Emergency Rescue From Confined Spaces

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:

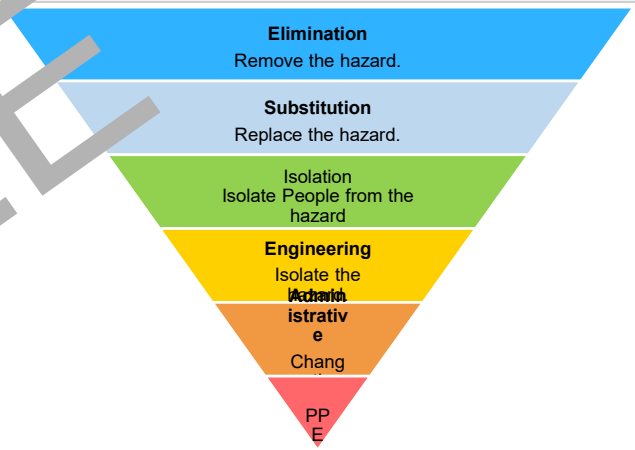
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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
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	Rev before work
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACU	2M MO RATE	Ensure control measures in place.
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 H	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS



Risk Rating & Required Action:

4A	Stop work. The risk is intolerable. E inate the hazar redesign the activity before proceeding. A Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) or hi er-level authorisati is required.
3H	Review and approve additional c rols b ask arts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
2M	Ensure all nominated controls are in ace and effe ive. 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, Legal Compliance and PCBU Duties	• Inadequate understanding of WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation 2011 and relevant confined space Codes of Practice by officers and managers • Absence of a documented confined space and emergency rescue governance framework (policies, procedures, standards) • Failure of officers to exercise due diligence in ensuring confined space and rescue risks are identified, resourced and reviewed • Unclear allocation of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities between PCBU, officers, workers, contractors and emergency services • Inadequate consultation, cooperation and coordination between multiple PCBUs sharing a workplace • Lack of formal review of WHS legal changes and industry standards relatin to confined spaces and rescue • Insufficient integrati of emergency rescue requiremen into the broader WHS managemen ystem	High	• Develop and endorse a documented Confi d Space Emergency Rescue Management Standard aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation 011 relevant Safe Work Australia Codes of Practice • Define and document PCBU officer, manager, pervisor, w er and contractor responsibilities for confined space work and resc in position descri ns, c acts and WHS procedures • Establish an annual l comp ce register and r w process covering confined space and rescue obligations, includ g mon ing c ges to legis ation, Australian Standards and regulator guidance • Require off s to demon ate due ligen through periodic WHS governance reports that specifically address confi space ri , rescue ca ity, resourcing and incident trends • Impl t a for consultation and coordination protocol between all PCBUs with workers in or around confin s ces, in ding rescue planning responsibilities and emergency interfaces • Integra e co ined sp e and rescue requirements into the organisation's WHS policy, risk management procedu , con ctor management system and emergency management framework • Sc du periodic internal audits focusing on confined space and emergency rescue compliance, with correc ctions tracked to completion through the WHS action management system • eport governance and compliance findings related to confined space rescue to the WHS Committee an Executive Team with clear actions, owners and due dates	Medium
2. Confined Space and Rescue Risk Management System	• Confined spaces and associated rescue needs not formally identifie classified or recorded in a centr register • Generic or outdated risk assessments that do not adequately consider emergency rescue scenarios, limitations and foreseeable failures • Failure to consider all foreseeable hazards such as atmospheric conditions, engulfment, configuration, access/egress and interaction with adjacent plant or processes • Risk assessments conducted without input from competent persons with confined space and rescue experience	High	• Establish and maintain a central Confined Space Register that records location, configuration, hazards, isolation points and specific emergency rescue considerations for each confined space • Implement a formal risk management procedure requiring task-specific and space-specific risk assessments that explicitly address emergency rescue feasibility and constraints • Mandate that confined space and rescue risk assessments are led or verified by a competent person with current confined space and emergency response training and experience • Use a standardised confined space risk assessment template that prompts consideration of atmosphere, engulfment, configuration, communication, access/egress, plant interactions and rescue access • Require documented demonstration that proposed rescue methods are practicable for the specific space, including evaluation of reach, clearances, loads, anchor points and worker condition scenarios • Link confined space and rescue risk assessments to permit-to-work processes so that permits cannot be issued without an up-to-date risk assessment and rescue plan • Implement a scheduled review cycle (for example, annually or after any change, incident or near miss) for all confined space and rescue risk assessments, with revision history maintained	Medium

