

Lawn Mowing and Turf Care Equipment

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			<b>Elimination</b> Remove the hazard.	
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	<b>Substitution</b> 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.	<b>Engineering</b> Isolate the hazard	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	<b>Administrative</b> Change	
								<b>PPE</b>	

  

Risk Rating & Required Action:	
<b>4A</b>	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.
<b>3H</b>	Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
<b>2M</b>	Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.
<b>1L</b>	Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.

  

Consequence Scale:			
Consequence	People (injury/illness)	Project / Assets	Compliance / Reputation
<b>Catastrophic</b>	Fatality or permanent total disability	project shutdown	Significant regulator intervention; criminal prosecution
<b>Major</b>	Serious injury/illness (hospital > 5 days)	critical delay	Improvement notice; major media coverage
<b>Moderate</b>	Medical-treatment injury; lost-time > 1 day	moderate delay	Minor breach; adverse client comment
<b>Minor</b>	First-aid only, no lost time	negligible delay	Isolated non-conformance
<b>Insignificant</b>	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, Legal Compliance and WHS Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of documented WHS policy for turf care and mowing operations</li> <li>Unclear allocation of PCBU, officer and worker WHS duties under WHS Act 2011</li> <li>Failure to consult, cooperate and coordinate with other duty holders (e.g. councils, golf clubs, contractors)</li> <li>No systematic review of compliance with WHS legislation, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards relevant to lawn mowing and turf equipment</li> <li>Inadequate resourcing for WHS management in turf care (time, funding, competent persons)</li> <li>Absence of formal WHS objectives and performance indicators for mowing and turf maintenance activities</li> <li>Failure to consider WHS in contracts for turf restoration, sports field maintenance, bunker management and land clearing</li> <li>No process to ensure changes in legislation or standards are identified and implemented</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a WHS management system specific to lawn mowing, turf care and greens maintenance aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations</li> <li>Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, supervisors and workers involved in mowing and turf operations</li> <li>Establish a legal compliance register covering relevant legislation, Codes of Practice (e.g. Managing the Risk of Plant in the Workplace) and applicable standards for motor mowers, ride-on mowers, slasher mowers, aerators and turf care equipment</li> <li>Implement a formal consultation framework with workers, Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and other PCBUs (e.g. venue owners, principal contractors) for all lawn mowing and turf care activities</li> <li>Embed WHS performance measures (e.g. incident rates, audit scores, completion of inspections) into management reporting for mowing and turf care operations</li> <li>Include explicit WHS requirements and competency expectations in contracts and tenders for lawn mowing, turf restoration, land clearing, bunker maintenance and green waste disposal services</li> <li>Schedule periodic management reviews of the WHS system, focusing on plant risk management, training, maintenance, and field safety</li> <li>Implement a change management procedure to capture and integrate updates to WHS legislation, codes and standards into relevant policies and procedures</li> </ul>	2M
2. Plant Procurement, Design and Suitability for Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of lawn mowers, gang mowers, triplex reel mowers, slasher mowers and aerators that are not suitable for the specific terrain or task</li> <li>Purchase of equipment without roll-over protection structures (ROPS) or seatbelts where required for ride-on mowers</li> <li>Lack of guarding on mower blades, slasher decks, turf cutters and lawn sod cutters</li> <li>Insufficient vibration and noise control features on 4-stroke mowers, turf cutters and aerators</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a formal plant procurement procedure requiring WHS review and approval prior to purchase or hire of any mowing or turf care equipment</li> <li>Specify minimum safety standards for plant, including compliance with relevant Australian Standards, ROPS and seatbelts for ride-on and motor mowers used on slopes, and suitable blade guarding</li> <li>Establish design and suitability criteria for different terrain categories (flat, gentle slopes, steep slopes, embankments, bunkers) and match equipment (e.g. triplex reel mower vs slasher mower) accordingly</li> <li>Require suppliers to provide plant risk assessments, safe operating information, service manuals and evidence of compliance with Australian