General Working at Heights

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:

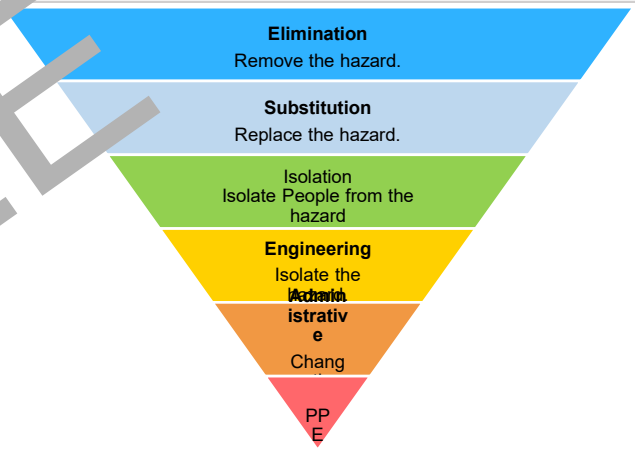
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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, Policies and Legal Compliance for Work at Heights	• Absence of a formal Work at Heights policy aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations • Unclear roles, responsibilities and accountability for managing work at heights risks (officers, PCBUs, supervisors, workers) • Failure to apply the hierarchy of control for work at height (elimination, substitution, engineering, administrative, PPE) • Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on height-related risks • Lack of documented procedures for unavoidable work at heights, including work over two metres and high-risk construction work • Inconsistent application of Australian Standards and Codes of Practice for fall prevention and height access equipme • Failure to consider psychological risks such as fear of heights, anxiety and stress associated with working at height • Poor integration of work at heights controls into broader corporate WHS management system	4A	• Develop, implement and maintain a corporate Work at Heights Policy that explicitly references the WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice • Define and document clear responsibilities for officers, PCBUs, managers, supervisors, workers and contractors in the WHS management system with respect to height-related risks • Embed the hierarchy of control within all work-at-heights procedures, templates and approval processes, prioritising elimination and engineering controls before administrative controls and PPE • Establish a formal consultation framework with workers and HSRs for the development, review and implementation of work-at-heights procedures and risk assessments • Ensure documented procedures address high-risk work at heights, including work above two metres, on fragile surfaces, fall-prone areas, and installations/maintenance at height or overhead • Mandate compliance with relevant Australian Standards (e.g. fall arrest systems, ladders, scaffolds, EWPs, roof anchors) within procurement and design specifications • Integrate psychological health considerations (e.g. managing fear of heights, providing support and suitable task allocation) into WHS policies and procedures • Schedule annual reviews and audits of work-at-heights governance documents to ensure currency with legislative and best-practice changes	2M
2. Strategic Work at Heights Planning and Job Categorisation	• Failure to systematically identify tasks that involve work at heights, elevated platforms or overhead structures • Inadequate differentiation between low-risk and high-risk height activities (e.g. >2 m, near edges, fragile surfaces, overhead works) • Lack of formal process for approving unavoidable work at heights when elimination is not reasonably practicable • Poor integration of wind-related and weather factors into task planning and authorisation	4A	• Implement a formal work planning process that requires identification and classification of all tasks involving work at height, including overhead work and elevated access • Develop a work-at-heights risk categorisation matrix (e.g. low/medium/high) that considers height, surface type, edge protection, proximity to voids and underlying hazards • Introduce an authorisation system for unavoidable work at heights, requiring documented justification of why elimination or alternate methods are not reasonably practicable • Integrate wind thresholds, weather patterns and forecast data (including gust speeds) into planning and permit processes for overhead and elevated works • Require pre-planning for access to high-risk locations (e.g. towers, narrow ledges, complex structures) including method of access, rescue options and exclusion zones • Mandate formal coordination meetings (e.g. pre-starts, permit coordination) for overhead works over operational areas, public zones or critical plant	2M

