

Landscaping Activities

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, Duty of Care and Legislative Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear WHS roles, responsibilities and accountability for landscaping activities under WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation Inadequate understanding by officers and managers of due diligence obligations relating to high-risk landscaping tasks (e.g. chainsaw use, elevated work, plant and traffic interaction) Failure to consult, cooperate and coordinate WHS duties with clients, host PCBUs, subcontractors and labour-hire providers on landscaping sites Absence of a documented WHS management system tailored to landscaping operations, leading to ad hoc safety practices Poor integration of WHS requirements into contracts, scopes of work and service agreements for landscaping projects Insufficient monitoring, review and verification that WHS policies and procedures are being implemented in the field 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, implement and maintain a documented WHS management System (WHSMS) aligned with the WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation, relevant Codes of Practice and AS/NZS ISO 45001 Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and delegated authorities for directors, officers, managers, supervisors, health and safety representatives and workers involved in landscaping activities Provide officer-level training on due diligence obligations, focusing on reasonably practicable controls for plant use, hazardous chemicals, manual tasks and outdoor environmental exposures Embed WHS requirements into contracts and procurement documents for landscaping works, including clear expectations for risk management, consultation, incident reporting and performance monitoring Establish formal consultation and coordination processes with other PCBUs, including pre-start coordination meetings, site-specific WHS plans and agreed communication protocols Implement a schedule of internal audits, management reviews and site inspections to verify WHSMS implementation and effectiveness for landscaping operations Maintain a WHS legal register and compliance calendar that tracks applicable legislation, codes and standards relevant to landscaping activities and reviews them at least annually Ensure policies and procedures are easily accessible to workers (e.g. intranet, WHS app, folders in vehicles) and regularly communicated through toolbox talks and supervisor briefings 	Medium
2. Planning, Job Design and Contract Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping scopes of work developed without formal WHS risk assessment, leading to high-risk methods being normalised (e.g. unnecessary manual handling, unsafe access on slopes, ad hoc traffic setups) Inadequate consideration of site-specific hazards such as underground services, overhead powerlines, steep or unstable terrain, water bodies and public interface during planning Unrealistic timeframes and budgets that encourage shortcuts, fatigue and inadequate supervision Poorly defined responsibilities between principal contractor, client, landscaper 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal project planning and WHS risk assessment process for all landscaping contracts, including review of site drawings, services plans, environmental constraints and public interface Require a written, site-specific WHS plan or risk assessment for each landscaping project, addressing plant, traffic management, hazardous chemicals, manual tasks and environmental exposures Integrate WHS requirements into tendering and contract documentation, including minimum supervision levels, mandatory qualifications, emergency arrangements and reporting expectations Adopt a subcontractor pre-qualification system that assesses WHS management capability, insurances, licences, incident history and references before engagement Include WHS performance and risk management as evaluation criteria in contractor and supplier selection, not solely price and schedule Ensure project schedules and resourcing plans account for realistic safe work methods, breaks, travel time and contingencies for adverse weather or site conditions 	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and subcontractors regarding site control, emergency response and permit systems Lack of pre-qualification of landscaping subcontractors and suppliers regarding their WHS capability and past performance Failure to plan for environmental conditions (extreme heat, UV exposure, storms, bushfire risk) in scheduling and resourcing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require documented utility locating and service confirmation (e.g. Dial Before You Dig, ground-penetrating radar where appropriate) in the planning stage for excavation and planting works Establish a planning procedure for managing seasonal and environmental risks (e.g. heatwave plans, bushfire danger periods, wet weather access controls) for outdoor landscaping activities 	
3. Worker Competency, Induction and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping workers operating plant, chainsaws, brushcutters, mowers and chemical application equipment without formal competency verification Inadequate training on the specific WHS risks associated with landscaping, including traffic interaction, public safety, wildlife, snakes, insects and allergen exposure Lack of structured induction for new workers, labour-hire staff and subcontractors regarding site rules, emergency arrangements and critical risk controls Inconsistent understanding of operating procedures and risk assessments across crews due to informal, on-the-job training only No documented process for assessing literacy, language and numeracy barriers that may affect understanding of safety instructions and labels Insufficient refresher training and verification of ongoing competence for high-risk tasks and equipment use 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a competency framework for landscaping roles, clearly specifying required licences, tickets, units of competency and on-the-job assessments for each type of plant and task Implement a formal induction program for all workers and subcontractors covering WHS responsibilities, site rules, emergency procedures, hazard and incident reporting, PPE standards and key landscaping risks Maintain a training and competency register (digital or hard copy) recording licences, tickets, training expiry dates and competency assessments for all workers engaged in landscaping activities Provide task-specific training and assessment on safe operating procedures for plant such as ride-on mowers, chainsaws, brushcutters, chippers, skid steers and compactors before unsupervised use Incorporate training on outdoor hazards including sun and heat exposure, hydration, venomous animals, manual handling, noise, vibration and chemical hazards into regular toolbox talks Ensure training materials are available in suitable languages and formats, and verify understanding through questioning, demonstrations or short assessments Schedule formal refresher training and re-assessment for high-risk activities (e.g. chainsaw operation, traffic management, chemical handling, first aid) at defined intervals Require supervisors to conduct and document on-the-job verification of competence for new workers and when new equipment or processes are introduced 	Medium
4. Plant, Equipment and Procurement Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of landscaping plant and equipment that does not meet Australian standards or is not fit for intended use (e.g. lack of guarding, poor stability on slopes) Use of ageing or poorly maintained mowers, brushcutters, chainsaws, 	High	<div style="background-color: black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 20px; width: 100%;"></div>	Medium