requirements before procurement</li> <li>Standardise the fleet of lawn mowers, ride-on mowers, gang mowers, aerators and turf cutters to reduce variability and improve maintainability and training consistency</li> <li>Ensure all new plant includes engineered controls for noise, vibration, emergency stop, dead-man controls and guarding to minimise exposure at source</li> </ul>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of non-compliant imported plant with inadequate safety documentation or labelling</li> <li>Incompatibility between towing equipment (e.g. gang mowers, ball collectors) and towing vehicles or ride-on mowers</li> <li>Inadequate safety controls on greens maintenance equipment and sand bunker maintenance machinery</li> <li>Lack of integrated emergency stop features or dead-man controls on powered lawn and turf care plant</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a pre-acceptance inspection checklist for new or hired plant, completed by a competent person before the equipment is released for operational use</li> <li>Maintain a register of all lawn and turf plant detailing rated capacities, slope limitations, compatible attachments and authorised uses</li> </ul>	
3. Plant Registration, Risk Management and Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No central register of lawn mowing and turf care plant, leading to loss of control over inspections and maintenance</li> <li>Outdated or missing plant risk assessments for older ride-on mowers, slasher mowers and aerators</li> <li>Failure to identify specific risks for steep slope mowing, gentle slope mowing and mowing near pedestrians</li> <li>Inadequate documentation of safe operating limits for gang mowers, triplex reel mowers and turf cutters</li> <li>Lack of information about residual risks, necessary training and PPE for each type of equipment</li> <li>No system to track modifications or attachments that alter the risk profile of plant</li> <li>Inconsistent or absent SWMS and risk assessments for higher-risk activities such as land clearing, steep slope mowing and operating slashers</li> </ul>	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain a plant register for all lawn mowing and turf care equipment including identification numbers, locations, risk ratings and inspection schedules</li> <li>Complete and periodically review formal plant risk assessments for each category of plant (e.g. walk-behind mower, ride-on mower, gang mower, aerator, turf cutter, slasher mower, ball collector)</li> <li>Document and communicate safe operating limits, including maximum slope gradients, towing capacities and conditions where specific plant must not be used</li> <li>Develop standardised WHS risk assessment templates for system-level risks and ensure separate SWMS exist for high-risk construction work (e.g. land clearing near traffic, steep embankments, work near public roads)</li> <li>Ensure plant risk assessments capture hazards related to bystanders, projectiles, noise, vibration, ergonomics, and maintenance tasks such as mower blade changes and repairs</li> <li>Implement a formal process for approving and recording any plant modifications or additional attachments (e.g. ball collectors, turf cutters, aerators) and updating risk assessments</li> <li>Store all plant documentation (manuals, risk assessments, SWMS, inspection records) in an accessible digital system and ensure workers and supervisors know how to access it</li> </ul>	1L
4. Preventative Maintenance, Inspection and Repair Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate planned maintenance for motor mowers, ride-on mowers, gang mowers, slasher mowers and aerators</li> <li>Failure to detect worn or damaged blades, belts, guards and safety switches on mowing equipment</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncontrolled defects leading to mechanical failure during steep slope mowing, land clearing or turf restoration work</li> <li>• Informal servicing of greens maintenance equipment, ball collectors and turf cutters with no records or quality checks</li> <li>• Use of equipment with known defects due to production pressure or lack of a lock-out/tag-out system</li> <li>• Poorly managed repair work on ride-on mowers and sports field equipment resulting in non-standard, unsafe configurations</li> <li>• Lack of specific maintenance schedules for seasonal equipment such as lawn scarifiers, lawn top-dressing machines and seeding equipment</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
5. Training, Competency and Authorisation of Operators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operators using ride-on mowers, gang mowers, slasher mowers, triplex reel mowers without formal competency assessment</li> <li>• Inadequate training on steep slope mowing, gentle slope mowing and terrain risk assessment</li> <li>• Lack of instruction on safe use and use of aerators, turf cutters, lawn scarifiers, lawn top-dressing and bunker maintenance equipment</li> <li>• No verification of competency for contractors engaged for lawn mowing, land clearing or turf restoration</li> <li>• Poor understanding of hazards when mowing or grass cutting near pedestrians or public areas</li> <li>• Failure to train workers in plant pre-start inspections, defect reporting and emergency response</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No refresher or corrective training following incidents, near misses or introduction of new plant</li> </ul>			