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	• Insufficient planning for works requiring access to high-risk locations, such as narrow ledges or confined elevated structures • Inconsistent assessment of risks associated with working at elevated heights above sensitive areas (e.g. public access, traffic routes, plant and equipment below) • Omission of work on fall-prone and fragile surfaces from routine planning processes • Ad hoc scheduling of overhead works leading to uncontrolled interaction with other site activities		• Include explicit triggers for additional controls where work occurs on fragile roofs, skylights, brittle sheets or deteriorated structures • Use centralised scheduling tools to avoid overlapping overhead works with incompatible activities on lower levels or adjacent areas	
3. Design, Engineering and Structural Integrity of Work at Height Locations	• Work undertaken on structures not designed for load bearing (fragile roofs, corroded platforms, brittle skylights) • Inadequate engineering design of walkways, platforms and narrow ledges leading to instability or collapse • Absence of permanent fall prevention systems (guardrails, parapets, anchor points) incorporated at design stage • Failure to verify structural integrity of high structures before inspection, maintenance or installation at height • Insufficient design consideration for safe access/egress routes to high-risk locations • Poor design of overhead structures, increasing risk of collapse or dropped objects • Inadequate edge delineation and barrier systems on fall-prone areas • Lack of engineering assessment when modifying existing elevated structures or installing overhead-structures	4A	• Apply Safety in Design principles to all new structures, ensuring permanent walkways, guardrails, parapets, fixed ladders and anchor systems are integrated for safe access and inspection • Require engineering certification for all permanent height access systems, elevated platforms and overhead structures in accordance with relevant Australian Standards • Establish a structural integrity assessment procedure for existing high structures, fragile surfaces and fall-prone areas prior to authorising work • Develop design standards for minimum widths, handrail configurations and non-slip surfaces on narrow ledges and elevated walkways to support balance and stability • Ensure design reviews consider clear and safe access/egress routes to all inspection, maintenance and installation points at height • Implement change management procedures requiring engineering review for any modification to platforms, roofs or overhead installations • Specify edge protection and physical barriers as default design elements wherever there is risk of a fall from one level to another • Maintain an engineering register of certified structures and systems used for routine elevated work, including expiry dates and recertification requirements	2M
4. Height Access Equipment Selection, Procurement and Configuration	• Selection of inappropriate access equipment (ladders, scaffolds, EWPs) for the task and environment	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• Procurement of non-compliant or uncertified fall prevention and access equipment • Lack of standardisation in equipment across sites leading to inconsistent controls and training gaps • Use of access equipment not rated for the load or configuration required (tools, materials, multiple personnel) • Inadequate controls for wind-related risks when using EWPs, cranes and temporary platforms • Poor configuration of temporary work platforms in areas with narrow ledges, uneven surfaces or overhead obstructions • Insufficient consideration for safe access/egress from EWPs or temporary platforms at height • Inadequate systems for securing equipment above ground level to prevent dropped objects		[redacted]	
5. Inspection, Maintenance and Recertification of Height Access Systems	• Inadequate inspection regime for ladders, scaffolds, EWPs, anchor points and fall arrest systems • Failure to detect deterioration in high structures, platforms and overhead installations • Lack of documented inspection criteria, checklists and acceptance standards for work at heights equipment • Missed recertification dates for permanent anchors, static lines and engineered systems • Unreported defects due to informal or inconsistent pre-use checks by workers • Use of damaged or contaminated equipment (e.g. harnesses, lanyards, connectors) due to poor storage and maintenance practices	3H	[redacted]	1L

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	• Inaccurate asset registers and tagging systems for height access equipment • Unmanaged corrosion, UV damage or mechanical wear on equipment used outdoors or in harsh environments		[redacted]	
6. Competency, Licensing and Training for Work at Heights	• Workers performing working at heights tasks without formal competency or verification of skills • Supervisors lacking capability to assess and manage system-level risks associated with work at heights • Insufficient training on managing balance on narrow surfaces and ledges • Inadequate instruction on recognising and responding to wind-related risks and unsafe conditions at height • Lack of refresher training leading to skill fade in inspection of high structures and fall prevention systems • No structured process to assess psychological readiness and fear of heights in workers assigned to elevated tasks • Inconsistent indu on for contractors engaged in overhe work a maintenance at heig • Poor understanding of emergency procedures and rescue techniqu related to falls from height	4A	[redacted]	2M
7. Work at Heights Permit, Authorisation and Change Management	• Work at heights undertaken without formal authorisation or permit process • Permits not adequately considering environmental factors such as high winds, rain and poor visibility • Permit system failing to capture non-routine tasks, short-duration jobs and minor maintenance at heights • Inadequate consideration of concurrent activities beneath or adjacent to overhead works	3H	[redacted]	1L

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	• Failure to reassess risks when scope, method or conditions change during elevated work • Poor record keeping of permit approvals, conditions and closures • Supervisors approving permits without adequate competency or information • Lack of integration between height permits and other control systems (e.g. isolation, confined space, crane permits)		[redacted]	
8. Environmental and Wind-Related Risk Management at Height	• Work at heights continuing during high winds beyond equipment or structural limits • Gusty or changing wind conditions affecting balance on narrow ledges and elevated surfaces • Wind loading on temporary structures, overhead installations and materials, increasing collapse risk • Wind causing movement of suspended or unsecured loads during overhead works • Insufficient monitoring of localised wind conditions at height compared with ground-level forecasts • Poor policy on when to cease or postpone work during storms, heavy rain or lightning • Inadequate consideration of wind chill and thermal comfort affecting concentration and fatigue at height • Lack of systems to secure loose materials, debris and tools in windy conditions	4	[redacted]	2M
9. Safe Access, Egress and Movement at Height	• Inadequately planned access and egress routes to elevated work areas • Obstructed or poorly maintained walkways and access points increasing trip and fall risk	3H	[redacted]	1L

