Paint Removal Stripping Heat Guns

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:

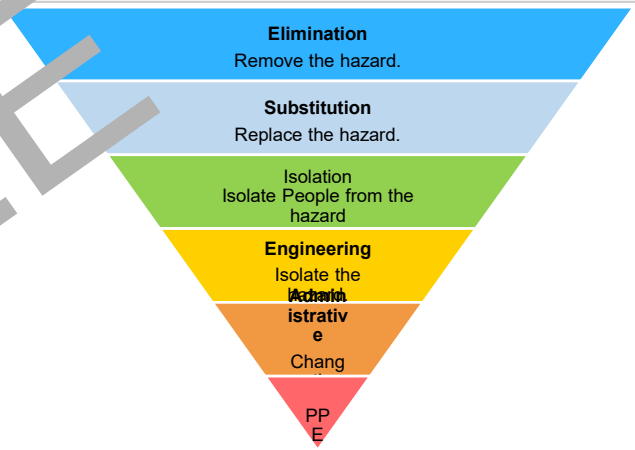
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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. WHS Governance, Legal Compliance & PCBU Due Diligence	• Lack of documented WHS management system covering paint removal and heat-gun operations • Inadequate understanding of WHS Act 2011 duties by officers and managers (PCBU due diligence failures) • No process to identify and comply with relevant WHS Regulations, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards (e.g. hazardous chemicals, airborne contaminants, electrical safety, confined spaces, asbestos, lead) • Failure to consult with workers and health and safety representatives (HSRs) on paint removal methods and controls • No formal system for regular WHS reviews, audits and management reporting specific to heat-gun and paint stripping activities	4A	• Implement a certified or structured WHS management system (e.g. ISO 45001-aligned) that explicitly includes paint removal and heat-gun activities as high-risk topics • Ensure officers exercise due diligence in line with WHS Act 2011 by obtaining up-to-date WHS knowledge, understanding specific risks of heat guns and chemical paint stripping, and verifying resources and processes are in place • Develop and maintain a legal register capturing applicable WHS legislation, regulations, Codes of Practice and relevant standards for heat guns, hazardous chemicals and legacy coatings, and review this at least annually • Establish a formal WHS consultation procedure ensuring workers and HSRs are involved in selecting paint removal methods, reviewing incidents and updating risk controls • Schedule regular management WHS reviews with key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to chemical use, airborne contaminants, heat-source management and legacy coating risks (e.g. lead, asbestos if relevant) • Include WHS compliance, incident trends and control effectiveness for paint removal in board or executive reporting processes	3H
2. Plant & Equipment Selection, Procurement and Design (Heat Guns & Accessories)	• Procurement of low-quality or non-compliant heat guns without Australian electrical approvals • Heat guns without over-temperature protection, tip guards or adjustable temperature control, increasing ignition and burn risk • Incompatible nozzles, extension leads, RCDs and accessories leading to electrical or fire hazards • Lack of standardisation of plant across sites, increasing training complexity and misuse • No formal pre-purchase risk assessment for new or higher-temperature plant and chemical stripping systems	4A	• Implement a formal plant procurement procedure requiring a documented WHS risk assessment and verification of compliance with relevant Australian electrical and safety standards before purchase • Specify heat guns with temperature control, thermal cut-outs, insulated handles, guards, lock-off switches and clear safety markings as minimum design requirements • Standardise approved makes and models of heat guns and accessories across the organisation to simplify training, maintenance and spare parts management • Ensure all electrical equipment, including heat guns and extension leads, is compatible with RCD protection and rated for the intended environment (e.g. indoors, outdoors, damp conditions) • Require supplier safety documentation (user manuals, conformity statements, test reports) to be obtained, reviewed and stored before first use • Include WHS and maintenance representatives in the assessment and approval of all new paint-stripping plant and associated chemical systems	2M
3. Hazardous Chemicals Management (Paint Strippers, Solvents,	• Inadequate identification of hazardous chemicals used for stripping (e.g. methylene chloride, caustic products, flammable solvents)	4A	• Establish and maintain a hazardous chemicals register specifically including all paint strippers, solvents and surface preparation products, with current SDS readily accessible to workers	2M

