Handheld Landscaping Power Tools

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:

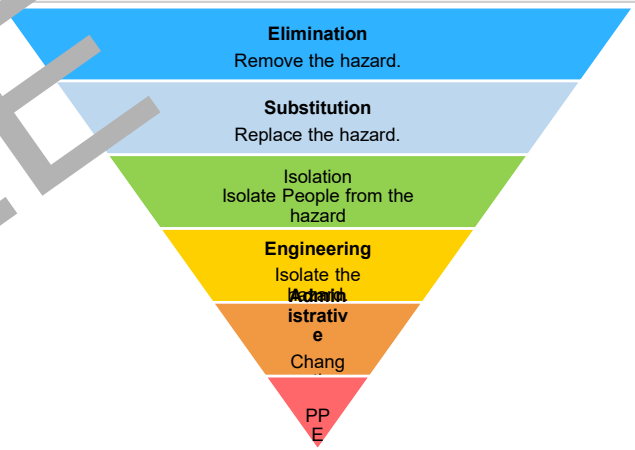
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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. Procurement, Design and Selection of Handheld Landscaping Power Tools	• Purchase of equipment (bark blower truck systems, blowers, blower vacs, hedge trimmers, pole pruners, chainsaws, weed whackers, plastic strimmers, lawn edgers and trimmers, hydraulic pruners, pole saws) that are not compliant with Australian Standards or WHS Act 2011 duties • Selection of tools without adequate vibration, noise and dust control features • Procurement driven solely by cost rather than safety performance and lifecycle risk • Inadequate consideration of ergonomic design leading to increased musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) risk • Failure to ensure compatibility of accessories (e.g. plastic line, blades, bar/chain combinations) with manufacturer specifications • Acquisition of tools without appropriate guarding, dead-man controls, chain brakes or anti-kickback features • Lack of documented pre-purchase risk assessment framework for power tools • Use of non-genuine or untested aftermarket attachments increasing failure and projectile risk	4A	• Establish a formal plant procurement procedure requiring documented WHS risk assessment and sign-off prior to purchasing handheld landscaping power tools • Specify minimum safety and compliance criteria in procurement documentation (e.g. relevant AS/NZS standards, low vibration models, noise output, integrated dust suppression or collection for bark blower systems) • Develop a preferred equipment list that prioritises ergonomically designed, low-weight, low-vibration and low-noise tools suitable for prolonged use • Require suppliers to provide conformity certificates, safety documentation, guarding information and maintenance requirements for all tools and bark blower truck systems • Prohibit purchase of handheld tools and accessories that do not meet manufacturer compatibility specifications or Australian Standards • Include consultation with workers and HSRs on equipment selection to capture end-user safety and usability concerns • Embed WHS performance criteria (e.g. automatic chain brakes, two-handed controls, throttle interlocks, blade guards) into procurement contracts • Implement a documented trial and evaluation process for new tool types before large-scale rollout	2M
2. Governance, WHS Management System and Legal Compliance	• Lack of clear accountability for WHS risks associated with handheld landscaping power tools under the WHS Act 2011 • Inadequate WHS policies and procedures specific to power tools and bark blower truck operations • Failure to identify and comply with applicable legislation, codes of practice and Australian Standards for plant and noise	4A	• Define and document roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, supervisors and workers in relation to handheld landscaping power tool safety, aligned with WHS Act 2011 duties • Develop and implement a suite of WHS policies and procedures specifically addressing procurement, maintenance, use, storage and transport of handheld landscaping power tools and bark blower trucks • Maintain a legal and standards register that captures relevant WHS regulations, plant codes of practice, noise and manual handling requirements and ensure periodic review • Integrate handheld power tool risks into the organisation's WHS management system, including risk registers, consultation processes and audit schedules • Establish structured HSR and worker consultation forums to review power tool hazards, incidents and improvement actions	2M

