

Food Processing

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, Legal Compliance & Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of formal WHS management system aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Inadequate senior management commitment to safety in food processing operations Failure to consult with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on key risk decisions (e.g. batch roasting oven upgrades, butchering processes, retort cooker changes) Policies not reflecting specific higher-risk activities such as butchering animals, operating retort cookers, conducting microbiological tests on meat, and emptying sausage stuffers Inadequate incident notification and regulator reporting processes for notifiable incidents (e.g. amputations, serious burns, confined space emergencies) Poor integration of food safety systems (HACCP) with WHS controls leading to conflicting priorities 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a certified WHS management system (e.g. ISO 45001) that incorporates specific risks associated with food processing equipment such as batch roasting ovens, butchering lines, sausage stuffers, and retort cookers Define and document WHS responsibilities and accountabilities for Board, executives, senior managers, supervisors and workers, including Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) due diligence requirements under WHS Act 2011 Implement a formal policy endorsed by senior leadership that explicitly references process safety, thermal plant, sharp tools and animal handling risks Develop and maintain a WHS legal register and compliance calendar covering relevant WHS, electrical, pressure vessel plant, hazardous chemicals and confined space requirements Implement a structured consultation framework including WHS committees, elected HSRs, toolbox talks and change consultation processes for new equipment, process changes or product changes Integrate WHS risk controls into existing food safety and quality systems (e.g. link HACCP, GMP and WHS risk register) to avoid conflicting requirements Establish a formal notifiable incident and near-miss reporting procedure aligned with regulator requirements, including training supervisors on incident thresholds and investigation duties Undertake periodic independent audits and management reviews of the WHS management system with action tracking and close-out 	2M
2. Plant & Equipment Safety Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate machine guarding on butchering equipment (saws, slicers, mincers) leading to laceration or amputation Defeated or poorly maintained interlocks on batch roasting ovens, retort cookers and sausage stuffers Lack of standardised design and procurement specifications for new plant (inconsistent safety features across equipment) Uncontrolled modifications to processing lines compromising guarding, emergency stops or safety circuits Failure of safety critical devices (e.g. emergency stop buttons, light curtains, 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal plant and equipment safety standard that defines minimum safety requirements for all food processing equipment, including batch roasting ovens, butchering machinery, sausage stuffers and retort cookers Conduct documented plant risk assessments (in line with AS/NZS 4024 series) for all existing and new machinery prior to use, with actions tracked to completion Standardise procurement specifications so all new plant includes compliant guarding, interlocking, emergency stops, safe access platforms and safety-rated control systems where applicable Develop engineering change management procedures requiring WHS review and approval for any plant modifications (guarding, control systems, layout changes) Establish a formal preventive maintenance and inspection program focusing on safety critical components (interlocks, guards, pressure relief devices, emergency stops, temperature/pressure controls) Implement a lockout/tagout (LOTO) and isolation procedure for maintenance and jam clearing, supported by training, authorised persons lists and routine verification Ensure guarding and safety control integrity checks are built into pre-start inspection routines and maintenance work orders 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pressure relief valves) due to lack of maintenance Poorly managed contractor installations and commissioning of new equipment, including ovens and cookers Inadequate plant risk assessments before introducing or relocating equipment Lack of clear isolation and lockout/tagout points for servicing and jam clearing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control contractor work on plant via permits to work, documented scopes, inductions, and verification of installation against design and safety requirements 	
3. Thermal Processes & Heat Exposure (Roasting Ovens & Retort Cookers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled exposure to high surface temperatures and hot vapours from batch roasting ovens and retort cookers Failure of temperature and pressure controls on retort cookers creating explosion or scalding risk Inadequate ventilation systems leading to build-up of steam and heat stress in processing areas Poorly defined start-up, shut-down and emergency venting procedures for ovens and cookers Inadequate inspection and maintenance of pressure vessels, valves, seals and safety relief devices Lack of clear zoning and restricted access around operating thermal equipment Inadequate training of operators on thermal process hazards, including burn and pressure risks 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement specific thermal plant operating procedures for batch roasting ovens and retort cookers including start-up, shutdown, emergency shutdown, and abnormal condition response Ensure all retort cookers and pressure components are designed, registered, inspected and maintained in accordance with relevant Australian Standards and statutory requirements for pressure equipment Install and maintain engineering controls such as insulation, guarding of hot surfaces, automatic lid/door interlocks, temperature and pressure cut-outs, and pressure relief valves with regular verification Implement a thermal process monitoring and alarm system with defined operator response protocols and escalation pathways Design plant layout to segregate hot zones, with restricted access, warning signage, and physical barriers where practicable Establish housekeeping and condensate management systems to prevent hot liquid pooling and steam leaks around ovens and cookers Provide structured training and competency assessment for operators on thermal processes, including recognition of abnormal conditions and emergency procedures Schedule periodic independent inspection and certification of retort and oven systems, with documented corrective actions 	2M
