Fibre Cement Sheeting

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:

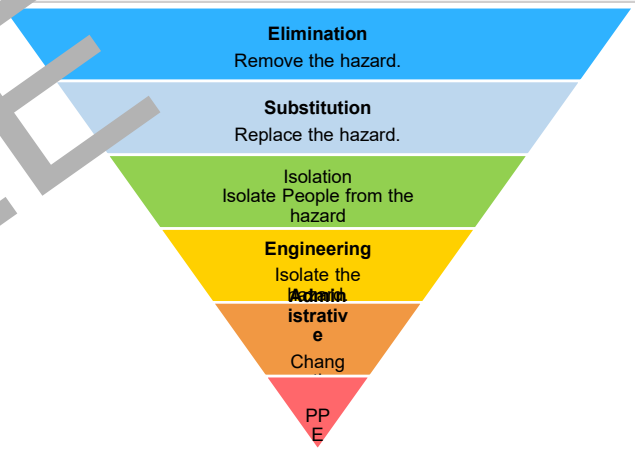
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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. WHS Governance, PCBU Duties and Legislative Compliance	• Inadequate WHS governance leading to non-compliance with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations regarding airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals and plant • Lack of clear allocation of due diligence responsibilities for officers in relation to fibre cement sheeting activities, including cutting and drilling • Failure to identify whether older cement sheet may contain asbestos or other hazardous constituents prior to work commencing • Insufficient consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) about fibre cement risk controls and changes to systems of work • Inadequate monitoring and review of WHS performance indicators related t dust generation, respirable crystalline silica and other airborne contaminant exposures • Failure to ensure th other duty holders (principal contractors, clients, subcontractors, la r-hire understand and me overlappi WHS duties	High	• Establish and maintain a formal WHS management stem that explicitly references WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations requirements for airborne conta ants, plant, hazardous chemicals, and construction work involving fibre cement sheeting • Define and document officer due diligence sponsibili , including the requirement to acquire up-to-date knowledge of risks associated wit re c ent cutting and respirable dusts, and to verify that adequate resources and processes are in plac • Implement a mandatory pre rk material verifi n pro ure to determine whether any cement sheeting is legacy asbestos-co ining material, inc ir obtaining product data sheets, as-built records, or engaging license tos as ssors where unce tainty exists • Develop a g nance sc dule fo egular W S audits, inspections and management reviews focusing on fibre ceme controls, su h as dust n ssion systems, extraction, isolation of cutting areas, and PPE c pliand • Form a cons tion procedure requiring engagement with workers and HSRs when developing, review g c changi policies, procedures, and equipment related to fibre cement sheeting storage, handlin and utting Integra WHS bligations into contracts, purchase orders and tender documents so that all contractors a ubc ntracto acknowledge their overlapping duties and agree to comply with organisational fibre ceme ety requirements stablish KPIs and reporting mechanisms for fibre cement related risks, including air monitoring results (w re required), health surveillance outcomes (where applicable), incident statistics, and corrective action close-out rates • Ensure that the organisation's legal register is kept current with relevant Australian Standards, Codes of Practice (e.g. for managing respirable crystalline silica, construction work, and asbestos where relevant), and regulator guidance on fibre cement work • Require periodic external WHS compliance reviews or audits to independently verify the effectiveness of governance arrangements for fibre cement related activities	Medium
2. Design, Procurement and Specification of Fibre Cement Products and Equipment	• Selection of fibre cement p ducts with higher dust generation potential or unnecessary cutting requirements due to poor design or specification • Procurement of cutting tools and plant without integrated dust control features (e.g. saws without water suppression or on-tool extraction) • Failure to obtain or review Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and manufacturer technical data, resulting in poor understanding of product composition and risks	High	• Implement a procurement policy requiring WHS risk assessment for fibre cement products, prioritising systems and designs that minimise the need for on-site cutting, drilling or chasing (e.g. pre-cut panels, modular sizing, off-site prefabrication) • Specify, during design and tender phases, that fibre cement sheeting layouts, joint locations and penetrations must be planned to reduce cutting frequency and intensity at the workface • Mandate that all fibre cement sheeting and related products are sourced from reputable suppliers who provide up-to-date Safety Data Sheets and technical data including crystalline silica content and recommended control measures • Establish minimum technical specifications for cutting plant and tools used on fibre cement sheeting, including requirements for water-suppressed saws, on-tool dust extraction, HEPA filtration, and noise/vibration performance	Medium

