

Equine 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:	

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 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 Duties and Safety Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCBU and officers not understanding or discharging WHS due diligence obligations under WHS Act 2011 in relation to equine activities Absence of a documented WHS management system specific to horse riding and training operations Inadequate resourcing (time, money, competent people) for safety management in equine programs Normalisation of risk-taking behaviour around horses (e.g. accepting frequent falls or near misses as 'part of the job') Lack of worker participation in consultation and health and safety decision-making No clear assignment of safety responsibilities and accountabilities for instructors, coaches, stable managers and support staff Poor reporting culture leading to under-reporting of incidents, near misses and behavioural indicators (e.g. horse aggression changes ignored) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a documented WHS management system aligned with WHS Act 2011 and relevant Codes of Practice, explicitly covering equine riding, training, handling and spectator activities Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, riding instructors, horse trainers, stable hands and contractors, and communicate these through position descriptions and induction Ensure officers exercise due diligence by receiving regular WHS briefings specific to equine risks, reviewing incident trends, and verifying implementation of controls through scheduled audits and inspections Develop and enforce a written Equine Safety Policy that sets expectations for risk management, rider behaviour and animal welfare, endorsed and regularly reviewed by senior management Implement structured worker consultation mechanisms (safety committees, toolbox talks, HSRs) that specifically address horse-related hazards, behavioural risks and proposed changes to work practices Introduce a just and transparent incident reporting and investigation procedure that encourages reporting of all falls, near misses, horse behavioural changes and property damage Set measurable WHS performance indicators for equine operations (e.g. falls per 1,000 riding hours, helmet compliance rates, horse behaviour reports) and review them quarterly Embed safety culture initiatives (e.g. safety leadership training for senior instructors, peer safety champions, recognition of proactive risk reporting) within equine teams 	3H
2. Rider Competency, Training and Supervision Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate assessment of rider skills, fitness and medical conditions before allocating activities or horses Lack of structured training curriculum for progressive skill development (novice to advanced) in riding and groundwork Insufficient supervision ratios, especially for beginners, children, and riders with additional needs No competency framework or formal sign-off process for instructors, coaches and assistant staff Inconsistent briefing and debriefing processes leading to misunderstandings of instructions, rules and emergency responses 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal rider intake and assessment process capturing riding history, experience level, relevant medical conditions, medications, and emergency contact information Adopt a documented rider competency matrix defining minimum skills, permitted activities and horse matching criteria for each competency level Develop and maintain a standardised training curriculum for riding and horse handling, with sequenced progression, learning outcomes and assessment checkpoints Set and enforce supervision ratios based on risk (e.g. age group, rider competence, environment) and document these in an Equine Training Supervision Procedure Introduce a competency-based training and authorisation system for instructors, coaches and assistants, including verification of external qualifications and periodic re-assessment Provide structured pre-ride safety briefings and post-session debriefs using standard checklists and language appropriate to participants' age and literacy levels Ensure access to interpreters, visual aids and simplified written materials where there are language or comprehension barriers 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to identify literacy, language or cognitive limitations affecting understanding of safety instructions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain records of training, competency assessments and supervisor approvals for all riders and relevant staff, with defined review intervals 	
3. Horse Selection, Behavioural Assessment and Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of horses with unsuitable temperament, training level or health status for the rider group or activity Inadequate behavioural assessment and documentation of horses used in lessons, trail rides or training programs Failure to identify and manage horses with history of aggression, bolting, bucking or other high-risk behaviours Poor system for matching horses to riders based on weight, skill, confidence and purpose No structured review of horse behaviour after incidents, changes in environment or workload Inadequate retirement or rehoming policy resulting in continued use of unsafe horses 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a documented horse selection and acceptance procedure including veterinary checks, history review and trial rides by competent staff before horses enter the program Maintain an up-to-date behavioural profile for every horse, recording temperament, experience, known triggers, incident history and appropriate rider competency level Establish a formal horse-rider matching protocol that considers rider weight, skill level, confidence, medical limitations and activity type, with decision criteria and override controls Introduce a horse behaviour reporting system for all staff to log changes (e.g. increased nervousness, aggression, reluctance) and near misses, with escalation triggers to remove horses from high-risk work Conduct scheduled behavioural reassessments of all working horses (e.g. quarterly or after any incident) and document outcomes and restrictions Develop and implement a Horse Retirement and Rehoming Policy that includes criteria for withdrawal from riding or training work on safety or welfare grounds Restrict training of green or problematic horses to designated competent personnel under a documented risk assessment and training plan Communicate horse-specific risks and handling instructions to all relevant workers and riders through horse files, briefing boards or digital profiles 	2M