4. Animal Handling, Butchering & Cutting Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate systems for humane handling and restraint of animals prior to butchering, leading to unpredictable animal movement and worker injury Poor design and maintenance of slaughter and butchering lines, including slip and trip hazards in lairage and kill floor areas 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient controls over use and sharpening of cutting tools, knives and saws, increasing laceration risk • Lack of standardised procedures for carcass handling, hoists and hanging systems • Inadequate separation of clean and dirty zones leading to cross-contamination risk affecting health of workers and food safety • Fatigue or production pressure leading to unsafe short-cuts in butchering processes 		[REDACTED]	
5. Manual Handling & Ergonomics (Including Sausage Stuffers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive, forceful or awkward manual tasks when emptying sausage stuffer, loading meat into hoppers, handling heavy trays and bins • Poor workstation and layout resulting in twisting, over-reaching and sustained stooping • Inadequate mechanical maintenance of existing lifting and transfer equipment • Lack of systems to manage cumulative strain from repetitive cutting, trimming and packing work • Insufficient job rotation and task variation leading to musculoskeletal disorders 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Hazardous Substances & Biological Agents (Meat Testing & Cleaning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure to pathogenic microorganisms when conducting microbiological or quality tests on meat samples • Inadequate management of chemicals used for cleaning, sanitisers, reagents and preservatives 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient segregation of laboratory or testing activities from production and amenities • Inadequate ventilation or local exhaust for fume-generating processes in testing or sanitation • Lack of systems for correct chemical labelling, decanting and Safety Data Sheet (SDS) access • Poorly managed biological waste and sharps disposal from meat testing activities 		[REDACTED]	
7. Hygiene, Housekeeping & Contamination Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slips, trips and falls from accumulation of blood, fat, water and product debris in processing areas • Cross-contamination between raw and cooked product streams affecting worker and consumer health • Blocked drains and inadequate floor gradients leading to standing water near electrical plant and thermal equipment • Poorly managed cleaning schedules causing unplanned exposure to wet floors during production • Inadequate systems for cleaning and sanitising high-risk equipment such as sausage stuffers, butchering saws and batch roasting ovens 		[REDACTED]	2M
8. Electrical, Gas & Utilities Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical faults on processing lines, ovens, refrigeration, retort cookers and testing equipment • Uncontrolled gas leaks (natural gas or LPG) supplying batch roasting ovens or other thermal plant • Inadequate earthing and bonding in wet processing environments increasing electric shock risk 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poorly managed power isolation and tagging for maintenance and cleaning contractors Overloaded circuits and unauthorised use of portable electrical equipment in production and testing areas 		[REDACTED]	
9. Safe Work Procedures, Training & Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers operating complex food processing plant such as retort cookers, roasting ovens and butchering equipment without formal competency verification Procedures not accurately reflecting actual work practices, leading to normalised deviation Over-reliance on informal on-the-job training without structured assessment Inadequate induction for workers, labour hire staff and contractors regarding site-specific hazards Training materials not available in relevant languages or formats for the workforce 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Fatigue, Work Organisation & Psychosocial Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended shifts, night work and repetitive high-speed line work causing fatigue and reduced alertness Production pressure and unrealistic targets leading to short-cutting of safety systems around butchering, ovens and retorts Poor communication between shifts resulting in incomplete handovers on plant status, defects and hazards 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to traumatic events associated with animal processing affecting psychological health Inadequate systems for reporting and managing bullying, harassment or other psychosocial hazards 		[REDACTED]	
11. Emergency Preparedness & Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unplanned fires or explosions associated with ovens, gas systems or retort cookers Amputations or serious lacerations on butchering equipment without effective first response capability Burns, scalds and chemical exposures without clear emergency procedures and equipment Inadequate evacuation routes and signage in complex food processing layouts Poor coordination with emergency services, particularly for high-hazard installations 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Contractor, Labour Hire & Visitor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors performing installation maintenance or cleaning around operating plant without adequate understanding of site-specific risks Labour hire workers placed on high-risk tasks such as butchering or oven operation without proper induction or competency assessment Poor delineation of WHS duties between PCBU, contractors, labour hire agencies and host employer Visitors entering production or testing areas without awareness of hazards or required controls 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
13. Maintenance, Inspection & Asset Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deferred or reactive maintenance on critical plant such as retort cookers, roasting ovens and butchering equipment leading to sudden failures Lack of asset registers and maintenance histories, making it difficult to identify high-risk equipment Inadequate inspection regimes for pressure vessels, lifting equipment, guards and safety devices Maintenance work undertaken without adequate planning, isolation or supervision Use of unsuitable replacement parts compromising integrity of safety systems 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
14. Monitoring, Reporting & Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to identify emerging risks in food processing due to inadequate HSE performance monitoring Under-reporting of incidents, near misses and hazards because of complex or punitive systems Lack of systematic analysis of incidents involving butchering, ovens, sausage stuffers and testing activities No structured mechanism to ensure corrective actions are implemented and effective 	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.