

Floor Polishing

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:	



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. WHS Governance, Duties and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of WHS duties under WHS Act 2011 for floor polishing activities Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives about floor polishing risks No effective issue-resolution process for safety concerns raised about slips, trips, chemicals or noise Failure to include floor polishing in the PCBUs WHS policy, objectives and due diligence framework Inadequate monitoring and review of WHS performance indicators related to cleaning and polishing operations Insufficient coordination and cooperation between PCBUs where contractors and hosts share the workplace 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed floor polishing activities into the organisation's WHS policy, risk management procedure and due diligence reporting, referencing WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation 2011 obligations Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for managers, supervisors, workers and contractors involved in floor polishing and cleaning services Establish formal worker consultation mechanisms (e.g. WHS committee, toolbox talks, pre-start briefings) specifically addressing floor polishing hazards such as slips, electrical risks and chemical exposure Implement documented issue-resolution procedure aligned with WHS legislation, including clear escalation paths for unresolved safety concerns related to polishing activities Include floor polishing indicators (e.g. incident rates, slip events, near misses, inspection findings) within WHS performance reporting to management and officers Require documented coordination arrangements (e.g. safety agreements, joint inductions) where multiple PCBUs share control of the premises and floor maintenance tasks 	3H
2. Contractor and Worker Competency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of floor polishing equipment by untrained or inexperienced workers or contractors No verification of competency for use of electric buffers, waxing systems and chemical products Inadequate supervision of new starters, labour-hire staff or external cleaners performing polishing work Failure to provide site-specific induction covering floor types, gradients, access and emergency procedures Lack of ongoing refresher training on changes to products, machinery or procedures Inconsistent understanding of safe work procedures across different shifts or contractor teams 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a competency framework for all personnel performing floor polishing, including formal training modules on electric buffer operation, tile and timber surface characteristics, and wax application principles Require evidence of relevant experience and competency (e.g. training records, references, VOC assessments) from all floor polishing contractors prior to engagement Develop and enforce a site-specific induction program that covers layout, surface types (tiles vs wooden floors), restricted areas, out-of-hours work controls and emergency arrangements Introduce supervised on-the-job familiarisation for new and transferred workers until competency is confirmed by a competent supervisor Schedule periodic refresher training and re-assessment when equipment, chemical systems or procedures change, and at defined intervals (e.g. annually) Maintain a central training and competency register accessible to management, supervisors and contract owners to verify authorisation status before work is allocated 	2M
3. Equipment Procurement, Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of floor buffers and polishers without adequate safety 	4A		2M

