

Floor Stripping Removal and Surface Preparation

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, Roles and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear WHS responsibilities for floor stripping and surface preparation activities Failure to identify and comply with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice for construction, hazardous chemicals and noise Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) about floor removal methods and products used Absence of a documented WHS Management System specific to refurbishment and warehouse floor rectification work Poor change management when introducing new floor strippers, self-levelling compounds, or removal methods 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a documented WHS Management System aligned with WHS Act 2011 and relevant Australian Standards for construction and hazardous chemicals Define and communicate WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for project managers, supervisors, leading hands and contractors involved in floor removal and surface preparation Implement a formal consultation process with workers and HSRs regarding proposed methods, products (e.g. floor strippers, chemicals, self-levelling compounds) and significant task changes Maintain a WHS legal register identifying applicable legislation, codes and standards for floor stripping, concrete preparation and use of hazardous substances Apply a structured management of change procedure when introducing new floor preparation equipment, products or work methods, including risk assessment and trial 	3H
2. Project and Task Planning (Scope, Sequencing and Interfaces)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate scoping of floor stripping, base layer fixing and self-levelling work leading to uncontrolled work fronts Conflicting trades in the same area causing congestion and increasing slip, trip and impact risks Poor sequencing of removal of existing carpets, tiles, vinyl and linoleum resulting in rushed or overlapping tasks No formal planning for out-of-hours work or deadline-driven programs leading to time pressure and shortcuts Failure to consider interaction with ongoing warehouse operations such as forklift movements and pedestrian traffic 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a project-specific WHS plan that clearly defines the extent of floor removal, base layer repair and levelling works, including boundaries and interfaces Use a scheduling process that sequences carpet, tile, vinyl and adhesive removal, base fixing and self-levelling to minimise concurrent high-risk activities Coordinate with other trades and building occupants through pre-start coordination meetings and a shared area access plan Implement permit-to-work or access control processes for zones where floor surfaces are being stripped, repaired or levelled Align program timeframes with realistic productivity rates so that safety controls can be applied without excessive time pressure 	2M
3. Contractor and Subcontractor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of contractors without verifying competency in floor stripping, glue scraping and self-levelling systems Inadequate review of contractor WHS management plans, insurances and licences 	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a contractor prequalification process that verifies experience, WHS systems, licences and insurances for floor preparation activities Require submission and review of contractor WHS management plans and risk assessments specific to floor stripping and surface preparation 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor coordination between multiple subcontractors working on adjacent floor areas Lack of clarity regarding who controls the worksite and supervises contractors No systematic monitoring or auditing of contractor WHS performance 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define, in contracts and site rules, who is the principal contractor and who holds primary duty of care for supervision and coordination Conduct regular coordination meetings with all contractors to allocate work zones, access times and housekeeping responsibilities Undertake periodic WHS audits and inspections of contractor activities, including verification of training records and equipment inspection tags 	
4. Competency, Training and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers operating floor strippers, grinders or scrapers without formal competency-based training Lack of understanding of hazards associated with self-levelling compounds, adhesives and mechanical removal methods Inadequate supervision of new or young workers on warehouse floor remediation tasks Poor awareness of manual handling, ergonomics and vibration risks during prolonged scraping or grinding Failure to provide task-specific inductions for unique site conditions such as uneven slabs and damaged base layers 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Site Access, Traffic and Pedestrian Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled interaction between preparation crews and warehouse mobile plant such as forklifts and pallet jacks Inadequate separation of pedestrian routes from zones where tiles, carpet or vinyl are being removed and debris is being transported Poor control of delivery vehicles bringing self-levelling materials, floor strippers and waste skips Insufficient signage and barricading around wet self-levelling areas or exposed uneven subfloors Emergency egress routes obstructed by stacked floor waste, adhesive buckets or equipment 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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6. Structural Integrity and Substrate Condition Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unidentified slab defects, voids or damaged base layers creating collapse or trip risks once coverings are removed Removal of tiles, vinyl or carpet revealing unexpected penetrations, service conduits or weak substrates Failure to assess load-bearing capacity of warehouse floors after removal and prior to use of heavy equipment or storage Inappropriate selection of base layer repair methods leading to delamination, cracking or further unevenness Lack of engineering review for substantial floor rectification or grinding works that alter slab profile 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
7. Hazardous Materials, Asbestos and Silica Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undetected asbestos-containing materials in old vinyl, linoleum, tiles, adhesive mastics or backing Inadequate identification and control of respirable crystalline silica from concrete grinding and scabbling Exposure to residual solvents, lead or other contaminants in old floor coatings or adhesives Failure to engage licensed asbestos or hazardous materials contractors where required Poor documentation of hazardous materials surveys and clearance certificates 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
8. Hazardous Chemicals and Product Safety (Strippers, Adhesives, Self-Levelling Compounds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of floor strippers, primers and self-levelling compounds without Safety Data Sheets (SDS) or risk assessments Inadequate control of vapours from solvent-based products in enclosed warehouse areas Incompatible storage of flammable or corrosive products with other site chemicals 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorrect mixing and handling of self-levelling compounds causing chemical burns or heat generation • Lack of spill response systems for liquid strippers, primers and compound slurries 		[REDACTED]	
9. Plant, Equipment and Maintenance Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of untested or poorly maintained floor stripping machines, grinders and scraping tools • Lack of guarding and isolation systems on rotating or cutting components • Electrical risks from portable equipment, extension leads and wet working environments • Noise and vibration from mechanical floor removal and grinding exceeding exposure standards • Inadequate systems for inspection, tagging and repair of plant used on uneven or damaged warehouse floors 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Work Environment, Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor ventilation in enclosed warehouses or rooms during use of floor strippers and self-levelling products • Accumulation of dust from scraping residual glues, grinding and removing old underlay • Inadequate temperature and humidity control affecting curing and off-gassing of compounds • Insufficient monitoring of air quality where multiple chemicals and dust-generating activities occur • Odour complaints and health impacts on other building occupants or adjacent tenants 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Occupational Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive bending, kneeling and forceful scraping when pulling up carpets, vinyl and residual glues • Handling of heavy waste bundles, tile stacks and bags of self-levelling compound without mechanical aids 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly designed tools and work methods increasing risk of musculoskeletal disorders • Prolonged work on uneven or partially stripped slabs causing slips, trips and joint strain • Inadequate systems to manage fatigue during extended shifts or tight project deadlines 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
12. Housekeeping, Waste Management and Surface Condition Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accumulation of removed tiles, carpet, vinyl and adhesive residues creating trip hazards and obstructing escape paths • Uncontrolled stockpiling of rubble and offcuts in operational warehouse areas • Inadequate segregation and disposal of hazardous waste such as contaminated adhesive or asbestos-containing materials (if identified) • Slips on wet self-levelling compound primers or stripper residues left on walkways • Failure to clearly identify and manage transitions between stripped, uneven and finished floor surfaces 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
13. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of planning for chemical spills, inhalation incidents and acute reaction to floor strippers and compounds • Inadequate arrangements for medical treatment or rescue in large or congested warehouse environments • Poor incident reporting and investigation processes leading to repeat events • Insufficient fire safety planning for storage and use of flammable or combustible products • Unclear communication protocols for emergencies involving contractors and building occupants 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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14. Documentation, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete or outdated risk assessments for floor stripping, glue scraping and self-levelling operations • Lack of evidence that control measures are implemented and effective over time • Failure to review incidents, near misses and worker feedback relating to floor preparation tasks • Poor retention and accessibility of critical WHS documents such as training records, inspection reports and test certificates • No systematic approach to updating procedures when new equipment or materials are introduced 	3H	<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>	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.