

Bus Safety

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 & Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of senior management oversight of school bus safety risks and legal obligations Unclear allocation of WHS duties between PCBU, school leadership, bus contractor and maintenance provider Inadequate consultation with drivers, mechanics, teacher supervisors and students about bus safety issues No formal WHS objectives, targets or key performance indicators (KPIs) for bus safety Failure to monitor compliance with the WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation and relevant road transport legislation 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Bus Safety Governance procedure that defines roles, responsibilities and WHS due diligence requirements in accordance with WHS Act 2011 Create a documented Bus Safety Policy endorsed by senior management addressing school transport and contractor operations Implement a WHS consultation framework (e.g. GRs, WHS Committee, toolbox meetings) that specifically includes school bus drivers, maintenance staff and duty teachers Develop bus safety KPIs (e.g. incident rates, near miss reports, maintenance compliance, fatigue breaches) and review at management meetings Conduct annual compliance reviews against WHS legislation, road transport laws and relevant Codes of Practice with corrective action plans Include bus safety responsibilities and expectations in position descriptions and contractor agreements 	3H
2. Vehicle Procurement & Design Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of buses that do not comply with Australian Design Rules or state school bus requirements Insufficient passive and active safety features (e.g. no ESC, poor rollover protection, inadequate emergency exits) Inadequate consideration of under-bus access, jacking points and safe inspection arrangements during vehicle selection Lack of child-appropriate seating, restraints and visibility for drivers supervising students Inconsistent specifications across fleet leading to confusion and higher training burden 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Bus Procurement Standard specifying compliance with Australian Design Rules, state/territory school bus regulations and minimum ANCAP or equivalent safety features Mandate inclusion of advanced safety technologies (e.g. ABS, ESC, reversing and side cameras, proximity sensors, speed limiters where practicable) Specify engineering controls for under-bus inspections such as compatible axle stands, jacking points, lockable isolation of engine and air systems and appropriate clearance for inspection Include requirements for high-visibility school bus markings, flashing warning lights, signage and appropriate seating layouts for children Standardise fleet specifications where reasonably practicable to simplify training, maintenance and safety system documentation Require supplier documentation on safe access, maintenance procedures and under-body inspection requirements as part of purchase contract 	2M
3. Fleet Asset Management & Maintenance Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate preventative maintenance program leading to critical mechanical failure (brakes, steering, tyres, suspension) Reliance on reactive repairs instead of scheduled servicing for school buses Poor control of maintenance records, making it difficult to verify roadworthiness 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal Fleet Asset Management Plan with scheduled maintenance in line with manufacturer specifications and regulatory requirements Use a computerised maintenance management system (CMMS) to schedule, track and verify all school bus inspections, servicing and repairs Establish a defect reporting and isolation procedure requiring buses with safety-critical defects to be removed from service until repaired and cleared by a competent person Develop and enforce minimum standards and service level agreements (SLAs) for external maintenance providers, including qualifications, quality controls and auditing 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to identify and quarantine defective buses from service Inconsistent standards for outsourced maintenance providers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out periodic third-party roadworthiness and maintenance audits of the school bus fleet Define end-of-life and replacement criteria for buses based on age, mileage, condition and safety performance 	
4. School Bus Maintenance Workshop & Under-Bus Inspection Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crushing or entrapment during under-bus inspections due to inadequate supports or uncontrolled movement Exposure to moving parts, hot components and pressurised systems during inspection and servicing Poor workshop layout leading to vehicle-pedestrian interaction and slips, trips or falls around parked buses Inadequate ventilation and lighting under buses affecting inspection quality and worker health Lack of standardised procedures for jacking, supporting and accessing under-bus areas 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Pre-Operation Inspection & Defect Reporting Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to identify critical defects before operating school buses with children on board Informal or inconsistent vehicle pre-start checks by drivers Drivers feeling pressured to operate buses despite known defects Poor communication between drivers and maintenance personnel leading to unresolved hazards 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
6. Driver Competency, Licensing & Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers operating school buses without appropriate licence class or authorisation Inadequate assessment of driving competency for large passenger vehicles and school bus specific risks 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of formal induction on organisational WHS procedures, emergency management and behaviour management of students Insufficient training in managing fatigue, distraction and challenging road conditions No verification of ongoing competency or monitoring of driving performance 		[REDACTED]	
7. Fatigue Management & Work Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers operating school buses while fatigued due to long shifts, split shifts or secondary employment Inadequate consideration of driving and duty hours against fatigue legislation and guidance Insufficient rostering controls for early morning and late afternoon school runs combined with other work Lack of education on signs of fatigue and reporting expectations 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Journey & Route Risk Management (Including School Environments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly planned routes exposing buses to unsafe roads, low bridges, flood-prone areas or high-traffic intersections Unsafe school pickup and drop-off locations, including inadequate turning areas and student crossing points Lack of formal process to review route changes, temporary detours or new schools/stops Inadequate assessment of remote or rural routes including communications coverage and emergency access 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Student Management,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruptive or aggressive student behaviour distracting the driver 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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Supervision & Behaviour Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate supervision at school bus stops and on-board, particularly for younger students Lack of clear behavioural expectations communicated to students and parents No systematic response to bullying or violence incidents on school buses 		[REDACTED]	
10. Emergency Preparedness, Response & Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncoordinated response to crashes, vehicle fires, medical emergencies or evacuations involving students Drivers and school staff unfamiliar with emergency equipment and procedures Delayed notification to emergency services, parents, schools and regulators Lack of post-incident investigation and corrective action process 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Contractor & Third-Party Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of external bus operators or maintenance providers with inadequate WHS systems Misalignment of responsibilities between school, PCBU and contractor for student safety and bus standards Limited visibility over contractor fatigue management, driver competency and maintenance practices 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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12. Communications, Remote Operations & Technology Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to contact drivers on remote school routes during emergencies or breakdowns • Overreliance on mobile phones leading to driver distraction while driving • Lack of reliable tracking of bus locations, delays or deviations on school runs 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Bus Stop, Depot & School Zone Traffic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle-pedestrian collision involving students, staff or members of the public in bus zones or depots • Uncontrolled vehicle movements during reversing, parking or manoeuvring of large buses • Congestion around schools leading to unsafe crossing behaviour and near misses 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
14. Hazard Reporting, Consultation & Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unreported hazards and near misses leading to repeated incidents • Workers and students feeling discouraged from raising bus safety concerns • No systematic review of incident trends to identify systemic failures 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
15. Documentation, Records & Compliance Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate documentation of policies, procedures and training related to school bus safety 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss or inaccuracy of maintenance, inspection and licensing records • Inability to demonstrate compliance with WHS Act 2011 and relevant transport regulations during audits or investigations 		<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>	

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.