

Gutter Cleaning

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 & Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear WHS responsibilities for gutter cleaning activities under WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations PCBUs not identifying gutter cleaning (including fixing or removing guttering and gutter vacuuming) as 'work at height' requiring formal risk management and, where applicable, SWMS Failure to consult, cooperate and coordinate with other PCBUs (clients, principal contractors, facility managers) at sites Absence of documented WHS risk assessment framework for roof and gutter work, leading to ad hoc decisions Poor integration of gutter cleaning risks into the organisation's overall WHS management system Inadequate review of WHS performance, incidents and near misses specific to roof and gutter work Non-compliance with relevant Australian Standards and Codes of Practice for working at heights plant use 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and document a WHS governance framework that explicitly covers gutter cleaning, clearing blocked gutters, fixing or removing guttering and gutter vacuuming as high-risk work where applicable Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and authorities for officers, managers, supervisors and workers undertaking or overseeing gutter work Ensure officers exercise due diligence by regularly verifying that appropriate resources, training and processes are in place for safe roof and gutter operations Implement a documented risk management procedure that requires formal risk assessments and SWMS for all work at height above 2 m or where there is a risk of a fall Develop and maintain a compliance register referencing WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations, relevant Australian standards and Safe Work Australia/State regulator Codes of Practice for working at heights and plant Implement a contractor management and consultation procedure requiring coordination with clients, principal contractors and building owners before commencing work Schedule periodic WHS system audits focused on height-related tasks, including gutter cleaning, to verify implementation and effectiveness of controls Establish a governance requirement that any changes to gutter cleaning methods (e.g. adoption of vacuum systems, new ladders, MEWPs) trigger a formal review of the risk assessment and SWMS 	3H
2. Competency, Licensing & Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers performing roof and gutter tasks without verified competency for working at heights or using gutter vacuum systems Absence of formal training in hazard identification for roof structures, fragile roofing, brittle skylights and deteriorated guttering No system to confirm relevant high-risk work licences (e.g. for elevated work platforms where applicable) or verification of competency Inadequate induction and refresher training for new methods such as gutter vacuuming, hose management and debris disposal 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a competency framework for all roles involved in gutter cleaning, including specific requirements for work at height, roof access and use of gutter vacuum plant Require nationally recognised Working Safely at Heights training (or equivalent) for all personnel accessing roofs or working near exposed edges Implement a training and licence verification system, with records of high-risk work licences, plant VOCs and refresher dates for staff using EWP or specialised equipment Provide structured induction covering typical gutter-related hazards (roof fragility, weather exposure, electrical proximity, manual handling) and organisation-specific procedures Schedule periodic refresher training and toolbox talks focusing on new equipment, incident learnings and changes to standards or internal procedures Train supervisors and leading hands in safety leadership, dynamic risk assessment and how to stop or modify work where conditions change 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of training on WHS duties, incident reporting and right to cease unsafe work Supervisors lacking skills to conduct field safety leadership and task verification for gutter work teams 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a competency matrix showing required and current competencies for each worker and link it to job allocation and scheduling systems 	
3. Site Assessment, Access Planning & Roof Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic pre-site assessment to identify roof condition, gutter design, fragility of roofing materials and access limitations Uncontrolled access to brittle roofs, skylights, deteriorated gutters or corroded fixings increasing risk of structural failure Inadequate planning for safe access routes to roofs and gutters, including access through clients' premises and outdoor areas Failure to identify unsafe or non-compliant existing access systems (old ladders, non-rated anchor points, improvised platforms) Lack of procedures for stopping or deferring work when roof or gutter integrity cannot be verified Inadequate documentation and communication of site-specific risks to all workers and subcontractors 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a mandatory pre-job site assessment procedure for all gutter work, including inspection of roof type, pitch, gutter height, structural condition and surrounding hazards Develop a roof and gutter access plan checklist requiring confirmation of safe access routes, design and work areas and no-go zones (e.g. around skylights and fragile sheet roofing) Introduce a requirement that any suspect or degraded roof or guttering is assessed by a competent person (e.g. builder, structural engineer) before workers access it Establish a policy that prohibits workers from using client-supplied ladders or improvised access equipment unless inspected and approved via a documented process Document and communicate minimum standards for fixed ladders, walkways, platforms and anchorages that must be met before regular roof access work is undertaken Integrate clear decision-making criteria in procedures for stopping work and escalating when roof integrity or safe access cannot be assured Ensure site-specific risk assessments and access plans are recorded, signed off by supervisors and easily accessible to workers in the field (e.g. via mobile app) 	3H
4. Working at Heights & Fall Prevention Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of engineered fall prevention or protection systems (guardrails, temporary edge protection, fall restraint or arrest systems) Inconsistent or incorrect use of anchor points, harnesses and lanyards due to inadequate system design or supervision Use of ladders as primary working platforms for extended gutter cleaning or for fixing/removing guttering No formal process to assess the hierarchy of control for falls (elimination, 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<p>substitution, engineering, administrative, PPE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate management of exclusion zones below gutter cleaning areas to protect persons from dropped tools or debris • Poor system for inspecting, maintaining and replacing height safety equipment and anchor systems 		[REDACTED]	
