Harness Use and Inspection

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:

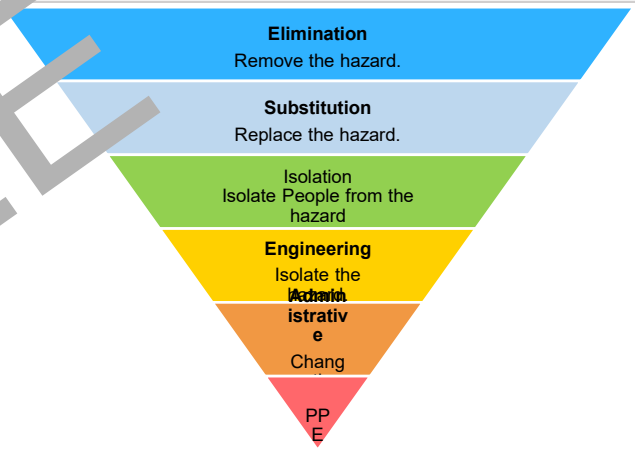
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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, Legal Compliance and PCBU Duties	• Lack of documented WHS policies addressing work at height and harness use in line with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations • PCBU and Officers not clearly understanding due diligence obligations for fall prevention systems • Failure to adopt hierarchy of control, leading to over-reliance on PPE (harnesses) instead of higher-level controls • Inadequate integration of AS/NZS 1891 series and AS/NZS 1891.4 (selection, use and maintenance of industrial fall-arrest systems and devices) into site standards • No formal review of harness and fall protection system controls following incidents, near misses or legislative changes • Inconsistent requirements across multiple sites or contractors, creating confusion and gaps in	4A	• Establish a work at height and fall protection [illegible]nce procedure endorsed by Officers, referencing WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations, Codes of Pra[illegible]e and AS/N[illegible]1891 series • Define and document PCBU, [illegible]fficer, manageme[illegible]supe[illegible]sor and worker responsibilities for harness use, fall restraint and fall arrest [illegible]tems • Embed the hie[illegible]ny of c[illegible]trol in[illegible]rganisatio[illegible]l policy so that elimination, substitution and engineering controls are [illegible]sidered and[illegible]ocume[illegible]d bef[illegible] PPE is approved • Deve[illegible]p and [illegible]intain [illegible]gal and stan[illegible]rds register for fall protection, reviewed at least annually and after [illegible]egulat[illegible]ange • Imple[illegible]e[illegible] forma[illegible]anagement review process (e.g. quarterly) to evaluate WHS performance relating to harn[illegible]s s[illegible]tems, i[illegible]uding incident trends and audit findings • Standa[illegible]ise fa[illegible]rotection and harness management requirements across all operations and contractors vi[illegible]corp[illegible]rate W[illegible]S standard and contract clauses	2M
2. Height Hazard Identification and Risk Management Planning	• Incomplete identi[illegible]ation of tasks requiring fall prote[illegible]n, leadi[illegible] unprotected work a[illegible] • Failure to recognise non-obvious f[illegible] hazards such as edges, voids, fr[illegible]e surfaces, openings and s[illegible]ed work platforms • Inadequate risk assessments that do not consider rescue, suspension trauma, swing fall, or anchor failure • Assumption that a harness alone is adequate without assessing suitability of restraint vs fall arrest systems • Poor change management when new plant, structures or processes alter fall risks	4A	• Implement a formal, documented work at height risk assessment process that specifically addresses when harnesses, lanyards and personal fall arrest systems are required • Maintain a register of all work at height tasks and locations, including details of existing fall prevention and fall restraint systems • Require task-based risk assessments and permit-to-work or work at height authorisations before harness-based work is allowed • Mandate assessment of anchor points, potential free-fall distance, swing fall and rescue arrangements as part of planning • Apply structured change management procedures so any modification to plant, access systems or work methods triggers review of fall hazards and harness requirements • Periodically review risk assessments for high-risk work at heights to ensure they remain current and reflect lessons learned from incidents and near misses	2M

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	• Work at heights undertaken without formal authorisation or review of risk controls			
3. Fall Protection System Design and Engineering Controls	• Inadequate or ad hoc design of fall restraint and fall arrest systems relying solely on harnesses without engineered solutions • Lack of certified anchor points or use of non-rated structures as anchorages • Improper selection or placement of horizontal lifelines and static lines, leading to excessive free-fall or swing falls • Insufficient engineering review of roof access, walkways, guardrails and edge protection, creating reliance on PPE • Failure to design for compatibility between harness, lanyards, connectors, anchors and rescue devices • Inadequate design documentation, drawings or load calculations for installed systems	4A	• Adopt an engineering design standard for fall protection systems that prioritises elimination and passive fall prevention (guardrails, walkways, platforms) before personal fall arrest • Ensure all anchor points, static lines and engineered fall restraint systems are designed, installed and certified by competent persons in accordance with AS/NZS 1891 and relevant engineering standards • Require engineering sign-off and load calculations for permanent and temporary fall arrest systems, including maximum arrest forces on structures and anchors • Standardise compatible equipment (harnesses, lanyards, connectors, inertia reels, rescue kits) across sites to minimise mismatched components • Maintain detailed design documentation, certifications, inspection records and layout drawings for all installed fall protection systems • Include fall protection considerations in plant and structure design reviews, procurement specifications and pre-use design risk assessments	2M
4. Harness and Lanyard Selection, Procurement and Compatibility	• Procurement of harnesses, lanyards and fall arrest devices that are not compliant with AS/NZS 1891 series • Inappropriate harness type for the task (e.g. work positioning vs fall arrest) leading to increased injury risk • Incompatible harness, lanyard, connectors and energy absorbers used together without system-level assessment • Failure to consider user body size, fit, comfort and medical conditions, reducing likelihood of correct use • Purchase of low-cost, poor-quality equipment with inadequate documentation, traceability or certification • Inconsistent procurement of brands and models creating confusion and training gaps for workers	3H	[redacted]	2M