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	• Insufficient consideration of balance and posture when moving along narrow ledges and walkways • Use of informal access methods (e.g. climbing on plant, pallets, or non-rated surfaces) • Inconsistent application of three points of contact principles when climbing to or from elevated areas • Poor demarcation of safe paths of travel on roofs, platforms and fall-prone areas • Inadequate lighting on access routes and work areas at height • Emergency egress routes from elevated locations not clearly identified or planned		[redacted]	
10. Housekeeping, Trip Management and Work Area Organisation at Height	• Accumulation of tools, offcuts and materials on elevated platforms creating trip and slip hazards • Improper routing of leads, hoses and cords across walkways at height • Inadequate management of waste and debris on scaffolds, platforms and narrow ledges • Poor organisation of work zones increasing the likelihood of overreaching or loss of balance • Materials stored near edges of platforms or on fragile surfaces increasing risk of falls or structural overload • Ad hoc changes to equipment layout without review of impact on safe movement • Lack of systems for managing housekeeping during multi-contractor operations at height • Infrequent inspections of housekeeping conditions in hard-to-access elevated areas	3H	[redacted]	1L

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11. Psychological Health, Fatigue and Fear of Heights Management	• Workers experiencing unmanaged fear of heights leading to panic, poor decision-making or refusal of controls • Fatigue contributing to impaired balance, coordination and situational awareness at height • Stress and anxiety from working at elevated heights or over open edges affecting concentration • Supervisors assigning height work without understanding individual limitations or history • Reluctance of workers to report discomfort or psychological issues related to working at heights • Insufficient systems to rotate personnel away from high-exposure tasks to manage cumulative stress • Lack of guidance on maximum exposure time for high-consequence height work • Inadequate support mechanisms following height-related near misses or incidents	3H	[redacted]	1L
12. Dropped Objects, Overhead Work and Public/Worker Interface Management	• Unsecured tools, equipment or materials falling from elevated work areas onto people or plant below • Inadequate exclusion zones under overhead works exposing workers or public to falling objects • Overhead installations and maintenance carried out above active work areas without coordination • Failure to secure overhead-structures during installation, leading to partial collapse or dropped components • Insufficient control of small items (nuts, bolts, fittings) during installations at height or overhead	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• No system for reviewing and approving overhead work in public or high-traffic internal areas • Inadequate planning for overhead work performed above fragile or fall-prone surfaces • Lack of secondary retention systems for critical overhead equipment and fixtures		[redacted]	
13. Emergency Response, Rescue and Incident Management for Falls from Height	• Absence of site-specific rescue plans for workers suspended in fall arrest systems • Over-reliance on external emergency services with delayed response times • Insufficient rescue equipment available or accessible near elevated work locations • Workers and supervisors unaware of protocols for managing suspension intolerance and injuries after a fall • No drills or practical exercises to test rescue procedures from EWPs, scaffolds and high str[redacted] • Emergency acce[redacted]routes to elevated locations obstructe[redacted]or not c[redacted] identified • Inadequate communication syste[redacted]to raise alarms from high-risk or re[redacted]te elevated areas • Inconsistent reporting and investigation of height-related near misses and minor incidents	4[redacted]	[redacted]	2M
14. Contractor, Supplier and Visitor Management for Work at Heights	• Contractors performing working at heights without adequate verification of their management systems and competencies • Supplier-provided access equipment not meeting organisational standards or legislative requirements	3H	[redacted]	1L

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	• Visitors or non-operational staff entering areas below or near elevated works without awareness of risks • Inconsistent application of site rules for work at heights across different contractor groups • Lack of clarity in contractual documents regarding responsibilities for fall prevention and emergency response • Insufficient monitoring and auditing of contractor work at heights practices • Inadequate briefing for short-term or one-off contractors undertaking maintenance at heights • Multiple contractors conducting overhead works simultaneously without central coordination		[redacted]	
15. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement of Work at Heights Systems	• Failure to identify emerging risks from new equipment, processes or structures involving work at heights • Inadequate monitoring of the effectiveness of existing fall prevention and height access controls • Lack of trend analysis on height-related incidents, near misses and inspection findings • Slow or ineffective implementation of corrective actions for systemic issues in work at heights management • Limited worker feedback loops to identify practical issues with controls at elevated locations • Outdated procedures not reflecting current legislation, Australian Standards or industry good practice • No benchmarking of organisational performance against industry work at heights metrics • Complacency due to low frequency of serious falls but ongoing presence of high potential exposures	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

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