact fill or unstable materials as walking surfaces without appropriate stabilisation Failure to coordinate tile laying with site access needs, resulting in workers walking across uneven and partially laid surfaces Inadequate specification for external pathways exposed to weather, ponding and loose sand accumulation 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Uneven and Unstable Ground Management (Including Loose Sand)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian access over loose sand, rubble or un-compacted ground causing slips, ankle injuries or loss of balance Ground instability under temporary loads such as trolleys, mobile scaffolds or stacked materials Unmarked soft spots, holes or erosion channels hidden under vegetation or debris Ground conditions changing due to weather (e.g. rain softening soil, wind redistributing sand), making previously safe areas hazardous 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to reassess ground stability when works extend, excavations occur or adjacent works disturb the surface 		[REDACTED]	
6. Temporary Works, Construction Staging and Tile-Laying Area Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers and visitors walking across partially laid tiles or unfinished screeded surfaces during construction or renovation Inadequate separation between active tile laying workfaces and designated pedestrian access routes Trip hazards from tools, tile packs, grout buckets and offcuts encroaching into walkways Uncontrolled changes in level between old and newly installed surfaces during progressive work staging Time pressure leading to removal of barriers too early before surfaces are fully cured or levelled 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Inspection, Monitoring and Maintenance of Walking Surfaces and Stairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Degradation of surfaces over time (cracked tiles, subsidence, worn nosings, loose sand build-up) creating new slip and trip hazards Handrails, balustrades or stair treads becoming loose or damaged without timely repair Blocked or inadequate drainage allowing water and silt to accumulate on paths and stairs Cleaning and maintenance contractors not reporting or rectifying uneven or unstable surface defects No structured inspection schedule, leading to ad hoc or missed checks of high-risk areas 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Signage, Barriers and Traffic Management for Pedestrian Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear wayfinding and warning signage leading workers to use unsafe shortcuts across uneven or unstable ground Insufficient barriers or delineation between pedestrian routes and work 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> areas with loose materials, sand or uneven surfaces • Pedestrian and vehicle interactions on shared, uneven surfaces exacerbating fall risk and distraction • Temporary changes to access (e.g. stair closure, tile-laying zone) not adequately communicated or signposted • Over-reliance on verbal instructions rather than physical controls to keep people off unstable or incomplete surfaces 		[REDACTED]	
9. Competency, Induction and Task-Specific Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers unaware of the risks associated with walking on uneven, unstable or partially completed surfaces • Lack of training in safe use of stairs, including carrying loads, using handrails and managing visual or physical impairments • Supervisors not trained to recognise systemic issues in access and egress arrangements • Contractors and visitors not receiving adequate induction regarding local access routes and restricted areas • No refresher training toolbox talk addressing recurring slip, trip and fall incidents on uneven surfaces 		[REDACTED]	2M
10. Worker Fitness for Work, Footwear and Ergonomic Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fatigue, medical conditions or reduced mobility increasing the likelihood of mis-steps when ascending or descending stairs or walking on uneven ground • Inappropriate footwear reducing traction on loose sand, tiles or external paths • Carrying awkward or heavy loads that obstruct vision or impair balance on stairs and uneven surfaces • Work planning not accounting for older or less mobile workers needing safer access routes 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No system to manage temporary impairments (e.g. sprains, use of crutches) in relation to access and egress 		[REDACTED]	
11. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Corrective Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slip, trip and fall incidents on uneven or unstable surfaces not being reported or analysed, leading to repeat events Root causes such as design flaws, inadequate maintenance systems or poor staging not identified and addressed Focus on worker behaviour rather than systemic factors like surface selection, access route design or supervision Corrective actions from previous incidents not tracked to completion or evaluated for effectiveness Data on near misses (e.g. almost falling on loose sand or stairs) not captured to inform preventative measures 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
12. Planning for Emergencies and Safe Evacuation Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency egress routes requiring use of stairs, uneven or unstable surfaces that are not safe under high-traffic or low-visibility conditions Evacuation drills not taking into account people with reduced mobility using stairways or uneven external assembly paths Temporary works or tile-laying activities obstructing or degrading emergency exits and routes Inadequate lighting or signage along emergency paths, especially where surfaces are uneven or include loose sand Emergency responders unfamiliar with surface conditions and best access routes on site 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Procurement and Contractor Management for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of designers, builders or tilers who are unfamiliar with WHS 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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Access and Surface Works	<p>requirements for stairs and walking surfaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts that do not clearly specify performance requirements for slip resistance, surface evenness and stair safety • Contractors altering access routes or ground conditions without consulting the principal contractor or PCBU • Cost-driven decisions leading to lower-standard materials or short-cuts in surface preparation and stair construction • Lack of verification that installed surfaces and stairs meet specified safety criteria before handover 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
14. Change Management, Design Review and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled modifications to buildings, stairways or surface finishes introducing new uneven or unstable walking conditions • Refurbishment or change-of-use projects not subject to WHS design review for access and impacts • New equipment, storage systems or processes encroaching into established pedestrian routes and stair approaches • Failure to incorporate learnings from incidents, audits or worker feedback into future designs and processes • Multiple small changes over time cumulatively degrading the safety of access routes and stairs 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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 FOR 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 2025
 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) Regulation 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>

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>

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

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.