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5. Harness, Lanyard and System Inspection, Maintenance and Expiry Management	• Failure to check expiry dates of harnesses, lanyards and energy absorbers in line with manufacturer guidance • No formal pre-use inspection system leading to undetected damage, contamination or degradation of webbing and stitching • Absence of scheduled detailed inspections by a competent person as required by AS/NZS 1891.4 • Inadequate record-keeping for inspections, repairs and removals from service • Improper storage or cleaning practices causing premature deterioration of harnesses and lanyards • Use of equipment involved in a fall arrest event without formal assessment and clearance	4A	[redacted]	2M
6. Training, Competency and Instruction in Harness Use	• Workers using fall protection harnesses without adequate training on correct donning, adjustment and connection • Lack of competency in selecting correct attachment points, lanyard types and fall restraint versus fall arrest configuration • Poor understanding of system limitations, including free-fall distances, swing fall and clearance requirements • Inadequate awareness of suspension intolerance (suspension trauma) and emergency self-rescue techniques • Supervisors unable to verify safe use due to insufficient technical understanding of harness systems • Training limited to induction or online modules without practical demonstration and assessment	4A	[redacted]	2M

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7. Work at Height Access, Authorisation and Permit Systems	• Uncontrolled access to height work areas without confirmation of adequate fall restraint or fall arrest systems • Work at heights commenced without verification that harnesses and lanyards are inspected, in-date and suitable for the task • Failure to confirm anchor point suitability and system configuration before use • No formal planning of work positioning, foot restraint systems and travel restraint lines, leading to overreliance on fall arrest • Lack of clarity about who may authorise work at heights involving harnesses • Pressure to bypass permit or authorisation processes to save time	3H	[redacted]	1L
8. Contractor and Labour Hire Management for Harness Work	• Contractors performing height work without alignment to the PCBU's harness and fall protection standards • Assumption that contractors manage their own harness inspection, expiry and training without verification • Multiple harness types, brands and systems on site creating inconsistency and confusion • Inadequate prequalification of contractor competency in harness use and fall protection system design • Poor communication between PCBUs about responsibilities for equipment provision, inspection and rescue arrangements • No verification that contractor harnesses and lanyards meet Australian Standards and are within service life	3H	[redacted]	2M
9. Supervision, Monitoring and Enforcement of	• Workers not wearing full body harnesses when required for work at heights	3H	[redacted]	1L

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Harness Use Requirements	• Incorrect or loose fitting of harnesses due to lack of supervision or enforcement • Failure to use appropriate attachment points or lanyard configurations in line with procedures • Normalisation of deviance where unsafe harness practices become accepted custom and practice • Supervisors not intervening when unsafe harness use is observed • Insufficient monitoring of high-risk work at heights outside of core hours or remote locations		[redacted]	
10. Emergency Response, Rescue and Suspension Intolerance Management	• Inadequate planning for rescue of a worker suspended in a harness following a fall arrest event • Lack of rescue equipment compatible with installed fall arrest systems and harnesses • Emergency response times too long t effectively manage suspension intolerance (suspensi trauma) • Workers and sup visors unaware of signs and manage ent of s intolerance and pos care requirements • No practice drills for rescue fro height, leading to confusi delay in a real event • Reliance on external emergency services without assessing their ability to reach the specific height locations	4A	[redacted]	2M
11. Health, Fitness for Work and Human Factors in Harness Use	• Workers with medical conditions or physical limitations adversely affected by harness use or suspension • Fatigue, heat stress or reduced concentration leading to incorrect fitting or misuse of harnesses	3H	[redacted]	2M

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	• Behavioural risk-taking, complacency or overconfidence when working in harnesses at heights • Poor ergonomic design or ill-fitting harnesses causing discomfort, leading to incorrect adjustment or non-use • Language or literacy barriers leading to misunderstanding of harness instructions and training content • Psychological factors such as fear of heights affecting safe decision-making while using fall protection gear		[redacted]	
12. Information, Documentation and Change Control for Harness Systems	• Outdated or inconsistent procedures and work instructions for harness use, inspection and storage • Lack of clear documentation on approved harness types, anchor points and fall protection system layouts • Uncontrolled changes to equipment, suppliers or system configurations without risk assessment • Poor communication of updates to harness-related requirements across shifts and work groups • Inadequate document control leading to multiple versions of procedures in circulation • Failure to capture lessons learned from incidents or near misses in documented systems	3H	[redacted]	1L
13. Monitoring, Audit, Assurance and Continuous Improvement of Harness Management	• Lack of systematic review of harness and fall protection performance data (inspections, defects, near misses) • Failure to detect recurring deficiencies in harness inspections, expiry management or usage practices • No benchmarking of organisational practices against industry standards and regulatory expectations	3H	[redacted]	1L

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	• Inadequate internal WHS audits covering fall protection and harness systems • Data from observations and incidents not analysed to drive improvements in system controls • Over-reliance on personal responsibility rather than system-level assurance mechanisms		[redacted]	

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