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and Maintenance Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> features (e.g. no dead-man controls, poor guarding) Use of faulty or poorly maintained electric buffers increasing risk of electric shock, fire or mechanical failure Inadequate tagging and testing regime for portable electrical equipment used for polishing No formal preventive maintenance schedule for buffers, vacuum attachments, and waxing applicators Use of incompatible pads, brushes or accessories on different floor surfaces causing damage and loss of traction Lack of standardisation of equipment types leading to inconsistent training and maintenance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt an equipment procurement standard that specifies minimum safety features for electric buffers and related equipment (e.g. dead-man switches, residual current device compatibility, ergonomic design, low noise models where reasonably practicable) Implement a documented preventive maintenance program including manufacturer-recommended servicing, inspection of cords and plugs, and replacement of worn pads and components at defined intervals Establish a formal test-and-tag system for all portable electrical equipment used in floor polishing, with records maintained and clear tagging visible Standardise preferred buffer and accessory models across the organisation or contract to simplify training, maintenance and spare parts management Introduce a pre-use inspection checklist for floor polishing equipment that workers must complete and submit (paper or digital) before starting work Define criteria and procedures for immediate removal from service and quarantine of defective equipment, including a tagging-out system and responsibility for repairs 	
4. Electrical Safety Management for Polishing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate system for managing RCDs and power outlets used for electric buffers Use of extension leads across walkways creating trip and electrocution hazards Lack of process to manage water or liquid presence near power-carrying equipment Insufficient controls on after-hours, remote-area use of electric buffers with limited supervision No documented procedure for isolating power in the event of equipment malfunction or shock Poor cable management leading to damage of insulation and exposure of live conductors 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Chemical Selection, Storage and Handling Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of incompatible or unsuitable floor polishes, waxes or strippers on facility tiles and wooden floors Inadequate review of Safety Data Sheets for chemical products used in buffering and waxing 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly controlled decanting and labelling of diluted products leading to misuse or over-application Inappropriate storage of flammable or volatile products near ignition sources or public areas Insufficient consideration of respiratory, skin and eye hazards from vapours, aerosols and splashes Lack of process for substituting hazardous products with safer alternatives 		[REDACTED]	
6. Surface Preparation, Product Application and Curing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systematic over-application or incorrect layering of wax on wooden floors leading to extremely slippery surfaces Inadequate control of curing and drying times for polish and wax before public access is allowed Use of inappropriate pad or buffer speed for tile versus timber surfaces causing uneven finish and trip hazards Failure to standardise product application methods between shifts and contractors leading to inconsistent surface friction No documented acceptance criteria for finished surfaces (e.g. slip resistance levels) Insufficient signage or barriers during and after polishing, creating uncontrolled public access to hazardous surfaces 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Slip, Trip and Fall Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate systematic assessment of slip and trip risks associated with polished tiles and waxed timber floors Failure to coordinate polishing schedules with other activities and pedestrian traffic flows 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor management of hoses, cords, buckets and equipment in corridors and entryways Lack of formal inspection regime to detect and rectify residual slipperiness or edges after polishing No documented approach to controlling footwear policies in high-risk polished areas Inconsistent use of warning signs, barricades and alternative routes during and after floor polishing 		[REDACTED]	
8. Noise, Vibration and Ergonomic Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prolonged exposure to noise from buffers and related equipment without adequate exposure assessment Hand-arm vibration exposure from long-duration buffer use contributing to musculoskeletal disorders Manual handling of heavy buffers, waxes, buckets and equipment leading to strains and sprains Inadequate design of work schedules leading to repetitive movements and awkward postures Lack of ergonomic considerations in equipment selection (ergonomic design, adjustability, weight balance) Insufficient systems for early reporting of discomfort, pain or fatigue related to polishing tasks 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Ventilation, Indoor Air Quality and Exposure Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accumulation of vapours from waxes, polishes and strippers in poorly ventilated indoor spaces Inadequate assessment of respiratory risks for workers and building occupants during and after waxing Use of fan or HVAC systems that disperse vapours into occupied areas rather than extracting them 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to manage sensitivities or health conditions of occupants (e.g. asthma) during heavy chemical use Insufficient planning of polishing tasks in confined or basement areas with limited fresh air Lack of documented criteria for re-occupation of areas following application of volatile products 		[REDACTED]	
10. Access Control, Public Interface and Traffic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public or unauthorised persons entering active polishing areas on tiles or timber floors Inadequate separation between floor polishing activities and vehicle traffic in loading docks or car parks Poorly managed emergency egress routes during temporary barricading or closure of corridors Lack of coordination with security or building management regarding out-of-hours access controls Insufficient wayfinding information for alternative routes during extended polishing campaigns Failure to consider people with disability or limited mobility when re-routing around polished areas 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of specific emergency procedures for incidents arising from floor polishing (slips, chemical exposure, electrical shock, fire) Inadequate spill response capability for polishing chemicals and waxes on tiles or timber Failure to train workers in local emergency equipment use (fire extinguishers, spill kits, first aid) Poor incident reporting culture for near misses such as minor slips on newly polished floors 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No structured post-incident investigation process to identify systemic failures in floor maintenance Insufficient communication protocols with building management and emergency services during major incidents 		[REDACTED]	
12. Health Monitoring, Consultation and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic process to identify workers at higher risk from noise, chemicals or physical load associated with polishing Inadequate consultation on work pacing, rest breaks and fatigue associated with after-hours or extended polishing shifts Failure to monitor health effects potentially arising from repeated exposure to polishes, waxes and cleaning agents Lack of mechanisms for confidential reporting of health concerns related to polishing activities Insufficient consideration of psychological risks such as lone work, high customer expectations and time pressure during floor turnarounds Poor integration of contractor health and wellbeing considerations into overall WHS planning 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Planning, Scheduling and Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc scheduling of floor polishing resulting in clashes with other high-risk activities or peak occupancy periods Inadequate planning for seasonal or weather-related impacts on floor slipperiness near entrances Failure to manage changes in floor coverings, coatings or building layout that affect polishing risk profiles Lack of formal risk review when new equipment or products are introduced for tile or timber floor polishing 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor communication of planned polishing works to stakeholders, leading to unanticipated exposures Insufficient allowances in contracts or budgets for safe work timeframes and controls 		[REDACTED]	
14. Documentation, Recordkeeping and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete or outdated procedures for tile buffering, timber waxing and electrical buffer use Failure to maintain records of inspections, maintenance, training and incidents related to polishing Lack of systematic review of incident trends and audit findings to improve controls Inconsistent document control leading to multiple versions of floor polishing procedures in circulation Poor retention of contractor safety documentation, including risk assessments and training records No structured review to ensure ongoing compliance with WHS legislation and relevant standards 	3H	[REDACTED]	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 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.