Loading Unloading Trucks and Loading Dock Safety

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:

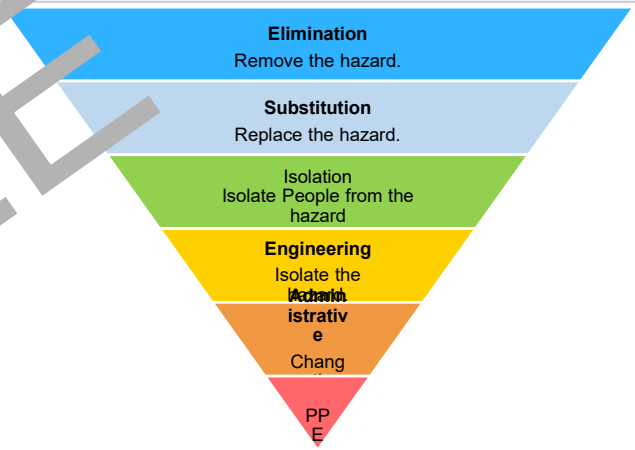
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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. Governance, WHS Duty of Care and Contractor Management	• Lack of clear allocation of WHS responsibilities for loading, unloading and loading dock interfaces • Inadequate consideration of primary duty of care under WHS Act 2011 for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) • Poor coordination of shared duties between host employer, transport companies, labour hire providers and third-party sites • Inadequate WHS clauses in contracts with carriers, suppliers and warehouse providers • Failure to consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with other PCBUs at shared loading docks and third-party premises • Insufficient monitoring of contractor performance against agreed WHS standards for loading/unloading activiti	4A	• Establish a documented WHS governance framework outlining roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for all parties involved in transport, loading, unloading and dock operations, in line with WHS Act 2011 • Include explicit WHS obligations, minimum standards and right of entry for audits in contracts with transport providers, freight forwarders, warehouse operators and host sites • Develop and implement a formal PCBU consultation, cooperation and coordination procedure for all locations with shared loading docks or third-party operations • Implement a pre-qualification process for contractors that assesses safety management systems, incident history and compliance with relevant Australian codes of practice and standards • Schedule regular contractor performance reviews including lead indicators (e.g. training completion, audits, inspection outcomes) and lag indicators (e.g. incidents, near misses) • Require documented site-specific safety information exchange (e.g. traffic plans, dock rules, induction requirements) before engaging new carriers or using new third-party sites • Ensure board and senior management receive periodic WHS reports specifically addressing loading, unloading and loading dock risks	3H
2. Traffic Management and Site Access (Including Third-Party Sites)	• Absence of a documented traffic management plan for loading docks, yards and worksites • Uncontrolled interaction between mobile plant, forklifts, pedestrians and trucks • Poor coordination of truck movements at third-party sites and customer premises • Inadequate controls for reversing, blind spots, and congested docking areas • Lack of designated safe pedestrian walkways and exclusion zones around loading/unloading areas • Inconsistent visitor and driver access controls at different sites • Insufficient consideration of seasonal or peak-period traffic volumes (e.g. during harvest, construction peaks or retail peaks)	4A	• Develop and implement site-specific traffic management plans for all depots, warehouses, loading docks and regular third-party sites, aligned with relevant Safe Work Australia guidance material • Use line marking, signage, bollards and physical barriers to separate pedestrian routes from vehicle and forklift operating zones • Implement standardised requirements for all third-party sites used regularly (e.g. documented traffic flow plans, designated marshalling areas, and reversing controls) • Adopt a hierarchy of controls for reversing including one-way systems, drive-through loading where practicable, and reversing cameras and sensors specified in procurement standards • Require formal traffic management risk assessments before introducing new loading dock layouts, temporary works or changes to site access • Establish driver check-in and gatehouse procedures that control entry, issue instructions and communicate site-specific traffic risks • Conduct periodic traffic management audits (including at key third-party sites) to verify that controls remain effective and are being followed	2M