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	• Reliance on informal knowledge rather than a structured, documented risk management process • No formal process to review and update risk assessments following changes to plant, processes, incidents or near misses • Inconsistent use or understanding of the definition of a confined space leading to misclassification and unmanaged rescue risk		• Provide training for supervisors and assessors on correct classification of confined spaces, common risk assessment failures and how to incorporate emergency rescue scenarios into assessments	
3. Emergency and Rescue Planning Framework	• Absence of a documented, site-specific confined space emergency response plan addressing rescue from each identified confined space or class of space • Over-reliance on external emergency services without validating response times, capabilities and access limitations • Rescue plans that are generic and n aligned to actual site layout, equipmer configurations or foreseeable emergencies • Inadequate plannin or non-entry rescue options res ing in unnecessary entry into hazardo environ during emergencies • Failure to consider multiple casual scenarios, casualty condition (unconscious, injured, co ated) and complex space geometries • No clear activation criteria, decision-making framework or command structure for confined space emergencies • Inadequate planning for secondary hazards during rescue (for example, atmospheric deterioration, structural instability, energised plant, or traffic interfaces) • Lack of integration between confined space rescue plans and broader site emergency management arrangements	High	evelo and m tain a documented Confined Space Emergency Response Plan that is integrated with the E ergency Management Plan and specific to each confined space or group of similar spaces Require that every confined space risk assessment includes a written, practicable rescue strategy p erring non-entry rescue where feasible and specifying equipment, personnel and communication ne ds • Formalise arrangements with external emergency services, including written confirmation of capabilities, response times, access routes, and any limitations in confined space rescue functions • Conduct capability assessments to determine when an in-house or contracted specialist rescue team is required, and define their activation and deployment processes in the emergency plan • Include decision-making tools and flowcharts in the emergency response plan to guide incident controllers on when to initiate rescue, when to withdraw and how to escalate • Detail roles and responsibilities for incident controller, rescue team leader, standby person, communications coordinator and first aid/medical liaison in all confined space emergencies • Document procedures for managing atmospheric hazards during rescue, including continuous monitoring, ventilation, standby respiratory protection and criteria for suspension of operations • Specify arrangements for handover to ambulance and hospital services, including contamination control, decontamination procedures and provision of relevant exposure and atmosphere data	Medium

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	(evacuation, medical response, communications)			
4. Permit-to-Work and Authorisation Systems	• Confined space work commenced without an authorised permit that specifically verifies rescue arrangements • Permits issued by personnel who are not competent in confined space hazards and emergency rescue requirements • Permit forms that do not require confirmation of rescue equipment readiness, rescue team availability and communication arrangements • Weak verification processes leading to permits being treated as administrative rather than risk control tools • Permit duration and revalidation practices that do not account for changing conditions, shift changes or rescue team fatigue • Inadequate record-keeping of permits including rescinded permits and reasons, limiting learning from previous work • Lack of linkage between confined space permits and other permits (for example, hot work, isolation, excavation) creating conflicting or unmanaged rescue risks	High	[redacted]	Medium
5. Training, Competency and Verification of Rescue Personnel	• Rescue and standby personnel lacking formal confined space and rescue training to nationally recognised standards • Training focused only on basic confined space entry without adequate practical rescue components (including non-entry rescue) • Skills decay due to infrequent practice of rescue techniques and use of specialised equipment • No formal competency framework or verification of competence for rescue	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	team members, standby persons and incident controllers • Supervisors and managers unaware of their duties when approving work requiring onsite rescue capability • Inadequate training of general workers in emergency communication, evacuation and support roles during a rescue • Contractor rescue personnel engaged without verification of training currency, medical fitness and competency for site-specific tasks		[redacted]	
6. Rescue Equipment Selection, Procurement and Maintenance	• Rescue equipment not fit for purpose for specific confined spaces (for example, incorrect tripod height, incompatible attachment points, inadequate retrieval systems) • Under-specification of equipment capacity leading to mechanical failure or inability to retrieve casualties safely • Failure to consider compatibility of rescue equipment with fall protection, breathing apparatus and other PPE • Lack of systematic inspection, testing and maintenance of rescue equipment leading to unavailability or failure during emergencies • Rescue equipment stored in inaccessible locations or in a manner that delays deployment • Poor asset management and record-keeping for rescue equipment, including service history and end-of-life tracking • Procurement based primarily on cost with inadequate technical input from competent rescue personnel	High	[redacted]	Medium
7. Communication, Coordination and	• Unclear communication channels between entrants, standby personnel,	High		Medium

