Bushfire Safety

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

THIS RISK ASSESSMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU OF 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

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

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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			
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	
POSSIBLE	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	3H HIGH	Review before work start	
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	2M MODERATE	Ensure control measures in place.	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	

Hierarchy of Controls (pyramid):
- **Elimination** — Remove the hazard.
- **Substitution** — Replace the hazard.
- Isolation — Isolate People from the hazard
- **Engineering** — Isolate the hazard
- **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 the 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. Bushfire Risk Governance & Legal Compliance	• Absence of a formal bushfire safety policy aligned with WHS Act 2011 and state-based bushfire legislation and codes of practice • Lack of clear senior management accountability for bushfire risk management, emergency planning and resourcing • Failure to integrate bushfire risk into the organisation's WHS management system and risk registers • Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on bushfire risks and controls • Non-compliance with local council, CFA/FRNSW/QFES/DFES and planning regulations relating to bushfire-prone areas • Failure to monitor and implement learnings from coronial findings, regulator guidance, and industry best practice • Inadequate annual review of bushfire risk controls and emergency procedures	4A	• Develop and endorse a written Bushfire Risk Management Policy approved by the PCBU/Board, explicitly referencing WHS Act 2011 duties and relevant state/territory bushfire legislation and guidance • Assign clear executive-level responsibility for bushfire safety (e.g. WHS Manager or Emergency Preparedness Coordinator) with defined KPIs and reporting lines • Integrate bushfire hazards into the organisation-wide WHS risk management framework, including formal risk assessments, risk registers and action plans • Establish a Bushfire Safety Committee (or integrate into existing WHS Committee) with representation from management, workers and HSRs • Maintain a legal and standards register capturing relevant bushfire-related statutes, regulations, Australian Standards (e.g. AS 3745, AS 3959), and fire authority guidelines • Schedule annual governance reviews of bushfire risk management arrangements, including external advice where appropriate • Implement a non-conformance and corrective action system to track bushfire-related findings from audits, drills and incidents through to closure	3H
2. Bushfire Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment System	• Failure to identify workplaces, outstations and work routes located in bushfire-prone areas • Inadequate assessment of bushfire risk factors such as vegetation, topography, access/egress and local fire history • No systematic consideration of bushfire impact on outdoor work, remote work, mobile workforces and contractors • Failure to account for ember attack, smoke, heat, and secondary hazards (e.g. hazardous materials release, power loss) • Static, one-off assessments that do not consider changing climate, land use and fuel loads	4A	• Implement a formal bushfire risk assessment procedure that aligns with ISO 31000 and the organisation's WHS risk management standard • Use mapping tools and government bushfire-prone area overlays to identify and classify all sites and travel routes by bushfire risk level • Conduct multi-disciplinary site-based bushfire risk assessments involving WHS, operations, property and local fire authority input • Incorporate assessment of ember attack, radiant heat, smoke exposure, infrastructure vulnerability and access constraints into risk methodology • Review bushfire risk assessments at least annually and after significant incidents, environmental changes or organisational changes • Maintain a centralised, version-controlled register of bushfire risk assessments accessible to managers, workers and contractors • Integrate bushfire risk ratings into planning for new projects, leases, depots and remote operations	2M

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	• Inconsistent documentation and communication of bushfire risk ratings for different sites and activities			
3. Bushfire Emergency Planning & Evacuation Strategy	• Absence of a documented Bushfire Emergency Management Plan covering all relevant workplaces and field locations • No clear triggers or decision-making criteria for 'Evacuate in Case of a Bushfire in Vicinity' versus stay/relocate to safer area • Inadequate planning for rapid deterioration of conditions, road closures and changing fire behaviour • Failure to nominate primary and secondary evacuation routes and external assembly points in safer locations • No pre-identified local safer places, refuges or last-resort options in coordination with fire authorities • Lack of arrangements for transport, headcount, and welfare of workers and visitors during evacuation • Failure to incorporate after-hours, shift work, lone workers and visitors into evacuation planning	4A	• Develop a comprehensive Bushfire Emergency Management Plan in accordance with AS 3745 and state fire authority guidance • Define clear, objective evacuation triggers (e.g. Emergency Warning levels, Watch and Act messages, fire proximity and direction) and document them in procedures and local instructions • Establish pre-defined evacuation routes and off-site assembly points located in low-fuel and low-risk areas with maps and signage • Develop contingency plans for lost or blocked evacuation routes, including alternative routes and shelter-in-place strategies where appropriate • Implement a system to account for all personnel and visitors during evacuations, such as electronic roll-calls or muster lists • Include procedures for after-hours, on-call staff, contractors and visitors, including sign-in systems and emergency contact protocols • Conduct annual multi-scenario tabletop exercises to test decision-making, communication and evacuation timing during bushfire events	2M
4. Bushfire Preparedness, Monitoring & Warning Systems	• Reliance on informal or ad hoc methods to monitor bushfire conditions and warnings • Failure to systematically track Fire Danger Ratings, Total Fire Bans and local incident alerts • No designated role responsible for gathering and interpreting bushfire information on high-risk days • Inadequate process to quickly disseminate warnings and instructions to dispersed or remote workers • Over-reliance on a single communication channel (e.g. email only) susceptible to power or network failure	4A		2M