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
	• Poor integration of handheld power tool risks into the organisation's broader WHS management system • Insufficient consultation with workers and HSRs about risks and controls for chainsaws, hedge trimmers, strimmers and similar tools • No system to review and update procedures following incidents, audits or legislative changes • Inadequate document control leading to workers using outdated procedures and instructions • Lack of clear escalation pathways for reporting systemic issues or recurring tool-related incidents		• Implement a document control system that ensures only current versions of procedures, risk assessments and safe operating guidance are accessible to workers • Schedule formal annual reviews of power tool-related WHS documentation, and additional reviews after significant incidents or legal changes • Adopt a governance process where senior management periodically reviews power tool incident trends, corrective actions and resourcing needs	
3. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	• Workers operating chainsaws, pole saws, hydraulic pruners and other high-risk tools without appropriate competency • Informal on-the-job training with no assessment of skills or understanding of manufacturer instructions • Inadequate training on use of bark blower truck systems, including hose handling, pressure limits and emergency shutdown • Lack of specific training on hazard identification (e.g. kickback, line breakage, blade snagging, electrical contact in electric trimmers) • No refresher training program for infrequently used tools (e.g. seasonal hedge trimming and tree pruning equipment) • Training not tailored to language, literacy or experience levels of workers • Supervisors not trained in verifying competency or coaching safe behaviours	4A	• Develop and implement a competency framework for all handheld landscaping power tools, including chainsaws, hedge trimmers, weed whackers, bark blowers and pole saws, with defined minimum skills and knowledge requirements • Introduce formal training programs that incorporate manufacturer instructions, WHS obligations, risk controls, pre-use checks and emergency procedures • Require external accredited training and certification for high-risk tools (e.g. chainsaw and elevated pruning operations) where applicable • Implement a practical competency assessment process (theory and observation) for each tool type before unsupervised use is permitted • Schedule regular refresher training based on risk level and usage frequency, with additional sessions following incidents or near misses • Ensure training materials are available in suitable formats and languages, using visual aids, demonstrations and plain English documents • Train supervisors in coaching, verification of competency and intervention techniques when unsafe practices are observed • Use a central training register or learning management system to track competencies, expiry dates and training gaps	2M

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
	• Failure to record and track training, resulting in expired or unverifiable competencies			
4. Maintenance, Inspection and Pre-Use Check Systems	• Lack of a scheduled maintenance program for bark blower trucks, blowers, hedge trimmers, weed whackers, chainsaws and similar tools • Failure to identify worn or damaged components (e.g. chains, bars, guards, trigger locks, blades, plastic trimmer heads) before failure • Use of defective tools due to absence of pre-start inspection requirements • Inadequate recordkeeping of servicing, repairs and fault history • Uncontrolled modification of tools or accessories compromising safety features • Maintenance performed by unqualified personnel or without reference to manufacturer instructions • No process to remove defective equipment from servic[illegible] and prevent re-issue before rep[illegible] • Poorly maintaine[illegible]ark bl[illegible] systems leading to f[illegible]ures, blockages and unpredictable discha[illegible]	4A	[redacted]	2M
5. Noise, Vibration and Health Monitoring Management	• Excessive noise exposure fro[illegible] blowers, chainsaws, bark blower trucks and strimmers leading to noise-induced hearing loss • Prolonged exposure to hand-arm vibration from trimmers, hedge cutters, weed whackers, pole saws and hydraulic pruners contributing to musculoskeletal and circulatory disorders • Lack of monitoring of cumulative daily exposure across multiple noisy or vibrating tools	4A	[redacted]	2M

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
	• No formal assessment of noise and vibration levels across different tasks and equipment types • Inadequate consideration of individual susceptibility or pre-existing health conditions • Reliance solely on PPE without implementing higher-order controls for noise and vibration • Poor communication about hearing conservation and early reporting of symptoms		[redacted]	
6. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Workload Management	• Sustained awkward postures and over-reaching when using pole pruners, pole saws and hedge trimmers at height • Repetitive movements when operating weed whackers, plastic strimmers, lawn edgers and trimmers for extended periods • Handling heavy or poorly balanced bark blower hoses and handheld blowers without ergonomic controls • Inadequate planning of workload leading to fatigue, decreased concentration and increased injury likelihood • Lack of systems for early reporting and management of musculoskeletal discomfort • No guidance on maximum tool operating times or micro-breaks for repetitive tasks • Use of tools unsuited to the operator's stature or strength, increasing risk of strain	3H	[redacted]	2M
7. Site Assessment, Planning and Job Authorisation	• Commencing work with handheld tools on sites without a structured pre-job risk assessment • Failure to identify proximity to powerlines, underground services, public access ways or traffic when	4A	[redacted]	2M