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Command in Emergencies	rescue teams, supervisors and external emergency services • Reliance on single communication methods that may fail in confined space environments (for example, radio black spots, noisy environments) • No established incident command structure for managing confined space emergencies • Poor coordination between internal rescue teams and external emergency services resulting in delays or conflicting actions • Lack of pre-identified rendezvous points, access routes and site maps for emergency responders • Language barriers, literacy issues or cognitive overload in an emergency leading to miscommunication • No formal logging of decisions and actions during emergencies, hindering situational awareness and post-incident review		[redacted]	
8. Interface with Plant, Isolation and Energy Control Systems	• Rescue plans no[redacted] isolation and lockou[redacted] systems leading to energisation of plant durin[redacted] rescue • Inadequate identificatio[redacted] control of all energy sources (mechanical, electrical, pneumatic, hydraulic, thermal, process materials) that could impact rescue activities • Automatic plant or process sequences restarting during a rescue due to interlocks, timers or remote control • Failure of isolations over time (for example, stored energy, leaks, bypassed valves) compromising safety of rescuers and casualties • Lack of clarity over who controls plant and isolations during emergency	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	rescues, particularly where multiple PCBUs are involved • Inadequate consideration of ventilation, purging and atmosphere control systems and their impact on rescue feasibility and timing		[redacted]	
9. Health Monitoring, Fitness for Duty and Psychosocial Factors	• Rescue personnel or entrants with undisclosed or unmanaged medical conditions that increase risk during rescue operations (for example, cardiac issues, respiratory conditions, claustrophobia) • Inadequate assessment of physical capability for roles requiring strenuous rescue tasks in challenging environments • Fatigue, stress or psychological distress impairing decision-making, coordination and performance during emergencies • Lack of systems to identify and manage psychosocial risks associated with traumatic rescue events including post-incident impacts on rescuers and other workers • Absence of a fitness-for-duty process that considers recent shift exposure to previous incidents and fit testing for respiratory protection • Cultural or organisational pressures that discourage personnel from self-reporting fitness concerns or withdrawing from rescue roles when unfit	High	[redacted]	Medium
10. Contractor and Third-Party Management	• Engagement of contractors for confined space work or rescue without adequate verification of their confined space and rescue management systems • Misalignment between contractor and principal PCBU procedures for	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	emergency rescue leading to confusion during incidents • Assumptions that contractors will provide rescue capability without formal agreement, assessment or integration into site plans • Inadequate induction of contractors on site-specific confined space hazards, emergency arrangements and communication protocols • Gaps in insurance, liability and governance arrangements relating to contracted rescue services • Multiple contractors working simultaneously in or around confined spaces without coordinated rescue planning		[redacted]	
11. Monitoring, Review, Audit and Continuous Improvement	• Failure to monitor the effectiveness of confined space rescue controls leading to persistence of systemic weaknesses • Lack of structured review following drills, near misses or actual emergencies • Inadequate data collection on confined space and rescue-related incidents, observations and hazards • Audit programs that do not specifically examine emergency rescue readiness and capability • Lessons learned not shared across shifts, departments or sites, perpetuating repeated failures • Changes to plant, processes or organisation not triggering review of confined space rescue plans	High	[redacted]	Low

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			[redacted]	

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

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-of-codes-of-practice

Northern Territory
Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011
Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulations 2011
Legislation NT: https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws
Codes of Practice NT: https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/forms-and-resources/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

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