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	• Inconsistent product sourcing leading to variability in material properties and unrecognised changes in dust characteristics or control requirements • Procurement of incompatible components (e.g. blades, extraction units) that undermine dust control system performance • Cost-driven purchasing decisions that prioritise lowest price over health and safety performance features		• Introduce a pre-purchase WHS evaluation checklist for plant and equipment that considers dust emission controls, guarding, ergonomics, maintenance needs, and compatibility with existing dust extraction systems • Require that procurement decisions for cutting equipment give preference to engineered controls (e.g. integrated shrouds, sealed extraction systems) over reliance on PPE alone • Standardise brands and models of key equipment where possible to simplify training, maintenance, and spare parts management for dust control systems • Ensure design and procurement documentation includes clear health and safety performance criteria, and that suppliers provide evidence of compliance (test data, certifications, user manuals) • Include whole-of-life considerations in procurement (e.g. filter replacement, water management, servicing) so that safe operation of cutting systems is financially sustainable	
3. Risk Management, Planning and Job Design for Cement Sheet Cutting	• Inadequate pre-planning for cement sheet cutting leading to ad hoc methods and uncontrolled dust generation on site • Failure to conduct or update risk assessments when work conditions, tools, or materials change • Lack of systematic consideration of alternative methods (e.g. off-site cutting, pre-cut supply) that could significantly reduce on-site exposure • Poor layout and sequencing of work causing cutting tasks to occur in congested areas or near other workers, increasing exposure to airborne dust and noise • Insufficient consideration of environmental factors such as wind direction, confined spaces, or inadequately ventilated indoor work areas • Absence of clear criteria for when air monitoring, health monitoring or specialist advice is required for fibre cement cutting operations	High	• Implement a formal risk management procedure requiring task-level WHS risk assessments for fibre cement sheet cutting activities, with specific sections addressing cutting, drilling, chasing and edge finishing work • Require project planners and supervisors to document cutting strategies during planning, including opportunities for off-site cutting, pre-cut ordering and use of templates or jigs to reduce on-site rework • Integrate fibre cement specific hazards and controls into project WHS plans and construction methodologies, including requirements for isolated cutting zones and dust control arrangements • Establish criteria for when specialist occupational hygienist input is required (e.g. large volumes of cutting, enclosed environments, uncertainty about exposure levels) • Introduce a planning requirement to identify and control interaction risks, ensuring that non-essential personnel are not scheduled to work within designated cutting zones during high-dust tasks • Mandate consideration of ventilation, wind direction and building orientation when selecting locations for fixed or temporary cutting stations • Develop decision-making triggers for air monitoring or health monitoring (e.g. where cutting volumes exceed defined thresholds or where water/dust extraction effectiveness is uncertain) • Require documented review and approval of risk assessments for fibre cement sheeting by a competent person before commencement of high-volume or complex cutting work • Ensure that planning documents and risk assessments are easily accessible to workers on site (digital or hard copy) and referenced during pre-start briefings	Medium
4. Information, Training, Instruction and Supervision	• Workers and supervisors lacking understanding of health risks associated with respirable crystalline silica and cement dust from fibre cement sheeting • Inadequate competency in the use, inspection and limitation of dust suppression equipment, extraction	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	systems and respiratory protective equipment (RPE) • Failure to provide clear, language-appropriate instructions and signage for high-risk cutting areas • Supervisors not adequately trained to monitor compliance with control measures or to identify early warning signs of poor work practices • Insufficient induction and refresher training for contractors, labour-hire workers and new starters engaged in cement sheet cutting work • Lack of awareness of emergency procedures relating to acute exposure, equipment failure or accidental cutting of suspect asbestos-containing material		[redacted]	
5. Plant, Equipment and Engineering Controls for Cutting Systems	• Use of unsuitable or poorly maintained cutting equipment that generates excessive dust, noise and vibration • Failure or degradation of water suppression systems, on-tool extraction, or filtration units leading to uncontrolled airborne dust • Lack of standardised equipment leading to inconsistent control effectiveness and worker confusion • Inadequate isolation or enclosure of cutting areas resulting in the spread of dust to other parts of the workplace • Insufficient consideration of safe power supply, cabling, and water management	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	for powered cutting and extraction systems • Inappropriate modification of tools or extraction systems by workers, bypassing safety devices or shrouds		[redacted]	
6. Exposure Control, PPE and Health Monitoring Systems	• Chronic exposure of workers and nearby personnel to respirable crystalline silica and ce[illegible]st due to ineffective or inconsi[illegible]ent control measures • Reliance on PPE [illegible]ary co[illegible]rol instead of using a hierarchy of contro[illegible] approach • Incorrect selection, fit, u[illegible] maintenance of respiratory protective equipment and other PPE • Failure to identify workers who may be at higher risk due to pre-existing health conditions or increased exposure duration • Inadequate health monitoring or absence of arrangements where exposure risk justifies surveillance under WHS Regulations	High	[redacted]	Medium

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			[redacted]	
7. Site Layout, Segregation and Environmental Management	• Uncontrolled spread of cement and silica-containing dust from cutting zones to other work areas, amenities, or neighbouring properties • Exposure of non-involved workers, visitors or members of the public due t poor location of cutting activities • Inadequate housekeepi ading to accumulation of dust d offcuts, increasing slip, trip d inhalation risks • Inappropriate dis al of ts or dust-containing w causing environmental contamination or regulatory non-compliance • Use of compressed air or dry sweeping that re-suspends settled dust into the breathing zone	igh	[redacted]	Medium
8. Contractor Management and Labour-Hire Arrangements	• Contractors or labour-hire workers undertaking cement sheet cutting without alignment to the PCBU's WHS procedures and standards	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	• Assumption that another party is managing key risks, leading to gaps in control for dust, plant safety and training • Inadequate verification of contractor competency, licensing and training for fibre cement cutting and related tasks • Poor communication of site-specific risks, including locations of cutting zones, ventilation constraints and interaction with other high-risk activities		[redacted]	
9. Documentation, Records and Change Management	• Incomplete or ou[redacted] documentation lea[redacted] control of fibre cement risks across projects and sites • Loss of critical records [redacted] assessments, air monitoring data, health monitoring reports and training evidence • Uncontrolled changes to tools, materials or methods of work without proper assessment of impact on dust generation and worker exposure • Failure to capture and act on lessons learned from incidents, near misses or worker feedback relating to cement sheet cutting	Medium	[redacted]	Low

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			[redacted]	
10. Incident Response, Emergency Preparedness and Continuous Improvement	• Delayed or inadequate response to incidents involving loss of dust control, acute exposure or equipment failure during cement sheet cutting • Lack of clear escalation pathways for reporting health concerns potentially related to fibre cement exposure • Inadequate investigation of incidents or near misses, resulting in repeated failures of control measures • Failure to prepare for discovery of suspect asbestos-containing sheeting during cutting or demolition activities	Medium	[redacted]	Low

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