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
	planning trimming, edging and pole pruning • Inadequate planning for weather conditions (wind, heat, rain) impacting bark blower discharge, visibility and footing • Lack of defined exclusion zones for bystanders around blower, trimmer, chainsaw and hedge trimming operations • No formal authorisation process for higher-risk tasks, such as working at heights with pole saws near overhead services • Inadequate consideration of environmental constraints (e.g. dust, noise impact on neighbours, vegetation protection) • Unclear allocation of responsibilities for site safety control implementation		[redacted]	
8. Public, Client and Third-Party Interface Management	• Members of the public entering active work areas during blowing, trimming, edging or chainsaw ope • Inadequate comm ication with clients and building occup nts about noisy or high-risk activities • Debris, stones or bark becoming projectiles from blowers, edgers a strimmers impacting third or property • Insufficient planning for work near roads, car parks, shared paths or playgrounds • Lack of clear procedures for coordinating with other contractors or tenants on multi-occupancy sites • Inadequate complaints management process for noise, dust or access disruption caused by landscaping tools	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
9. Plant Guarding, Safety Devices and Energy Isolation Systems	• Removal or defeat of guards on hedge trimmers, lawn edgers, plastic strimmers and bush trimmers • Non-functional safety devices on chainsaws and pole saws (e.g. chain brakes, throttle interlocks, hand guards) • Lack of formal checks to verify correct functioning of emergency stop and isolation controls on bark blower trucks and powered tools • Inadequate lock-out/tag-out procedures for maintenance and jam-clearing activities • Use of tools without functioning on/off switches, dead-man controls or blade covers during transport • Workers not understanding the role and limitations of safety devices, leading to over-reliance or unsafe practices	4A	[redacted]	2M
10. Fuel, Energy Source and Chemical Management	• Inadequate systems for safe storage transport and decanting of petrol, 2-stroke mix and other fuels for blowers chainsaws and trimmers • Lack of controls for battery management (charging, storage damage) on battery hedge cutters and blowers • Poorly controlled use and storage of chain oil, lubricants and chemicals associated with tool maintenance • Absence of spill response procedures for fuel and oil leaks from bark blower trucks and handheld tools • Use of non-approved containers for fuel transport in vehicles or on trailers • Charging of batteries in unsuitable locations without ventilation or fire controls	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
11. Traffic, Access and Remote/Isolated Work Management	• Workers operating handheld tools near live traffic without appropriate traffic management systems • Uncontrolled vehicle movements of bark blower trucks, utes and trailers within work zones • Landscaping work with blowers, trimmers or pole saws in remote or isolated locations without reliable communication systems • Delayed emergency response due to poor location information, access constraints or lack of coordination with emergency services • Inadequate assessment of driving, journey and fatigue risks associated with mobile landscaping crews	3H	[redacted]	2M
12. Electrical Safety and Power Supply Management	• Use of corded electric trimmers and hedge cutters with damaged leads, plugs or residual current devices (RCD • Contact with overhead or undergroun electrical services when using pole pruners, pole saws or he immers a height • Inadequate testi and tagging stem for portable electric quip t us with landscaping tools • Improper use of extension leads power boards or generat ctric tools • Lack of clear exclusion zones and approach distances for electrical hazards • Workers not trained to recognise electrical risks in outdoor landscaping environments	3H	[redacted]	1L
13. Environmental Conditions, Dust and Debris Management	• Uncontrolled generation of dust, bark, leaf litter and debris when using bark blower trucks, leaf blowers and blower vacs	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
	• Reduced visibility and slip hazards from accumulated debris during edging and trimming • Work in extreme heat, cold, rain or wind affecting worker concentration and tool control • Inadequate planning for allergen and respiratory irritant exposure from organic material and dust • No system to evaluate weather-related risk (e.g. high wind dispersing debris onto roads or neighbouring properties)		[redacted]	
14. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Corrective Action	• Under-reporting of near misses, minor injuries and equipment faults related to handheld landscaping power tools • Inconsistent or superficial incident investigations leading to recurrence of similar events • Lack of root cause analysis focusing on systemic issues (training, supervision, maintenance, planning) rather than individual blame • Delayed implementation or tracking of corrective actions from incidents and inspections • Poor communication of incident findings and lessons learned across crews and worksites		[redacted]	2M
15. Supervision, Behavioural Safety and Culture	• Insufficient field supervision of crews using chainsaws, hedge trimmers, weed whackers and bark blower trucks • Tolerance of unsafe shortcuts or non-compliance with procedures (e.g. by-passing guards, operating tools in exclusion zones) • Lack of positive safety leadership and visible commitment from managers regarding tool safety • Workers feeling unable to stop work or speak up about unsafe conditions or equipment defects	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
	• Inconsistent reinforcement of safe behaviours across different supervisors or sites		[redacted]	
16. Emergency Preparedness and First Aid for Tool-Related Incidents	• Inadequate emergency response planning for lacerations, amputations, eye injuries or struck-by incidents involving handheld tools • Lack of accessible first aid equipment suited to chainsaw, trimmer and bark blower injuries • Workers not trained in immediate response steps, including tool isolation and bleeding control • Delayed access to emergency services in remote or dispersed landscaping worksites • No post-incident support or return-to-work planning for injured workers	3H	[redacted]	1L

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