6. Supervision, Work Planning and Scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient supervision of new or inexperienced operators during lawn mowing and turf maintenance activities</li> <li>Poor planning of mowing routes and patterns around sports fields, bunkers, greens and public access ways</li> <li>Failure to plan turf care tasks (e.g. aeration, scarifying, top-dressing, seeding) around weather, ground conditions and game schedules</li> <li>Rushing of tasks due to unrealistic timeframes, leading to shortcuts and bypassing of safety controls</li> <li>No supervisor oversight for higher-risk work such as steep slope mowing, land clearing or operating slasher mowers</li> <li>Lack of job allocation processes that consider operator competency, fatigue and environmental conditions</li> <li>Inadequate coordination when multiple pieces of plant operate simultaneously in confined sports fields or park areas</li> </ul>	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	1L
7. Site Assessment, Traffic Management and Public Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal site risk assessments before mowing or turf care near pedestrians, vehicles or residential areas</li> <li>Inadequate exclusion zones when grass cutting near pedestrians, sports participants or spectators</li> <li>Uncontrolled interaction between turf equipment and public traffic in parks, schools, golf courses or road verges</li> <li>Lack of signage and barriers around active mowing, slasher or aeration work areas</li> <li>Unplanned work near utilities, open drains, water hazards or unstable ground on sports fields and landscaped areas</li> </ul>	4A	<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>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient liaison with facility owners about event schedules, public access times and high-use periods</li> <li>Unmanaged risks when disposing of green waste at transfer stations or composting facilities with mixed vehicle movements</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
8. Terrain, Slope and Environmental Condition Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to assess and document safe operating slope limits for ride-on mowers and gang mowers</li> <li>Uncontrolled steep slope mowing leading to roll-over or loss of control incidents</li> <li>Use of inappropriate equipment on wet, unstable or uneven ground during turf restoration or sports field maintenance</li> <li>No system for classifying slopes (steep vs gentle) and allocating suitable plant and operators</li> <li>Inadequate controls for work near water hazards, bunkers, ditches and retaining walls</li> <li>Lack of procedure to cease operations in high wind, storms, extreme heat or low-visibility conditions</li> <li>Erosion and ground instability caused by repetitive mowing and turf equipment use not considered in plan</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Hazardous Energy, Guarding and Blade Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to moving blades, reels, belts and PTOs due to inadequate guarding on lawn mowers, slasher mowers and turf cutters</li> <li>Uncontrolled release of stored energy during mower blade change, repair or maintenance of turf equipment</li> <li>Bypassing or defeating safety interlocks and dead-man controls on motor mowers and ride-on mowers</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate systems for isolation and verification before cleaning, clearing blockages or performing maintenance</li> <li>Use of incorrect, worn or unbalanced blades leading to vibration, mechanical failure or projectiles</li> <li>Lack of procedures for safe handling, storage and disposal of used or damaged blades and cutting components</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
10. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Whole-Body Vibration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive pushing, pulling and manoeuvring of walk-behind mowers, lawn scarifiers and turf cutters</li> <li>Awkward postures during maintenance of mowers, blade changes and repairs to riding lawn mowers</li> <li>Prolonged exposure to whole-body vibration when operating ride-on mowers, gang mowers and aerators</li> <li>Manual loading and unloading of turf equipment, lawn scarifiers and aerators from trailers and vehicles</li> <li>Inadequate consideration of operator size, reach and posture when procuring equipment and setting controls</li> <li>Cumulative musculoskeletal strain for workers performing seeding, top-dressing and sand bunker maintenance repetitively</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	1L
