

Demolition Saw

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:	

SAMPLE

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. Procurement and Design Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of demolition saws that are not compliant with relevant Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 60745, AS 4024 series) • Selection of saws without appropriate guarding, vibration control, dust suppression capability or noise reduction features • Inadequate compatibility between saws, blades and consumables leading to increased risk of kickback, blade failure and exposure to respirable crystalline silica • Lack of documented specification and approval process for new or replacement saws • Procurement decisions driven solely by cost rather than safety, durability and whole-of-life risk 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a formal plant procurement procedure aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations (Plant and Construction Work) requiring WHS review and sign-off before purchase of any demolition saw • Specify minimum safety design requirements in procurement documentation, including compliance with relevant Australian Standards, effective blade guard, lead-man controls, vibration-dampening handles, water-feed or on-tool dust extraction options and noise reduction features where practicable • Require suppliers to provide declarations of conformity, plant hazard information, operator manuals, maintenance schedules, noise and vibration data, and control recommendations at time of purchase • Implement a pre-purchase risk assessment process for demolition saws, involving WHS and operational representatives to evaluate inherent risks and control options before approving any model • Standardise demolition saw models and blade systems across the business to reduce variability, support consistent training and simplify maintenance and parts management • Include whole-of-life cost and safety performance (including maintenance, consumables and downtime from failures) as mandatory criteria in procurement evaluations • Maintain a controlled register of approved saw models and compatible blades/consumables, with a formal process for adding or removing items from the list 	Medium
2. Governance, Policies and WHS Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of a formal WHS management system governing demolition saw use within construction and demolition activities • Unclear responsibilities between officers, PCBU representatives, supervisors and workers regarding plant safety obligations under the WHS Act 2011 • Lack of documented policies and procedures covering selection, use, inspection, maintenance and disposal of demolition saws • Poor integration of demolition saw risk management into broader construction project planning and WHS consultation processes • Inadequate monitoring, review and continuous improvement mechanisms leading to uncontrolled drift from safe practices 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a documented WHS management system that explicitly includes demolition saw risk management consistent with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations, including plant and construction work requirements • Define and document roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, supervisors, HSRs and workers for demolition saw safety, including due diligence obligations and consultation duties • Create and maintain a Demolition Saw Safety Policy and supporting procedures that address procurement, risk assessment, training, safe use, inspection, maintenance, storage, and incident reporting • Integrate demolition saw risk controls into construction project WHS plans, Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) and site-specific risk assessments, ensuring alignment between corporate and project-level documentation • Implement a scheduled WHS system review (e.g. annually) focusing on plant-related risks, audit findings, incident trends and legislative/standard updates, with documented action plans and governance oversight • Ensure that worker consultation and participation processes (e.g. WHS committees, HSR forums, toolbox talks) routinely address demolition saw risks, controls and improvement opportunities • Adopt a document control system to manage current versions of all procedures, policies, risk assessments and forms related to demolition saws, accessible to all relevant personnel 	Medium

