

Air Conditioner Decommissioning

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. Governance, WHS Duties and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of WHS duties for air conditioner decommissioning activities under the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation Inadequate understanding of statutory obligations relating to hazardous chemicals, plant, electrical safety and waste management Absence of a documented WHS management system specific to HVAC and refrigerant work Failure to consult with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on changes to decommissioning methods or equipment Inadequate contractor management arrangements where decommissioning is outsourced Failure to ensure PCBUs in a shared workplace coordinate activities and share relevant WHS information 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a WHS management system aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation and relevant Codes of Practice (e.g. Hazardous Chemicals, Managing Risks of Plant, Managing Electrical Risks at the Workplace) Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, supervisors, workers and contractors involved in air conditioning decommissioning Develop a compliance register capturing all relevant legislation, Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 5149, AS/NZS 3000, AS 1677 where applicable) and licence requirements for refrigerant handling and electrical work Implement a documented WHS governance framework including regular WHS committee meetings, safety performance review and reporting to officers under due diligence obligations Establish and enforce contractor and subcontractor WHS prequalification system that requires evidence of licence, insurances, SWMS, risk assessments and WHS performance history Implement formal consultation and communication procedures with workers and HSRs on proposed changes to plant, substances, work methods or decommissioning schedules Create written arrangements for consultation, cooperation and coordination between multiple PCBUs where decommissioning occurs in shared facilities or tenancies Undergo periodic independent WHS audits of the decommissioning program and implement corrective actions through a documented action tracking system 	Medium
2. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers performing permit recovery or electrical isolation without appropriate licence or authorisations Inadequate verification of competency for technicians undertaking decommissioning of complex systems or high-pressure refrigerant Lack of formal induction covering site-specific WHS risks, emergency procedures and environmental obligations Insufficient training on correct use, inspection and limitations of tools, test equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) No refresher training or competency reassessment, leading to skill fade and unsafe practices Poor understanding of hazardous properties of refrigerants (asphyxiation, 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a competency and licensing procedure requiring verification and recording of current ARCTick refrigerant handling licences, electrical licences and other relevant high-risk work licences before allocation of decommissioning duties Develop role-specific competency profiles for technicians, supervisors and apprentices involved in decommissioning, with clear prerequisites and assessment criteria Provide a structured induction program addressing WHS responsibilities, site rules, emergency response, permit systems, environmental protection, and communication protocols Establish a formal training matrix and schedule for initial and refresher training on refrigerant hazards, hazardous chemicals, isolation and lock-out procedures, working at height (where relevant), manual handling and confined spaces (if applicable) Use documented competency assessment tools (e.g. practical demonstrations, observation checklists, knowledge tests) to verify skills before unsupervised work is allowed Maintain a secure training and licence register with expiry tracking and automated reminders for renewal or refresher training Provide training on correct selection, inspection, use and storage of PPE, including respiratory protection where required, and ensure fit-testing for tight-fitting respirators Review training effectiveness through incident investigations, audit findings and supervision feedback, updating content as technology and legislation change 	Medium