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	• Workers unaware of official warning systems, terminology and their implications for work activities			
5. Land, Asset & Infrastructure Bushfire Resilience	• Inadequate asset design or siting in relation to bushfire risk (e.g. buildings located in heavy fuel loads) • Lack of defensible space and vegetation management around structures, storage yards and critical infrastructure • Buildings not constructed or upgraded to relevant bushfire resistance standards for their Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) • Vulnerable utilities (power, water, communications) with no redundancy or protection against bushfire damage • Poor layout of access roads, gates and turning areas limiting emergency services access and safe egress • Unprotected above-ground fuel and chemical storage susceptible to radiant heat and ember attack	4A		2M
6. Hazardous Materials, Fuel & Ignition Source Management	• Uncontrolled accumulation of flammable materials, waste, pallets and vegetation near buildings and plant • Inadequate segregation and bunding of fuel stores, LPG cylinders and combustible liquids • Poor control of hot work, grinding and other ignition sources on high Fire Danger Rating days • Lack of procedures for plant operation, refuelling and parking during elevated bushfire risk • No system to routinely inspect and maintain electrical, mechanical and vehicle systems to prevent sparks or leaks • Failure to identify and manage chemical reactions or releases during bushfire exposure	3H		2M

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7. Worker Competency, Training & Bushfire Awareness	• Workers unaware of bushfire risks, local conditions and organisational emergency arrangements • Lack of competency in interpreting warnings, using communications equipment and following evacuation procedures • No specific induction for new workers, contractors and visitors operating in bushfire-prone environments • Inadequate training for supervisors and incident controllers in decision-making under bushfire conditions • Failure to address language, literacy or cultural barriers to understanding bushfire instructions • Overestimation of workers' ability to defend assets or conduct wildfire response activities safely	3H		2M
8. Communication, Coordination & Command Structure	• Unclear roles and responsibilities during bushfire incidents leading to confusion and delayed actions • Lack of structured incident command arrangements compatible with emergency services protocols • Ineffective internal communication between field crews, depots, management and control rooms • No reliable communication channels in remote or poor-coverage areas during bushfire emergencies • Inadequate coordination with neighbours, tenants, landlords and local emergency services • Multiple, conflicting instructions being issued to workers during fast-moving bushfire scenarios	4A		2M
9. Journey Management & Remote/Field Work Controls	• Workers travelling through or working within bushland or rural areas without structured journey management	4A		2M

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	• Inadequate route planning that fails to consider fire history, vegetation and potential road closure points • No real-time monitoring of worker locations during heightened bushfire conditions • Lone workers or small crews unable to receive timely instructions to evacuate in case of a bushfire in vicinity • Vehicles not suitably equipped for emergency evacuation, smoke or heat exposure • Failure to suspend or modify non-essential travel and field tasks on extreme and catastrophic fire danger days			
10. Health, Wellbeing & Smoke Exposure Management	• Prolonged worker exposure to bushfire smoke, particulate matter and poor air quality • Exacerbation of respiratory or cardiovascular conditions due to inadequate health screening and controls • Heat stress and dehydration for workers undertaking wildfire response activities or evacuations • Psychological stress, anxiety and fatigue arising from bushfire threat, evacuations and property loss • Lack of systems to identify and support vulnerable workers during major bushfire events	3H		2M
11. Wildfire Response Activities & Operational Limits	• Uncontrolled or ad hoc attempts by workers to defend property or undertake wildfire response without proper systems • Use of firefighting equipment (e.g. slip-on units, pumps, hoses) by untrained or unsupervised personnel • Lack of clear organisational limits on wildfire response activities leading to unsafe exposure to radiant heat, smoke and entrapment	4A		2M

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	• Insufficient PPE, equipment maintenance and refuelling procedures for designated wildfire response teams • Inadequate coordination with emergency services during on-site defensive actions			
12. Contractor, Visitor & Public Interface Management	• Contractors operating in bushfire-prone areas without alignment to the organisation's bushfire procedures • Visitors and short-term workers unaware of local bushfire risks, alarms and evacuation arrangements • No clear allocation of responsibilities for bushfire safety between host employer, principal contractor and subcontractors • Public presence on or near worksite during bushfire or wildfire response activities leading to uncontrolled exposure • Inconsistent communication of restrictions on access, parking and movement during high-risk days	3H		2M
13. Resources, Equipment & Maintenance for Bushfire Readiness	• Insufficient or poorly maintained firefighting and emergency equipment to support planned bushfire response and evacuations • Lack of documented maintenance schedules for pumps, hoses, water tanks, generators and emergency lighting • Inadequate provision of bushfire-specific PPE for designated roles • Failure to test backup power, water supply and communication systems prior to bushfire season • No clear budget or resourcing plan for implementing and sustaining bushfire controls	3H		2M

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14. Documentation, Drills, Testing & Continuous Improvement	• Outdated or inaccessible bushfire procedures, plans and maps during emergencies • Lack of regular drills to validate evacuation and communication processes under realistic conditions • No structured process to capture lessons learnt from drills, near misses and actual bushfire events • Inconsistent record-keeping on training, equipment checks and bushfire-related decisions • Failure to adjust bushfire controls in response to climate change, new technology or regulator guidance	3H			1L

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 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

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/legislati...
Codes of Practice NSW: https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/lis...codes-of-practi...

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-...-laws
Codes of Practice NT: https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/f...-and-resourc...s/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/le...lation
Codes of Practice for SA: https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/wor...aces/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.

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

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

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