

Animal Biohazard Waste and Carcass Disposal

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 for the task parts. 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 Duty of Care & Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of WHS duties for animal biohazard waste and carcass disposal under WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Failure to identify and comply with relevant biosecurity, environmental protection and waste transport legislation No documented organisational policy for management of animal biohazard waste and deceased animals Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on biohazard risks Insufficient resources (time, budget, staffing) allocated to safely manage animal carcass handling and waste disposal Failure to include contractors and labour hire workers within the WHS management system 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and endorse a written WHS and Biohazard Management Policy covering animal carcass handling, quarantine care, deceased animal removal and disposal of animal waste Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, supervisors and workers consistent with WHS Act 2011 due diligence requirements Undertake a legal compliance review to identify appropriate WHS, biosecurity, environmental protection, waste transport and local council requirements and integrate them into procedures Implement formal WHS consultation framework with toolbox talks, HSR involvement and worker feedback channels specific to animal biohazard waste activities Allocate dedicated budget and staffing for training, equipment, engineering controls, health monitoring and emergency preparedness related to biohazard work Include contractors, agency staff and volunteers in all relevant WHS policies, inductions, risk assessments and consultation processes Review governance arrangements annually or after significant incidents or regulatory changes 	3H
2. Biosecurity and Quarantine Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate classification of animals, carcasses and waste according to biohazard and quarantine status Poor segregation of quarantined animals and infectious waste from general animal care areas Failure to implement isolation protocols for suspect or confirmed infectious cases Lack of coordination between WHS and biosecurity roles, leading to conflicting instructions Inadequate procedures for movement, tracking and documentation of quarantined animals and associated waste Uncontrolled entry of unauthorised persons into quarantine or high-risk biohazard zones 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Biosecurity and Quarantine Management Plan aligned with relevant national and state biosecurity guidance Define clear quarantine categories and risk levels for animals and animal waste, with associated handling, storage and disposal requirements Establish physical and procedural isolation zones for high-risk and quarantined animals, including controlled access, zoning signage and restricted pathways Implement documented entry and exit protocols for quarantine areas, including gowning/degowning, decontamination and waste handling rules Create a system for identification, labelling and tracking of quarantined animals and associated biohazard materials, including chain-of-custody documentation Integrate WHS, infection prevention and biosecurity responsibilities in procedures, with a single point of coordination for high-risk events Conduct periodic internal audits and mock drills to verify quarantine procedures are followed and effective 	3H

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	<p>emergency euthanasia under suboptimal conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear criteria or decision-making framework for euthanasia and subsequent carcass handling • Psychological stress and moral injury to staff repeatedly managing sick or dying animals • Poor communication between veterinary, husbandry and WHS personnel about welfare and infection risks 		[REDACTED]	
6. Biological and Chemical Hazard Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to zoonotic pathogens from carcasses, animal tissues, blood, faeces, urine and other body fluids • Aerosolisation of infectious agents during cutting, high-pressure washing transport of decomposing carcasses • Inappropriate selection or use of disinfectants and chemical sanitisers, leading to ineffective decontamination or chemical exposure • Inadequate systems for collection and segregation of waste streams (biohazard, sharps, clinical, general pharmaceutical, cytotoxic) • Insufficient management of odours, off-gassing and decomposition products in storage and transport systems • Lack of clear post-exposure procedures for bites, scratches, needle-stick injuries or splash incidents 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Waste and Carcass Transport, Storage and Logistics Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate systems to ensure timely removal of carcasses and putrescible animal waste, leading to decomposition and increased biohazard risk • Use of unsuitable vehicles or containers for transporting biohazardous carcasses and waste 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of route planning and chain-of-custody arrangements for off-site disposal or transfer to third-party contractors Failure of refrigerated or frozen storage systems resulting in large-scale decomposition events Insufficient controls for loading and unloading, leading to spills, leaks or contamination of public areas Poor integration with third-party disposal facilities, leading to non-compliant disposal or rejected loads 		[REDACTED]	
8. Contractor, Supplier and Third-Party Disposal Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliance on external waste contractors without adequate verification of their WHS and biosecurity systems Poor communication of specific site hazards and quarantine requirements to contractors handling deceased animal or biohazard waste Misalignment between disposal procedures and third-party disposal facility requirements, causing confusion or non-compliance Inadequate incident reporting and investigation arrangements involving contractors or external facilities Failure to manage performance of long-term contractors, leading to gradual erosion of safety standards 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Competency, Training and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers and supervisors not adequately trained in zoonotic disease risks, quarantine rules and biohazard waste handling Reliance on informal on-the-job instruction without competency assessment 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient supervision of new, young or inexperienced workers dealing with high-risk carcass or waste streams • Lack of refresher training, leading to skill fade and non-compliance with changing procedures • Contractors and temporary staff not included in site-specific training and briefings 		[REDACTED]	
10. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hygiene Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate specification of PPE levels for varying risk scenarios (routine carcass handling vs. high-risk infectious disease cases) • Poor systems for PPE supply, sizing, storage and disposal leading to non-use or misuse • Lack of formal hand hygiene and decontamination protocols at entry/exit points to quarantine and processing areas • PPE policies that do not address compatibility with other risks (e.g. heat stress, communication, manual dexterity) • No monitoring of PPE compliance and hygiene practices 	3M	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Plant Safety Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic reliance on manual lifting of heavy or awkward carcasses and bulk waste containers • Inadequate maintenance and inspection regimes for trolleys, hoists, conveyors and compactors used in carcass and waste handling • Poorly designed workstations or processing benches leading to repetitive strain or awkward postures • Lack of plant guarding, interlocks or emergency stop systems on machinery 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<p>used in carcass size reduction or waste processing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient isolation, lock-out and tagging procedures for maintenance on equipment contaminated with biological hazards 		[REDACTED]	
12. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a coordinated response plan for spills, leaks, biohazard releases or quarantine breaches No specific procedures for managing injured workers, exposure incidents or contaminated equipment during emergencies Inadequate drills, training and equipment to deal with mass animal mortality or disease outbreak scenarios Poor communication channels with regulators, public health, biosecurity agencies and neighbours during significant incidents Failure to learn from previous incidents due to inadequate investigation and corrective action processes 	1A	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Health Monitoring, Vaccination and Worker Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of targeted health monitoring for workers with ongoing exposure to animal biohazards Inadequate vaccination programs for relevant zoonotic diseases and tetanus Delayed reporting of symptoms potentially associated with occupational exposures Psychological impacts of regular exposure to animal suffering, euthanasia and deceased animals 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stigma or fear of reporting mental health concerns or exposure incidents 		[REDACTED]	
14. Environmental Protection and Community Impact Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled release of contaminated effluent, leachate or wash-down water to soil, stormwater or sewer systems Odours, pests and vermin attracted by poorly managed carcass and animal waste storage Noise, traffic and visual impacts associated with frequent waste transport and carcass movements Negative community perception or complaints due to visible or odorous animal carcass activities Regulatory non-compliance with environmental licences and council requirements 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
15. Information Management, Records and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete or inaccurate records of carcass generation, storage, movement and disposal Fragmented WHS, biosecurity and environmental data, making it difficult to identify systemic issues Lack of trend analysis on incidents, near misses, exposures and audit findings Outdated procedures, risk assessments and training materials remaining in circulation Failure to incorporate worker feedback and lessons learned into system improvements 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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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 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.