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	flammability, frostbite) and associated controls			
3. Planning, Design and Engineering Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decommissioning works planned without consideration of structural load paths, access routes or impact on existing building services Selection of decommissioning methods that do not account for refrigerant type, pressure, flammability or toxicity Lack of engineering input on safe isolation points, access platforms, lifting points and anchorages Inadequate assessment of building layout leading to poor emergency egress and restricted access for rescue or evacuation Failure to identify latent conditions such as asbestos-containing materials, brittle roofing, deteriorated supports or undocumented modifications to plant Poor integration of new plant installation plans with decommissioning strategy, causing congestion and conflicting workflow 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a formal design and planning review process for all significant decommissioning projects, involving engineers, building management, WHS representatives and contractors where relevant Require a pre-decommissioning engineering assessment of plant layout, supporting structures, roof integrity, access ways and lifting requirements Implement a structured risk assessment process as a planning stage that considers refrigerant characteristics, plant pressure, pipework routing, potential leak paths, and isolation strategies Ensure hazardous building materials surveys (including asbestos registers) are reviewed and, where necessary, updated before decommissioning commences Develop standard engineering guidelines for positioning isolation valves, service access zones, lifting points and safe work platforms for current and future decommissioning activities Coordinate decommissioning programs with building services and tenant operations to eliminate or reduce simultaneous operations that may create additional risk (e.g. hot works, live electrical work, roof work) Require documented lifting and access plans for heavy or awkward components, including engineering verification where loads approach structural limits Incorporate lessons learned from previous decommissioning projects into design standards and planning checklists 	Medium
4. Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to systematically identify hazards related to refrigerants, electrical energy, stored mechanical energy, working at height and confined spaces during decommissioning Generic or outdated risk assessments that do not reflect actual site conditions or new types of equipment and refrigerants Absence of a formal management of change process when plant design, location or decommissioning methodology is altered Inadequate consideration of interaction between multiple contractors or concurrent tasks within the same area 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor documentation and communication of identified risks and controls to all affected workers Lack of review of risk assessments following incidents, near misses or regulatory updates 		[REDACTED]	
5. Refrigerant and Hazardous Chemicals Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled release of refrigerant to atmosphere during decommissioning due to poor systems or equipment Inadequate inventory and labelling of refrigerants, leading to confusion between non-flammable, mildly flammable and flammable types Lack of procedures for handling contaminated or mixed refrigerants recovered from aged systems Improper storage, segregation or transport of recovered refrigerant cylinders and associated hazardous chemicals (oils, cleaning agents) Non-compliance with environmental protection requirements and refrigerant handling regulations Insufficient emergency arrangements for refrigerant leaks including oxygen-deficient atmospheres and flammable gas accumulation 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
6. Plant, Tools, Equipment and Maintenance Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of unsuitable or poorly maintained recovery units, gauges, hoses, vacuum pumps and leak testing equipment Failure or malfunction of lifting equipment, access equipment and supports used to handle units and components during decommissioning Inadequate inspection and testing of electrical tools and equipment, increasing risk of electric shock or fire Lack of standardisation of equipment leading to incorrect connections, fittings or adapters being used 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled stored energy from pressurised systems, rotating parts or elevated loads due to inadequate isolation or faulty equipment No system for tagging out or quarantining defective plant or tools identified during use or inspection 		[REDACTED]	
7. Electrical Safety, Isolation and Lock-Out Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled energisation of air conditioning units or associated circuits during decommissioning Inadequate identification of electrical circuits and isolation points leading to work on live equipment Lack of formal lock-out, tag-out procedures and devices across sites Insufficient coordination between electrical workers, HVAC technicians and building management regarding isolations and re-energisation Inadequate testing for dead and verification before commencing decommissioning activities Poor record keeping of isolations, resulting in confusion and potential bypassing of controls 	High	[REDACTED]	Low
8. Site Access, Traffic and Work Environment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled interaction between decommissioning activities and building occupants, visitors or other contractors Vehicle and mobile plant movements in loading docks, car parks and access roads without traffic management planning 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor management of access to roofs, plant rooms, ceiling spaces or restricted areas used during decommissioning Insufficient control of dust, noise, heat and other environmental factors affecting workers and occupants Inadequate lighting and housekeeping in plant rooms, service risers or back-of-house areas Limited consideration of vulnerable persons (e.g. aged care residents, hospital patients) when scheduling disruptive or noisy works 		[REDACTED]	
9. Health Monitoring, PPE and Occupational Hygiene Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure of workers to refrigerants, oils, cleaning agents and other hazardous substances without adequate controls Heat stress, dehydration and fatigue for workers undertaking decommissioning in plant rooms, ceiling spaces or roofs Inappropriate or inconsistent selection and use of PPE, including respiratory and eye protection Lack of health monitoring where there is significant ongoing exposure to specific hazardous substances or environments Skin and eye injuries from contact with liquid refrigerant or pressurised releases Noise-induced hearing loss risk from work in plant rooms with running equipment or use of power tools nearby 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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10. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate planning for refrigerant leaks, fires, structural failures or medical emergencies during decommissioning Lack of clear emergency roles, communication protocols and training for workers and supervisors Insufficient coordination of emergency procedures between the PCBU, building management and other PCBUs on site Poor availability or location of emergency equipment such as fire extinguishers, spill kits, gas detectors and first aid kits Failure to report, investigate and learn from incidents and near misses, leading to repeated failures Confusion during evacuations due to temporary closures of exits or changes to building layout during works 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
11. Documentation, Records, Communication and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss or inaccessibility of WHS documents such as risk assessments, permits, licences and maintenance records Inconsistent or informal communication of hazards and controls between management, supervisors, technicians and contractors Workers and HSRs not meaningfully consulted on WHS matters affecting decommissioning work Outdated procedures, drawings, schematics or asset information leading to incorrect assumptions about plant configuration Inadequate language, literacy or cultural considerations in WHS communications and training materials 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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			[REDACTED]	
12. Contractor Management, Procurement and Outsourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of contractors for decommissioning who lack adequate WHS systems, licences or experience Procurement decisions based solely on cost, ignoring WHS performance and capability Poor coordination between principal contractor, subcontractors and facility management, leading to conflicting work activities and uncontrolled risks Inadequate monitoring of contractor compliance with agreed WHS requirements during decommissioning Lack of clarity regarding which PCBU is the principal contractor and which WHS procedures apply at multi-PCBU sites 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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.