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3. Loading Dock and Bay Design, Engineering and Maintenance	• Poorly designed loading docks with inadequate edge protection, lighting or fall prevention • Incompatible dock heights, ramps or levellers leading to unsafe manual handling or unstable loading conditions • Lack of physical separation between loading docks and public areas, roadways or other work zones • Inadequate maintenance of dock levellers, restraints, bumpers, dock plates and dock shelters • Insufficient capacity or structural integrity of ramps and temporary bridging devices (e.g. for flat-bed transport, lorries and utes) • Absence of fixed guarding or barriers at dock edges when no vehicle is present • Poor design consideration for refrigerated goods docks (condensatio slip hazards, temperature gradients)	4A	• Apply recognised engineering standards an ustralian codes when designing, upgrading or leasing loading docks, including structural capacity d fall prev on requirements • Specify minimum design criteria for dock hei patibility, dock levellers, dock plates and vehicle restraint systems across the transport fleet • Install fixed barriers, guardra or swing gates at k e s, with interlocks where reasonably practicable, to prevent falls whe o vehicle is prese • Integrate dock ting, a slip su cing, drai ge and housekeeping features into design specification ncluding co ols for d dens on in refrigerated areas • Impl ent a p ned p entive maint nance program for all dock engineering controls, ramps, levellers and r ints wi ection records retained • Ensu ra p depl g systems are engineered with rated capacities, positive locking mechanisms and docume ted fe ope ing envelopes • Include ading dock design reviews in pre-lease, refurbishment and capital project processes, with W inp at con ept design stage	2M
4. Vehicle and Trailer Selection, Configuration and Maintenance	• Use of unsuitable ve e or trailer types for the load, te or dock configuration (e.g. appropriate for timber packs, palle or re rate goods) • Inadequate maintenance system leading to brake failures, ti ults, tailgate issues or restraint point failures • Lack of standardisation in vehicle safety features (e.g. side guards, fall prevention, access systems) • Insufficient design for safe loading/unloading of flat-bed transport and curtain-siders • Refrigerated vehicles with inadequate temperature control monitoring or door seal integrity • Poorly positioned anchorage points making it difficult to secure loads correctly	4A	[redacted]	2M

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			[redacted]	
5. Load Planning, Load Restraint Systems and Stability Management	• Inadequate systems for planning load distribution and centre of gravity, particularly for heavy materials, long loads and timber • Poor load restraint practices due to lack of standardised procedures and equipment • Overloading or uneven loading of trucks, flat-beds or lorries leading to instability during loading/unloading or transit • Use of incompatible or poorly maintained load restraint equipment (chains, straps, gates, curtains, dunnage) • Insufficient control of mixed loads (e.g. combining timber, palletised goods an loose items) resulting in load shift • Failure to consider specific requirements for refriger oods (e.g airflow, stacking, loa spreaders)	4A	[redacted]	2M
6. Systems for Loading and Unloading at Third-Party Sites and Customer Premises	• Lack of visibility ov S standar at third-party loading docks and customer worksites • Inconsistent rules for who controls the loading/unloading operation (driver vs host site vs subcontractor) • Poor communication of site-specific hazards, ground conditions and traffic controls to drivers before arrival • Insufficient verification that host sites have safe systems for operating forklifts, cranes, ramps and dock equipment • Drivers being pressured to load/unload in unsafe areas (e.g. on public roads, uneven ground, non-designated zones)	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• Inadequate management of language barriers or literacy issues with site personnel at third-party locations		[redacted]	
7. Use of Mechanical Aids, Forklifts, Cranes and Dock Equipment	• Uncoordinated operation of forklifts, reach trucks, cranes and pallet jacks within loading docks and around trucks • Inadequate systems to ensure operators are competent, licensed and authorised for specific equipment • Poor maintenance or inspection regimes for forklifts, lifting gear, dock levellers, tailgate loaders and ramps • Lack of standard procedures for operating mechanical aids on uneven, sloped or wet surfaces • Inconsistent rules for who operates equipment at customer or third-party sites (driver vs site operator) • Failure to manage exclusion zones a[redacted] communication between operators and drivers during loading/unloading	4A	[redacted]	2M
8. Work at Height, Falls from Vehicles and Dock Edges	• Workers climbing[redacted]n truck de[redacted] flat-beds, loads or [redacted] with[redacted] fall prevention systems • Inadequate access systems (ste[redacted], ladders, handrails) to tru[redacted], mezzanine docks or loading platforms • Inconsistent controls for work on top of loads (e.g. tarping timber, inspecting stacked materials) • Unprotected fall edges at loading docks, ramps and raised storage areas • Poor control of slip and trip hazards on vehicle decks and dock surfaces • Lack of safe systems for securing or releasing load restraints at height	4A	[redacted]	2M