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
Lead & Legacy Coatings)	• Failure to identify hazardous constituents in existing coatings such as lead-based paint, isocyanates, chromates or asbestos-containing materials (ACM) • Absence of current Safety Data Sheets (SDS) and inaccessible chemical information at point of use • Improper decanting, labelling and storage of paint strippers leading to exposure, spills or incompatible chemical reactions • No system for classifying or segregating waste containing hazardous chemicals or heavy metals		• Implement a formal process for pre-work coating assessment (e.g. sampling, laboratory testing or use of reliable test kits) to identify lead, asbestos, isocyanates or other hazardous components in existing paint and linings • Develop and enforce procedures for decanting, labelling, storage and handling of paint stripping chemicals consistent with WHS Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice • Standardise to the least hazardous effective chemical stripping products where reasonably practicable, and document substitution decisions in the risk assessment • Establish clear waste classification, segregation and disposal procedures for solvent waste, contaminated debris and lead- or asbestos-affected waste, including licensed disposal where required • Provide worker training on reading SDS, understanding chemical health effects and following organisational chemical management procedures	
4. Thermal, Fire & Explosion Risk Management	• Use of high-temperature heat guns near combustible materials, hidden voids or flammable vapours leading to ignition or smouldering fires • Lack of pre-job assessment for nearby ignition sources, flammable finishes, dust or vapours from chemical strippers • No hot-work style permit or equivalent control for high-risk heat-gun work in sensitive environments • Inadequate fire detection, fire-fighting equipment selection and worker competence in emergency fire response • No post-work fire-watch arrangements where concealed smouldering may occur (e.g. timber cavities, linings)	4A	[redacted]	2M
5. Ventilation, Airborne Contaminants & Indoor Air Quality	• Inadequate natural or mechanical ventilation when using heat guns or chemical strippers, leading to accumulation of toxic vapours, fumes or smoke • Failure to assess airborne contaminants from heated legacy paints (e.g. lead fumes, isocyanate	4A	[redacted]	2M

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
	decomposition products) and chemical stripping agents • No engineering controls (local exhaust, extraction) where paint removal is conducted in small rooms, workshops or enclosed areas • Absence of air monitoring program for respirable dust, hazardous vapours and fumes where high-risk substrates or chemicals are used • Reliance on PPE alone due to underinvestment in ventilation and extraction systems		[redacted]	
6. Worker Competency, Training & Supervision	• Workers not trained in the specific hazards of heat-gun paint removal and chemical stripping methods • Inadequate competency in recognising signs of legacy hazardous materials (lead, asbestos, isocyanates) and escalating concerns • Lack of training in safe plant use, emergency procedures, fi[redacted]sponse and spill response • Insufficient super[redacted]sion of new starters, labour hire or cont[redacted]tors u[redacted] paint removal activiti[redacted] • Training not refreshed or verified leading to skill fade and u[redacted]safe improvisation	4A	[redacted]	2M
7. Safe Work Procedures, SWMS Integration & Work Planning	• Absence of formal safe work procedures for heat-gun use and chemical paint stripping across different environments and substrates • SWMS documents focusing only on task steps but not integrated with higher-level risk controls and management systems • Inconsistent work planning leading to ad-hoc selection of methods, chemicals and plant without proper risk assessment	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
	• Failure to review and update procedures following incidents, regulatory changes or introduction of new chemicals and equipment • Workers unaware of or not following organisational procedures due to poor communication or accessibility		[redacted]	
8. Electrical Safety, Inspection & Maintenance Systems	• Heat guns and extension leads used without regular test and tag, RCD protection or inspection, increasing electric shock and fire risk • Damaged cords, plugs or casings not identified due to lack of systematic inspection and reporting process • Use of non-rated or domestic-grade electrical equipment in industrial or construction environments • Inadequate maintenance schedules for plant, including failure of thermal cut-outs and control switches • No clear responsibility assigned for electrical safety checks, resulting in equipment remaining in service when unsafe	3H	[redacted]	1L
9. Exposure to Lead, Asbestos and Other Legacy Hazardous Materials	• Undetected lead-based paint causing in chronic lead exposure through fumes, dust and debris during heat or mechanical removal • Unrecognised asbestos-containing materials (e.g. textured coatings, old linings) disturbed during paint removal, generating respirable fibres • Failure to comply with specific legislative requirements for asbestos and lead, including licensing, notifications, clearance inspections and health monitoring • Inadequate containment and decontamination systems resulting in spread of contaminated dust to adjacent areas and home environments	4A	[redacted]	2M

