

Knives and Cutters Industrial

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. Governance, WHS Leadership and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of documented WHS policy and procedures specific to knife and cutter use leading to inconsistent practices Senior management not clearly allocating resources or accountability for managing sharp-tool risks Failure to consult workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) about knife and box cutter risks and controls as required under WHS Act 2011 Inadequate monitoring of compliance with WHS Regulation (e.g. hazard management, training, incident notification) No clear risk appetite or tolerance for knife-related injuries, resulting in normalisation of minor cuts and near misses 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and endorse a written WHS Policy that explicitly references management of sharp-tool hazards (knives, box cutters, utility blades) in line with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation 2011 Define and document WHS responsibilities for PCBUs, officers, managers, supervisors and workers for knife and cutter risk management, including consultation duties for Officers Integrate knife and cutter risks into the organisation's risk management framework (hazard identification, risk assessment, control, review) with clear reporting lines to senior leadership or a WHS Committee Implement formal consultation arrangements with workers and HSRs on selection of knives/box cutters, procedures, PPE and changes to systems of work, consistent with WHS Act consultation duties Include knife and cutter risk metrics (e.g. incident rates, near misses, training completion, inspection findings) in regular WHS performance reporting to management and the Board (or equivalent governance body) Ensure WHS management system procedures reference applicable Australian Standards and industry guidance for cutting tools where relevant Establish a process to periodically review WHS policies and procedures (at least every 2 years or after significant incidents) covering sharp-tool management 	Medium
2. Procurement and Selection of Knives and Cutters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement decisions based on cost rather than safety features (e.g. lack of safety guards, auto-retracting blades) Selection of inappropriate knife types for tasks, increasing force required and likelihood of slips Use of non-standard, improvised or personally supplied knives and cutters with unknown safety performance Purchase of blades that are difficult to change safely, increasing hand contact with sharp edges Inconsistent procurement leading to multiple knife types and brands, complicating training and standardisation of controls 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a procurement standard for knives and cutters that mandates safety features (e.g. self-retracting blades, guarded cutting edges, rounded tips, anti-slip handles) and prohibits high-risk designs where safer alternatives exist Standardise approved knife and cutter types for each task category (e.g. box opening, trimming, food preparation) based on a documented risk assessment Prohibit the use of personal or unauthorised knives and cutters through a written policy and enforcement by supervisors Include maintainability and safe blade-change capability as criteria in supplier selection, including quick-change mechanisms that minimise hand contact with sharp edges Engage workers and HSRs in evaluating and trialling new cutting tools prior to bulk procurement to ensure usability and acceptance Establish preferred suppliers and catalogue lists in purchasing systems so that only risk-assessed, approved knives and cutters can be ordered Specify that suppliers provide safety data, instructions for use, and training material (where applicable) for all procured cutting tools 	Medium
3. Policy, Procedures and Safe Systems of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a formal safe system of work for using sharp knives and box cutters across different departments 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement written Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Safe Systems of Work for all significant uses of knives and cutters (e.g. warehouse, production, kitchen, maintenance) with a focus on hazard elimination and substitution where possible 	Medium

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled storage and disposal of used blades creating sharps hazards in bins and work areas • Lack of a structured inspection regime leading to inconsistent standards across shifts and sites • Use of incorrect or non-genuine replacement blades compromising tool performance and safety features 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
6. Workplace Design, Layout and Environmental Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workstations and benches not designed for safe cutting heights or angles, increasing strain and loss of control • Poor lighting, cluttered areas or restricted space around cutting zones leading to slips, trips, collisions and mis-cuts • Inadequate separation between cutting activities and pedestrian or vehicle routes, increasing the risk of contact injuries • Lack of designated storage or shelving systems for sharp knives between desks, leading to loose tools on desks or in pockets • Environmental factors such as wet, greasy or uneven floors contributing to instability while cutting 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium
7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-reliance on PPE instead of higher-level controls for knife and cutter risks • Inadequate specification of PPE (e.g. gloves without cut resistance, ill-fitting equipment) leading to false sense of security 	Medium	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Low

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE not consistently issued, maintained or replaced, resulting in degraded protection • Lack of training in correct PPE use, limitations and compatibility with tasks • Failure to consider interaction between PPE and fine motor control required for knife tasks 		[REDACTED]	
8. Contractor, Labour-Hire and Visitor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors and labour-hire workers using different or unapproved knife types and box cutters on site • Inconsistent training and competency verification for non-permanent workers • Visitors entering areas where knives are used or stored without appropriate controls or awareness • Poor coordination between CBU and host employer regarding responsibilities for knife and cutter risk management • Short-term project pressures encouraging unsafe cutting practices by contractors 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
9. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Corrective Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-reporting of minor cuts and near misses involving knives and cutters, limiting learning opportunities • Inadequate investigation of incidents, focusing on worker behaviour rather than system and management factors • Delays in implementing corrective actions, allowing repeat incidents to occur 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of analysis of incident data to identify trends by area, task, tool type or time of day Failure to meet statutory notification requirements for serious incidents in accordance with WHS Act 2011 		[REDACTED]	
10. Monitoring, Audit and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic checking that knife and cutter controls are implemented and effective across all shifts and sites WHS performance indicators not capturing sharp-tool-related risks adequately Audit findings and worker feedback not translated into meaningful improvement Changes in volume of work, materials, or staffing not triggering re-assessment of knife and cutter Complacency over time as incident rates reduce, leading to gradual erosion of controls 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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/lit/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.