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			[redacted]	
9. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Use of Handling Aids	• Excessive manual handling of materials during loading and unloading, especially loose goods, timber and irregular loads • Inadequate availability of mechanical handling aids or poor planning of palletisation and packaging • Awkward postures and repetitive tasks when securing loads, operating curtains or deploying ramps • Poor systems for handling damaged or shifted loads that cannot be safely managed with standard equipment • Insufficient design consideration of packaging, pallet configuration and unit load sizes • Inadequate training on manual handling risks specific to loading docks and truck bodies	3H	[redacted]	2M
10. Fatigue, Scheduling, Workload and Chain of Responsibility	• Unrealistic loading and unloading schedules resulting in time pressure and rushed work • Inadequate systems to manage driver and loader fatigue, especially for early morning dock operations or extended shifts • Poor coordination of booking times at loading docks leading to queuing, delays and pressure to take shortcuts • Incentive structures that unintentionally reward unsafe loading/unloading behaviours (e.g. payment per load, demurrage penalties) • Failure to integrate Chain of Responsibility (CoR) obligations into planning, scheduling and site procedures	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• Insufficient communication between dispatch, warehouse and site managers about realistic loading/unloading times			
11. Communication, Training, Induction and Competency Management	• Lack of structured training for workers and drivers involved in loading/unloading and loading dock operations • Inconsistent induction content between company sites, third-party warehouses and customer premises • Poor communication of changes to dock layouts, procedures or equipment • Inadequate verification of competency for key tasks such as load planning, load restraint and dock supervision • Failure to address literacy, language and learning style differences in training materials • No defined refresher training schedul or competency reassessment process	3H	[redacted]	2M
12. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Response at Loading Docks	• Inadequate emergenc nse planning for incident nvolving trucks, docks, ramps or lo ing equipment • Poor coordinatio CBU during emergencies at shared or third-party loading sites • Lack of suitable emerg ipment (spill kits, first aid, eyewash, fire equipment) in loading dock and yard areas • Insufficient training and drills for scenarios such as vehicle roll-away, load collapse, falls from heights or refrigeration failure • Inadequate communication systems for summoning assistance in remote or low-staff dock locations • Failure to capture lessons learned from incidents and near misses involving loading/unloading	3H	[redacted]	2M

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13. Refrigerated Goods Handling, Temperature Control and Product Integrity	• Inadequate procedures for loading/unloading refrigerated goods leading to temperature abuse and condensation hazards • Frequent door opening at docks without controls, causing ice build-up and slip risks on floors and ramps • Poor monitoring of cold chain integrity during loading, unloading and staging at docks • Lack of coordination between warehouse, transport and customer regarding refrigeration set points and loading times • Insufficient maintenance of refrigerated dock seals, doors and air curtains • Inadequate emergency procedures for refrigeration unit failure during loading/unloading	3H	[redacted]	2M
14. Documentation, Procedures, Permits and Change Management	• Absence of clear, accessible procedures for key loading/unloading and dock safety systems • Outdated or inconsist[redacted] documentation acr[redacted] different depots, worksites and third[redacted]party facilities • Uncontrolled varia[redacted]n proced[redacted]s due to undocumented local practices[redacted]r workarounds • Poor management of cha[redacted] (MOC) when introducing new vehicle types, dock layouts, materials or equipment • Lack of permit-to-work systems for high-risk loading/unloading activities (e.g. work at height, live traffic interface, hazardous materials) • Insufficient review of risk assessments and procedures following incidents or significant operational changes	3H	[redacted]	2M
15. Consultation, Worker Engagement and Reporting Culture	• Limited involvement of drivers, loaders and dock workers in identifying and controlling risks	3H		2M

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	• Under-reporting of near misses and hazards related to loading/unloading and docks • Perception that production and schedule pressures override safety concerns at docks and worksites • Lack of structured forums for raising site-specific issues at third-party and customer premises • Fear of reprisal for refusing unsafe work or challenging unsafe instructions from clients or contractors • Insufficient feedback loop to workers on actions taken in response to reported issues		[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