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3. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers operating demolition saws without verified competency or adequate supervision Reliance on informal on-the-job instruction without structured training, assessment or refresher programs Lack of competency requirements for high-risk applications (e.g. cutting masonry containing silica, cutting overhead or in confined spaces) Inadequate training on hazard identification, risk assessment, emergency response and limitations of control measures (e.g. dust suppression systems) Failure to consider language, literacy, cultural and experience differences in training delivery leading to misunderstanding of safe systems of work 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a demolition saw competency framework outlining minimum training, assessment and refresher requirements for all levels (operators, supervisors, maintenance personnel) Implement a formal training program that covers legislative duties, plant hazards (noise, vibration, silica, kickback, manual handling, fire), manufacturer instructions, PPE, and site-specific procedures Use trained and authorised instructors to deliver practical and theory-based training with documented competency assessments before authorising workers to use demolition saws unsupervised Maintain a central competency and authorisation register for demolition saw operators, including dates of training, assessment outcomes, and refresher due dates Introduce periodic refresher training (e.g. every 2–3 years or after significant change/incident) to reinforce safe systems of work and update workers on new risks or control measures Ensure training materials and assessments are tailored to workforce needs, including use of plain English, visual aids and interpreter or translated materials where required Include supervision requirements in procedures, specifying higher levels of supervision for new or inexperienced operators and for high-risk environments 	Medium
4. Plant Registration, Asset Management and Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to track demolition saws, their condition, history and use leading to unmanaged risks and use of unsafe equipment Missing or inaccessible manufacturer instructions and safety information for operators and maintenance personnel Use of unregistered or unlicensed plant brought onto site by subcontractors or workers Lack of documentation of modifications, repairs and safety upgrades that may affect plant safety or compliance Poor record-keeping making it difficult to demonstrate due diligence and compliance with WHS Act 2011 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <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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5. Maintenance, Inspection and Calibration Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of demolition saws with worn, damaged or incompatible components (e.g. guards, blades, fuel lines, mounts, switches) • Failure of critical safety features such as dead-man switches, guards and vibration-dampening leading to serious injury risk • Irregular or undocumented maintenance resulting in hidden defects or sudden plant failure • Informal repair practices, including use of non-genuine parts or unqualified personnel, compromising safety performance • Inadequate pre-use and scheduled inspection regimes allowing progressive deterioration and increased risk of incidents 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
6. Safe Systems of Work and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent or undocumented safe work methods for demolition saw use across different sites and conditions • Reliance on informal custom and practice instead of risk-based procedures informed by engineering control • Inadequate consideration of site-specific factors (e.g. structural stability, services, access/egress) in the planning of demolition saw activities • Failure to integrate demolition saw controls into broader construction sequencing and task coordination, increasing interaction with other trades and plant • Procedures that are overly complex, not user-friendly or inaccessible leading to poor implementation in the field 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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7. Hazardous Substances, Silica and Dust Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic underestimation of exposure to respirable crystalline silica and other hazardous dusts generated during cutting masonry, concrete and stone • Lack of organisational silica management plan addressing demolition saw activities specifically • Inconsistent use, maintenance and enforcement of engineering controls such as on-tool water suppression or dust extraction systems • Inadequate respiratory protection program (fit testing, selection, cleaning, storage, training) for workers exposed to dust • Poor housekeeping and dust containment systems resulting in contamination of adjacent work areas and prolonged exposure 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium
8. Noise, Vibration and Ergonomics Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic exposure of workers to high noise levels from demolition activities without adequate organisational controls or hearing conservation program • Chronic exposure to high frequency vibration and whole-body load from frequent or prolonged saw use leading to long-term musculoskeletal and vascular disorders • Inadequate planning of work methods and task rotation leading to fatigue and over-exertion • Lack of ergonomic consideration in selection of saw types, accessories and work positioning, increasing manual handling and posture-related risks 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium

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			[REDACTED]	
9. Site Planning, Traffic and Public Interface Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled interaction between demolition saw operations and other mobile plant, vehicles, trades or pedestrians • Inadequate planning for exclusion zones, barricading and signage around cutting areas resulting in bystander exposure to debris, dust and noise • Poor coordination with other contractors and stakeholders leading to overlapping high-risk activities • Insufficient consideration of public safety where demolition saw work occurs near public roads, footpaths or occupied buildings 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
10. Contractor and Subcontractor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors using demolition saws with different standards, equipment and practices that are not aligned with the principal contractor's WHS expectations • Lack of verification of contractor competencies, licences, SWMS and maintenance systems relating to demolition saws • Poor communication of site-specific hazards and controls to contractor personnel before and during work • Inconsistent supervision and monitoring of contractor demolition saw activities resulting in uncontrolled risk-taking 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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11. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Management and First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of planning for emergency scenarios associated with demolition saw use such as severe lacerations, eye injuries, fires, fuel spills and crush injuries Inadequate first aid resources, training or response arrangements on sites where demolition saws are used Poor incident reporting and investigation systems resulting in repeated events and missed lessons Failure to integrate demolition saw-specific emergency scenarios into broader site emergency plans and drills 	High	[REDACTED]	Low
12. Health Monitoring and Worker Wellbeing Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undetected long-term health effects from exposure to silica dust, noise, vibration and manual handling demands associated with demolition saw work Lack of structured health monitoring programs for workers undertaking high-risk demolition saw tasks on a regular basis Insufficient systems for workers to report early symptoms or health concerns without fear of reprisal Poor integration of occupational health providers into WHS planning for demolition saw operations 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
13. Supervision, Behavioural Safety and Safety Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Normalisation of unsafe practices such as bypassing guards, removing dust controls or operating without required PPE due to production pressures Inconsistent supervisory expectations and enforcement of demolition saw 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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	procedures across different sites and crews • Lack of constructive feedback mechanisms, leading to under-reporting of concerns and near misses • Management focus on productivity over safety when scheduling demolition saw tasks and setting performance targets		[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	

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.