

Ladders and Step Platforms

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 Duties and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear organisational policy on ladder and step platform use leading to inconsistent practices PCBU and Officers not understanding due diligence obligations under WHS Act 2011 for work at height and access systems Insufficient consultation with workers and HSRs on ladder-related risks and control measures No formal process to review incidents, near misses and legislative changes relating to ladders and climbing access Inadequate integration of ladder risk management into overall WHS management system 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and endorse a corporate Ladder and Temporary Access Equipment Policy aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice (e.g. Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplaces) Define and document Officer due diligence responsibilities specific to ladder, ramp, walkway and climbing system risks, including regular review of performance reports Establish formal consultation arrangements (toolbox talks, WHS committees, HSR engagement) for ladder and climbing systems, including feedback on safe climbing techniques and fence/wall access Include ladder and access system risks in the organisation's WHS risk register, with scheduled reviews and documented actions Implement a documented change management process for introduction of new ladder types, walk pads, ramps, walkways, rope access systems 	3H
2. Ladder and Access Equipment Procurement and Design Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of non-compliant ladders, step platforms or ramps not meeting Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 1892, AS/NZS 1576, AS/NZS 1657) Selection of ladders instead of safer engineered access (e.g. stairs, platforms, walk pads, ramps) due to cost or convenience Inadequate consultation for tasks requiring climbing fences or walls or using ropes, resulting in makeshift systems Use of domestic grade equipment in commercial or industrial environments Incompatibility between ladders, roof walk pads, ladder accesses and existing structures creating instability or entrapment risks 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a procurement standard mandating compliance of all ladders, step platforms, ramps, walkways, walk pads and ladder access systems with relevant Australian Standards and manufacturer specifications Adopt a hierarchy of control decision process requiring consideration and documented rejection of higher-order controls (e.g. permanent stairs, platforms, engineered walkways) before selecting ladders Standardise approved equipment types and configurations for fence/wall access, ladder accesses and rope-based climbing, prohibiting improvised solutions Require pre-purchase risk assessments and engineering review for new walk pads, rooftop access points, ramps and fixed ladder systems Maintain a central register of approved ladder and access equipment with specifications, inspection intervals and permitted uses 	2M
3. Planning of Tasks, Access Routes and Work Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate planning for ascending and descending routes leading to workers carrying loads, overreaching or using unsuitable access points Failure to identify and plan for the need to climb fences or walls, resulting in unsafe shortcuts 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal work at height and access planning procedure requiring assessment of all ladder, ramp, walkway and climbing requirements prior to job allocation Mandate job planning tools (e.g. JSAs, risk assessments) that include specific sections on safe ascent/descent routes, fence/wall access and use of ropes or fall arrest systems Develop standard access plans for routine tasks (e.g. rooftop maintenance with walk pads and ladder accesses) that specify approved equipment, tie-off points and travel paths 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of consideration of environmental factors (wind, wet surfaces, uneven ground) in ladder and ramp use Ad-hoc decisions to use ladders instead of safer methods due to time pressure or poor job planning No formal process to determine when ropes, fall protection or alternative access systems are necessary 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require supervisory approval for any deviation from documented access plans or for unplanned use of ladders or climbing equipment Integrate weather and environmental condition checks into planning, with defined triggers for rescheduling or using alternative access systems 	
4. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers using ladders, step platforms, ramps and walkways without adequate competency in safe climbing techniques Lack of training on specific risks of ascending and descending, including carrying tools and materials No formal competency requirements for tasks involving ropes or specialised climbing equipment Supervisors unable to recognise unsafe ladder set-up or use due to insufficient training Inconsistent induction of contractors regarding site-specific ladder and access rules 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Supervision, Enforcement and Behavioural Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent supervision of ladder and access work leading to normalisation of unsafe shortcuts Tolerance of unsafe behaviour such as overreaching, standing on top rungs or climbing fences without proper equipment Lack of enforcement of rules relating to use of walk pads, designated ladders and access points Workers not reporting unsafe practices for fear of reprisal or due to poor safety culture Supervisors prioritising productivity over compliance with access procedures 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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6. Inspection, Maintenance and Condition Monitoring of Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of damaged or worn ladders, step platforms, ramps or walkways due to lack of inspection systems • Walk pads, ladder accesses and ramps becoming loose, corroded or degraded without detection • Ropes and climbing equipment not inspected to manufacturer or standard requirements • Contamination (oil, mud, moss) on treads and walkways increasing slip risk during ascending and descending • No tagging or isolation system for defective access equipment 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Access Infrastructure: Walk Pads, Ramps, Walkways and Ladder Access Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate or poorly designed walk pads on roofs leading to slips, trips or falls • Ramps and walkways with unsuitable gradients, widths or guardrails for safe ascent and descent • Unprotected edges or gaps near ladder access points creating fall hazards when transitioning • Lack of clearly designated travel paths resulting in workers walking on wet or uneven surfaces • Improperly secured portable ladder accesses causing movement during use 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Climbing Techniques, Manual Handling and Use of Tools/Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsafe climbing techniques such as facing away from ladders, skipping rungs or sliding down during descent • Carrying heavy or awkward tools and materials while ascending or descending, compromising three-point contact • Improvised lifting using ropes or makeshift systems without proper controls • Overreaching from ladders or step platforms instead of repositioning equipment 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of systems to control dropped objects when working at height from ladders or walkways 		[REDACTED]	
9. Work Environment, Housekeeping and Site Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor housekeeping around ladder bases, ramps and walkways creating trip and snag hazards Adverse weather (rain, wind, heat) affecting stability and grip during ascent and descent Inadequate lighting on access ways, especially when climbing fences, walls or fixed ladders Uncontrolled vehicular or plant movement near ladder set-up areas Ground conditions not assessed, leading to ladder movement or sinking 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Climbing Fences, Walls and Non-Standard Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers climbing over fences, walls or barriers without engineered access points or fall protection Use of non-structural elements (pipes, brackets, mesh) as footholds or handholds Uncontrolled access to neighbouring properties, restricted areas or different levels Lack of assessment of structural integrity of fences or walls intended for access or anchorage Potential for entanglement or snagging on barbed wire, mesh or protrusions during ascent/descent 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Use of Ropes, Fall Protection and Climbing Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrect selection or use of ropes, harnesses, lanyards or anchorage points for climbing or fall restraint Rope access or assisted climbing used as an informal solution without proper planning or competency verification Failure to inspect and retire rope and textile equipment in line with manufacturer guidance 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate rescue planning for workers using ropes or climbing systems in conjunction with ladders and platforms Anchorage points installed or used without engineering verification 		[REDACTED]	
12. Contractor Management and Third-Party Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors using non-compliant ladders, ramps or walkways that do not meet site standards Inconsistent application of safe climbing techniques and rope use by different contractors Lack of clarity regarding responsibility for installing and maintaining walk pads and ladder access systems on shared sites Uncontrolled modification or removal of fixed access systems by third parties Contractors bypassing fence or wall access controls to save time 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Emergency Response, First Aid and Rescue Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed response to falls or incident on ladders, ramps, walkways or when climbing fences/walls Lack of rescue capability for workers using ropes or climbing systems in confined or elevated areas Inadequate communication system for workers accessing remote rooftops or isolated ladder access points First aiders not trained to manage fall-related injuries Emergency procedures not accounting for complexities of evacuating injured persons from elevated access routes 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
14. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underreporting of ladder, climbing and access near misses, leading to missed learning opportunities Superficial investigations that focus on worker behaviour rather than system and management failures 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mechanism to track trends in ladder-related incidents across multiple sites Failure to update procedures, training or infrastructure following significant incidents Limited communication of lessons learned to workers and contractors 		[REDACTED]	
15. Health, Fitness for Work and Human Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers with reduced mobility, balance or strength performing tasks involving ladders and climbing Fatigue, heat stress or medical conditions affecting concentration and coordination during ascent and descent Psychological factors such as fear of heights leading to unsafe movements or rushed climbing Inadequate consideration of age and physical capability in job allocation for ladder-related tasks Use of medication or substances that impair judgement or balance 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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.