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
	• No baseline or periodic health monitoring for workers with repeated potential exposure to lead or other toxic metals		[redacted]	
10. Ergonomics, Manual Handling & Work Environment Design	• Poor workstation design leading to awkward postures, prolonged static holding of heat guns and repetitive movements • Inadequate access equipment or work platforms causing overreaching, working at height or unstable footing during paint removal • Lack of planning for weight and handling of doors, panels and heavy items being stripped, increasing musculoskeletal disorder risk • Insufficient breaks and rotation arrangements for physically demanding stripping tasks • Noise, heat load and poor lighting in work areas contributing to fatigue and reduced concentration	3H	[redacted]	2M
11. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program & Respiratory Protection	• Reliance on PPE as the primary control instead of as a last line of defence within a hierarchy of controls framework • Selection of inappropriate PPE for hazards present (e.g. incorrect respirator cartridges for organic vapours or lead particulates, inadequate eye and face protection for splashes and hot debris) • No formal fit-testing, maintenance or replacement program for respirators and other critical PPE • Workers not trained in correct donning, doffing, storage and inspection of PPE, leading to false sense of protection • Inadequate organisational budget or supply chain for consistent, timely provision of required PPE	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
12. Contractor Management & Third-Party Interface	• Contracted painters, strippers or maintenance personnel working under different WHS standards without alignment to PCBU's systems • Inadequate prequalification and verification of contractor competence in heat-gun use, chemical management and legacy coatings • Poor communication of site-specific hazards, emergency arrangements and restrictions to contractors and subcontractors • Concurrent work activities (e.g. welding, hot work, confined space entry) interacting harmfully with paint stripping operations • Lack of clarity regarding roles, responsibilities and supervision between principal contractor, PCBUs and subcontractors	3H	[redacted]	2M
13. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Response & First Aid	• Unplanned fires, chemical exposures, burns or inhalation incidents with no clear on-site emergency response plan • Lack of first aid resources suitable for burns, chemical contact, inhalation and eye exposures associated with stripping • Workers unaware of procedures for spills, exposure events and potential poisoning (e.g. solvent overexposure, lead ingestion) • No processes to investigate and learn from incidents, near misses and unsafe conditions related to paint removal • Insufficient liaison with emergency services and neighbouring businesses where work may affect shared environments	3H	[redacted]	1L
14. Health Surveillance, Hygiene & Welfare Facilities	• Chronic health effects from repeated low-level exposure to solvents, lead or other hazardous substances used or released during paint stripping	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
	• Inadequate washing, change and eating facilities contributing to ingestion or cross-contamination of hazardous residues • Workers not informed about early signs and symptoms of overexposure (e.g. solvent narcosis, lead effects, respiratory irritation) • No systematic health surveillance where required by legislation or risk assessment outcomes • Poor management of personal clothing, contaminated PPE and tools leading to spread of contaminants to vehicles and homes		[redacted]	
15. Monitoring, Audit, Consultation & Continuous Improvement	• Risk controls for heat-gun and chemical paint removal degrading over time without detection • Lack of structured inspections, audits or performance indicators specific to paint stripping activities • Worker concerns about fumes, symptoms or unsafe conditions not systematically captured or addressed • Changes in product, plant, or work methods introduced without review of WHS implications • Failure to learn from industry incidents or regulatory alerts relating to heat guns, solvents or legacy coatings	3H	[redacted]	2M

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