4. Facility Design, Arenas, Yards and Traffic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate separation of horses, vehicles, machinery, pedestrians and spectators Unsafe design of arenas, yards, stables and mounting areas (e.g. poor footing, inadequate space, blind corners, low roofs) Defective or inappropriate fencing, gates and latches leading to horse escapes or entrapment Congested or poorly controlled mounting, dismounting and waiting areas Insufficient provision for safe emergency access by ambulances and horse floats Lack of systems to control public access to high-risk areas during events or lessons 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
5. Equipment, Tack, PPE and Maintenance Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of damaged, poorly maintained or inappropriate saddles, bridles, girths and other tack leading to equipment failure and falls • Inconsistent PPE requirements for riders, staff and participants (e.g. helmets, body protectors, footwear) • No systematic inspection, tagging or replacement schedule for critical safety equipment • Lack of standardisation of tack for lesson horses leading to incorrect fitting and adjustment • Insufficient storage systems resulting in contamination, damage or loss of equipment • Failure to incorporate Australian Standards and industry guidelines into equipment procurement and maintenance 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
6. Horse Handling, Groundwork and Stable Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent or unsafe horse handling techniques used by different staff and volunteers • Lack of documented procedures for high-risk tasks such as tying, leading, rugging, feeding, and moving horses between yards and paddocks • Inadequate systems for controlling public and novice access to stables and horse handling zones • Poor coordination and communication during simultaneous tasks (e.g. 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> machinery operating near horses, multiple horses being moved at once) • Failure to manage specific handling risks for stallions, mares with foals, young or rehabilitating horses 		[REDACTED]	
7. Riding Programs, Lesson Planning and Activity Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riding activities designed without adequate consideration of rider competency, horse suitability, weather and surface conditions • Overly complex or crowded lesson plans increasing collision and fall risk • No formal risk assessment for higher-risk activities (e.g. jumping, cross-country, games, trail riding, breaking-in and starting young horses) • Inadequate time allowance for warm-up, cool-down and controlled mounting/dismounting • Failure to adapt programs for riders with disabilities, medical conditions or fatigue 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Contractor, Volunteer and Visitor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract instructors, farriers, veterinarians, and other specialists operating without integration into the site's WHS and equine safety systems • Volunteers and work experience participants undertaking tasks beyond their competency or authorisation • Visitors and spectators entering restricted areas or interacting with horses without control or information • Inadequate verification of contractors' qualifications, insurances and safety practices relating to equine work 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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			[REDACTED]	
9. Health, Fitness for Work and Fatigue Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riders or staff participating while impaired by fatigue, alcohol, drugs (including prescription medications) or illness Lack of systems for declaring and managing relevant medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy, heart conditions, musculoskeletal issues) Insufficient management of cumulative physical strain on instructors, stable staff and riders from repetitive riding and manual handling Inadequate consideration of thermal stress and hydration for outdoor equine work in Australian conditions 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
10. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Response and First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coordinated response to serious falls, horse entanglements, runaways or crowd incidents Insufficient first aid capability, equipment or training for the types of injuries reasonably foreseeable in equine activities No system for controlled horse capture and containment following an incident or escape Inadequate communication protocols for summoning emergency services and directing them on site 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor post-incident management including psychological support, return-to-riding decisions and review of controls 		[REDACTED]	
11. Environmental, Weather and Biosecurity Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adverse weather (heat, storms, high winds, lightning, heavy rain) affecting rider, horse and surface safety Poor pasture, yard and arena surface maintenance leading to slips, trips and falls Inadequate control of dust, allergens and manure affecting respiratory health and animal comfort Introduction and spread of infectious diseases or parasites among horses and possibly zoonotic risks to humans Failure to manage snakes, insects and other wildlife hazards around equine facilities 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
12. Animal Welfare, Workload and Behavioural Conditioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive workload, inadequate rest or poor nutrition for horses contributing to fatigue, pain and unpredictable behaviour Use of training methods or equipment that cause distress, fear or pain, increasing risk to riders and handlers Failure to recognise and act on signs of lameness, illness or behavioural stress Inadequate integration of veterinary advice into work planning and horse utilisation 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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			[Redacted]	
13. Information, Communication, Documentation and Records	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical safety information about horses, riders, facilities or procedures not effectively communicated to those who need it • Outdated or inconsistent procedures and forms in circulation • Inadequate record-keeping hindering analysis of incidents, trends and effectiveness of control measures • Failure to provide information in formats accessible to young riders, parents and people with limited literacy or English proficiency 	3H	[Redacted]	1L
14. Monitoring, Audit, Review and Continual Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls for equine safety not monitored, audited or updated leading to degradation of systems over time • Lessons from incidents, near misses and industry developments not integrated into practice • No structured review of the WHS risk assessment for equine activities when changes occur (e.g. new facilities, new programs, different horse populations) 	3H	[Redacted]	1L

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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.