11. Noise, Dust, Chemicals and Environmental Exposures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excessive noise exposure from motor mowers, ride-on mowers, slasher mowers, turf cutters and aerators</li> <li>Exposure to exhaust fumes and dust during mowing, scarifying, top-dressing and land clearing</li> <li>Inhalation of organic dusts, pollens and moulds when handling green waste or undertaking turf restoration</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to fertilisers, herbicides and top-dressing materials used in sports field and greens maintenance without adequate controls</li> <li>Lack of consideration of environmental conditions such as UV radiation, heat stress and dehydration for outdoor turf workers</li> <li>Inadequate systems for disposal of green waste leading to pest, odour or environmental contamination risks</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
12. Fuel, Fire and Hazardous Substances Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improper storage and handling of petrol, diesel and oils for lawn mowers and turf equipment</li> <li>Refuelling of hot equipment without controls, leading to fire or burn risks</li> <li>Use of unlabelled or incompatible containers for fuel and lubricants</li> <li>Inadequate spill response systems for fuel and oil leaks during maintenance or refuelling</li> <li>Lack of fire protection measures in workshops, storage sheds and green waste areas</li> <li>No system to control ignition sources in areas where dry grass, green waste and fuel vapours may accumulate</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	1L
13. Contractor, Labour-Hire and Third-Party Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contractors performing lawn mowing, land clearing, turf restoration or sports field maintenance without equivalent WHS controls</li> <li>Labour-hire workers used on ride-on mowers or slasher mowers without adequate induction or competency verification</li> <li>Poor coordination between principal and subcontractors leading to</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>overlapping work areas and uncontrolled risks</li> <li>Inconsistent incident reporting and investigation processes across contractors and principal organisations</li> <li>Failure to verify maintenance and inspection standards for contractor-supplied plant and equipment</li> <li>Commercial pressures on contractors resulting in unsafe work practices or use of defective plant</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
14. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Management and First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of emergency procedures for mower roll-over, plant entanglement, blade contact or public impact incidents</li> <li>Insufficient first aid coverage for dispersed turf maintenance crews and remote sports field locations</li> <li>No established process for rescue from slopes, water hazards or bunkers in the event of plant overturn or operator incapacitation</li> <li>Delayed emergency response due to poor communication systems between field crews and supervisors</li> <li>Under-reporting of near misses, minor injuries and plant damage hindering learning and prevention</li> <li>Inadequate incident investigation processes to identify root causes and implement system-level improvements</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
15. Health Monitoring, Fatigue and Fitness for Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers operating turf and mowing equipment while fatigued, distracted or unfit for work</li> <li>Unmanaged health conditions (e.g. musculoskeletal issues, heat sensitivity) adversely affecting safe plant operation</li> <li>Long shifts, early starts and consecutive days of high-intensity</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<p>outdoor work during peak mowing and sports field seasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient systems for managing alcohol and other drugs (AOD) risks among mowing and turf crews</li> <li>• Lack of health monitoring for workers exposed to high noise, vibration, dust or chemicals in turf maintenance activities</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
16. Information, Consultation and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers uninformed about changes to equipment, procedures or site conditions affecting mowing and turf care safety</li> <li>• Limited worker participation in identifying hazards and developing control measures for turf operations</li> <li>• No systematic process for learning from incidents, audits or industry guidance relevant to mowing and sports field maintenance</li> <li>• Inconsistent communication of WHS expectations to contractors, labour, staff and seasonal workers</li> <li>• Failure to review and improve WHS systems as operations expand to new turf restoration or land clearing activities</li> </ul>	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>

**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.