5. Plant, Equipment & Gutter Vacuum Systems Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of unsuitable or poorly maintained gutter vacuum units, pumps, hoses and attachments leading to mechanical failure or injury • Inadequate system for selecting and maintaining ladders, mobile platforms, trolleys and extension poles • Lack of documented pre-start inspection routines for vacuum systems, generators and associated plant • Uncontrolled modification of equipment (e.g. homemade suction hose and hose couplings) compromising safety • Failure to manage noise, vibration and airborne particulates generated by gutter vacuuming systems • No formal procedure for de-energising and isolating powered equipment before maintenance or blockage clearing 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Electrical Safety & Overhead Service Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmanaged proximity to overhead power lines when using ladders, extension poles, metal tools or vacuum hoses near gutters • Use of damaged or non-tested electrical leads, portable RCDs and generators for vacuum units 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal procedure for identifying and controlling electrical risks from solar PV systems, conduits and aerial cables on roofs Inadequate training on approach distances and communication with electricity network providers where clearances are insufficient Failure to manage electrical risks during wet weather or when gutters and roofing surfaces are saturated 		[REDACTED]	
7. Environmental Conditions, Weather & Seasonal Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of planning for adverse weather (rain, wind, storms, extreme heat or cold) during roof and gutter activities Work scheduling that pressures workers to continue during unsafe weather or rapidly changing conditions Slips and trips on wet, mossy or leaf-covered roofing and access routes due to poor environmental conditions Unmanaged UV exposure and heat stress for outdoor workers engaged in prolonged gutter cleaning tasks Failure to consider seasonal build-up of debris, pests or nesting animals in gutters that may affect risk profile 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Manual Handling, Ergonomics & Material Handling Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetitive or sustained awkward postures when cleaning gutters, particularly on sloped roofs or from ladders Manual handling of heavy or awkward items such as gutter vacuum units, hoses, sections of guttering and debris bags without mechanical aids 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of systems for handling long gutter sections during fixing or removal leading to uncontrolled movements and strains Inadequate planning for waste collection, transport and disposal resulting in multiple unnecessary handling steps No structured assessment of musculoskeletal disorder risks associated with extended use of hand tools and poles 		[REDACTED]	
9. Hazardous Substances, Biological Hazards & Debris Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to biological contaminants in gutters, such as mould, bird and vermin droppings, decomposing organic matter and stagnant water Unmanaged contact with chemical residues, roofing sealants, lead-based paints or asbestos-containing materials near gutters Lack of systems for safe debris containment, transport and disposal leading to contamination of public areas or work vehicles Insufficient procedures for identifying and managing asbestos or suspected asbestos materials in older guttering and roofing components Inadequate infection control measures when handling putrid or contaminated water during clearing of blocked gutters 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Traffic, Public Interface & Site Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work vehicles, hoses and equipment placed in driveways, car parks or pathways without adequate traffic control Members of the public or building occupants entering work zones below gutters where falling objects may occur 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor signage and barricading around gutter vacuum hoses crossing pedestrian paths or doorways • Lack of coordination with facility managers leading to unplanned interactions with deliveries, school traffic or high-footfall periods • Inadequate vehicle and plant parking plans leading to reversed vehicle movements and collision risks 		[REDACTED]	
11. Fatigue, Workload Management & Psychosocial Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive daily workload, travel and physical demands from multiple gutter cleaning jobs leading to fatigue • Scheduling practices that encourage rushing, cutting corners or working extended hours to complete jobs • Workers operating alone on roofs or in remote areas without adequate supervision or support systems • Psychosocial stress from time pressure, customer expectations and variable site conditions impacting decision-making • Lack of systems to identify and manage fitness for work issues (fatigue, illness, medication, substance use) 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Emergency Preparedness, First Aid & Rescue Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate planning for falls from height or medical emergencies occurring while workers are on roofs or ladders • Lack of site-specific rescue procedures when harness-based fall arrest systems are used • Insufficient first aid resources, communication equipment or access arrangements for emergency services at remote or complex sites • Workers unaware of nearest medical facilities, access routes or local emergency response limitations 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic testing or drills of emergency and rescue plans for gutter work scenarios 		[REDACTED]	
13. Documentation, SWMS, Permits & Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of documented SWMS for high-risk gutter work where required by WHS Regulations Poor control of documentation leading to outdated procedures or uncontrolled versions being used on site Lack of system for review and approval of changes to methods, equipment or materials used in gutter cleaning and repair Failure to integrate permit-to-work systems (e.g. roof access permits, hot work permits) where required by client or site rules Inadequate capture and retention of records demonstrating risk assessments, consultation and worker sign-off 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
14. Contractor, Subcontractor & Client Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of subcontractor crew for gutter cleaning without adequate WHS vetting or alignment with organisational standards Poor communication of site-specific hazards and expectations between the PCBU and client or principal contractor Inconsistent supervision or oversight of subcontractors performing gutter work under tight commercial arrangements Client pressure to prioritise cost and speed over safety controls, particularly for gutter repairs and removal 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of mechanisms to ensure subcontractors provide and follow suitable risk assessments and SWMS 		[REDACTED]	
15. Incident Reporting, Consultation & Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-reporting of incidents, near misses and hazards related to gutter cleaning and roof work Limited worker consultation in the development and review of procedures for gutter cleaning, clearing blocked gutters and gutter vacuuming Lack of systematic analysis of incident trends specific to working at height and plant use No feedback loop to ensure identified issues lead to tangible changes in equipment, training or procedures Workers feeling that raising safety concerns will delay jobs or negatively affect performance metrics 	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.