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	<p>blowers, chippers, loaders and trailers increasing risk of mechanical failure and injury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of standardisation of plant across the fleet, resulting in inconsistent controls, training and spare parts Inadequate selection of plant for specific terrain, leading to rollovers, loss of control and musculoskeletal strain Failure to include noise and vibration exposure considerations in plant selection and change management Insufficient control over hired or subcontractor-supplied plant, including limited visibility of maintenance and inspection history 		[REDACTED]	
5. Plant Maintenance, Inspection and Tagging Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate preventative maintenance of landscaping plant leading to mechanical failure, loss of control, fires and exposure to fumes No formal system for pre-use checks, defect reporting and isolation of unsafe plant Use of damaged or non-compliant electrical tools, extension leads and portable RCDs in outdoor settings Failure to verify that guards, safety interlocks and emergency stops on plant remain functional over time Inconsistent servicing intervals due to dispersed worksites and competing production priorities Lack of documented evidence to demonstrate maintenance compliance following incidents or regulatory inspections 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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6. Hazardous Chemicals and Biological Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled use, storage and transport of herbicides, pesticides, fertilisers, fuels and cleaning agents used in landscaping Lack of current Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and risk assessments for hazardous chemicals routinely used by landscaping crews Inadequate systems for mixing, decanting, labelling and disposing of chemicals leading to exposure, environmental harm and regulatory breaches Failure to consider combined exposures to chemicals, dust, pollens, mould, animal droppings and other biological agents when planning works Poor management of chemical application near sensitive receptors such as schools, waterways, playgrounds and public thoroughfares Insufficient monitoring of worker health in relation to repeated chemical and allergen exposure 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium
7. Traffic, Vehicle and Public Interface Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping crews operating in close proximity to live traffic without adequate traffic management plans and oversight Movement of vehicles, trailers, plant and pedestrians within depots, client sites and public spaces without clear separation and control Insufficient systems to manage reversing, loading and unloading of trailers, plant and materials in public or congested areas Lack of coordination with road authorities, local councils or facility owners regarding temporary traffic controls and public access restrictions 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate procedures for securing worksites, tools, plant and materials to protect members of the public, including children, from entering work areas Poor journey management for crews travelling between multiple landscaping sites, contributing to fatigue and driving risk 		[REDACTED]	
8. Environmental and Outdoor Exposure Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic exposure of landscaping workers to ultraviolet (UV) radiation, heat stress, cold, wind and adverse weather Inadequate planning for severe weather events such as storms, lightning, high winds and heavy rain that may make landscaping work unsafe No systematic approach to managing wildlife and environmental hazards such as snakes, spiders, bees, wasps, ticks and aggressive domestic animals Insufficient control of slips, trips and falls risks associated with uneven ground, embankments, grass, mulch and debris across working sites Lack of structured hydration, shade and work-rest arrangements for hot conditions and high-exertion tasks Failure to incorporate seasonal and climatic factors into resource allocation, job rotation, PPE selection and scheduling 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
9. Manual Tasks, Ergonomics and Workload Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systemic reliance on high-effort manual handling for materials such as soil, pavers, plants, turf, rocks and green waste due to inadequate mechanical aids and poor job design Repetitive and sustained use of handheld landscaping equipment resulting in musculoskeletal disorders and vibration exposure Inadequate planning for workforce rotation, rest breaks and variation of 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> tasks leading to cumulative strain injuries • Equipment and vehicle layouts that require awkward postures when accessing or securing tools and materials • Lack of structured process for assessing and redesigning high-risk manual tasks across different landscaping contracts • Production targets that implicitly encourage rushing and unsafe lifting practices 		[REDACTED]	
10. Fatigue, Psychological Health and Workforce Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long workdays, early starts, travel between multiple landscaping sites and seasonal peak workloads leading to fatigue • Work in isolation or small mobile crews with limited supervision and support, increasing psychosocial and physical risk • Exposure to aggressive members of the public, client pressures and competing priorities without clear escalation pathways • Under-resourced teams resulting in sustained high workload and stress especially during seasonal peak after weather delays • Stigma or lack of awareness regarding mental health, preventing early reporting of psychological strain • No formal arrangements for discussing workload, job control, bullying, harassment or conflict in landscaping crews 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low
11. Incident, Hazard Reporting and Investigation Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-reporting of hazards, near misses and minor injuries in landscaping activities due to complex, slow or punitive reporting processes 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent classification, recording and analysis of incidents across different crews and sites, limiting learning Failure to meet notifiable incident reporting obligations under the WHS Act 2011 for serious landscaping-related events Poor quality or superficial incident investigations that focus on worker behaviour rather than underlying system and management failures Lack of feedback to workers and subcontractors on actions taken following reports, reducing trust in the WHS system No centralised system for tracking corrective actions, leading to recurrence of similar landscaping incidents 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
12. Emergency Preparedness and First Aid Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscaping crews working across dispersed and remote sites without adequate emergency planning, communication or location information Insufficient first aid resources, training and systems given the nature of landscaping hazards (cuts, amputations, crush injuries, bites and stings, heat stress, chemical exposure) Lack of coordination with host workplaces, local emergency services and clients regarding site-specific emergency arrangements Inadequate processes for responding to severe weather, bushfire risk, vehicle incidents or medical emergencies while travelling between sites Failure to test and review emergency procedures for landscaping operations, resulting in confusion during actual events 	Medium	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Low

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic recording or review of emergency drills or real emergency responses to inform improvements 		<div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>	

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-of-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.