

**Plastering Stilts and High Level Access**

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.	Administrative 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. WHS Governance, Policies and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of a documented WHS policy addressing high level access and plastering stilts</li> <li>Failure to align business procedures with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations (e.g. falls, plant, construction work)</li> <li>Lack of documented roles, responsibilities and authorities for managing high level access risks</li> <li>No formal consultation mechanisms with workers about stilt use and high ceiling work</li> <li>Inadequate review of incidents and near misses leading to repeated systemic failures</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a WHS policy that specifically references high risk construction work, working at height, and the use of plastering stilts and other elevated access systems</li> <li>Ensure management systems are aligned with WHS Act 2011 and relevant WHS Regulations, Codes of Practice (e.g. Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplaces) and Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 1576 scaffolding, AS 1892 ladders)</li> <li>Define and document PCB officer, manager, supervisor and worker responsibilities for planning, authorising and monitoring high level access activities</li> <li>Establish formal consultation processes (toolbox talks, HSR forums, safety committees) to discuss issues related to stilts, high ceilings, taping and spotting and high drywall installation</li> <li>Implement a documented management change procedure to control introduction of new access methods, new stilt types or new high ceiling techniques</li> <li>Conduct periodic WHS system audits and management reviews to confirm compliance, close out actions and drive continuous improvement</li> </ul>	3H
2. Design, Planning and Work Method Selection for High Level Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate pre-planning of ceiling heights, access needs and work duration</li> <li>Default reliance on stilts where safer access methods (e.g. mobile scaffolds, elevated work platforms) are reasonably practicable</li> <li>Poorly designed work sequences leading to excessive movement on stilts or awkward reaches over obstacles</li> <li>Failure to consider different tasks (taping, spotting, repairs, installation) and match them with the most appropriate access system</li> <li>Inadequate consideration of interaction between trades in congested overhead work areas</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a formal high level access planning process that assesses ceiling height, surface condition, work duration, and frequency prior to choosing stilts</li> <li>Adopt a risk-based hierarchy of control requiring justification and documented risk assessment where stilts are selected over scaffold or EWP solutions</li> <li>Develop standard planning templates for high ceiling plaster repairs, taping and spotting, and high drywall ceilings that specify preferred access systems and limitations on stilt use</li> <li>Require competent supervisors to review and approve work methods for each project, including traffic routes, exclusion zones and storage locations for access equipment</li> <li>Integrate high level access planning into the broader construction staging plan to avoid simultaneous incompatible activities under the same ceiling area</li> <li>Ensure designs of ceiling layouts and services (e.g. lighting, ducting) consider constructability and access requirements to reduce the need for extended stilt work</li> </ul>	2M
3. Procurement and Specification of Plastering Stilts and Access Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase of non-compliant or poor quality stilts that are not fit for purpose</li> <li>Inconsistent brands and models leading to incompatible spare parts and maintenance issues</li> <li>Lack of engineering verification for load ratings and adjustment mechanisms</li> </ul>	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a procurement standard specifying minimum design, quality and safety requirements for plastering stilts and high level access equipment</li> <li>Source stilts only from reputable suppliers who provide documentation on load ratings, user instructions and compliance with relevant Australian or international standards</li> <li>Standardise on a limited range of approved stilt models and heights to improve familiarity, training effectiveness and spare parts management</li> </ul>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement decisions based solely on cost rather than safety and ergonomics</li> <li>• No traceability of equipment, serial numbers or compliance documentation</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include ergonomic considerations (weight, adjustability, foot support, ankle support) in procurement evaluation criteria</li> <li>• Maintain an asset register for all stilts and major access equipment including serial numbers, purchase dates, inspection history and decommissioning records</li> <li>• Require supplier-provided technical data, user manuals and safety information to be incorporated into internal procedures and training materials</li> </ul>	
4. Inspection, Maintenance and Asset Management of Stilts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stilt component failure due to lack of inspections or maintenance (e.g. straps, fasteners, springs, locking pins)</li> <li>• Use of damaged, modified or poorly repaired stilts in high ceiling areas</li> <li>• No schedule for periodic thorough inspections by a competent person</li> <li>• Inadequate quarantine system for suspected defective stilts</li> <li>• Absence of records to demonstrate maintenance history and fitness for use</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
5. Worker Competency, Licensing and Training for Stilts and High Level Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers using stilts without adequate initial training or verification of competency</li> <li>• Lack of specific instruction on safe body positioning, balance and movement on stilts during overhead plastering tasks</li> <li>• Supervisors unable to recognise unsafe stilt use or early signs of fatigue or imbalance</li> <li>• No refresher training program leading to skill fade and poor practices becoming normalised</li> <li>• Insufficient induction for labour hire workers or subcontractors who use different techniques or equipment</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>	2M
6. Fitness for Work, Health Monitoring and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers with pre-existing musculoskeletal or balance issues using stilts without medical clearance</li> </ul>	3H		2M

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Ergonomic Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatigue and reduced concentration during prolonged high level taping, spotting and drywall installation</li> <li>Cumulative strain injuries from repetitive overhead work while elevated</li> <li>Inadequate systems for managing heat stress, dehydration or medication impacts on balance</li> <li>No process for workers to confidentially report health concerns affecting stilt work</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
7. Site Layout, Housekeeping and Floor Condition Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven, slippery or cluttered floors increasing fall risk for workers on stilts</li> <li>Inadequate control of offcuts, plaster droppings, cords and hoses in stilt travel paths</li> <li>Changes in floor level, ramps or penetrations not identified or flagged in advance</li> <li>Poor lighting in high working areas reducing visibility of trip hazards</li> <li>Congested workspaces where materials, trolleys and plant obstruct safe movement on stilts</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Traffic Management, Exclusion Zones and Interaction with Other Trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collision between stilt users and mobile plant, trolleys or other workers</li> <li>Simultaneous overhead work by multiple trades leading to dropped object or entanglement risks</li> <li>Unauthorised persons entering stilt work zones and distracting or obstructing workers</li> <li>Movement of ladders, scaffolds or materials under or near stilt users</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor coordination of high level ceiling tasks with other ceiling services installation</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
9. Work at Height Risk Management and Fall Prevention Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System-level failure to identify stilt work as a form of work at height with specific fall risks</li> <li>No documented approach for selecting between stilts, scaffolds, platforms and EWP's for high ceilings</li> <li>Lack of engineered edge protection or fall restraint systems where stilts are used near voids, stairs or balcony edges</li> <li>Inadequate control of work over fragile surfaces or incomplete flooring</li> <li>Failure to consider rescue and retrieval options in the event of a fall or medical episode at height</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Task Design, Workload Management and Time Pressures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unrealistic productivity targets driving unsafe speed, shortcuts and overreliance on stilt</li> <li>Extended periods of continuous overhead work for taping, spotting and sanding high ceilings</li> <li>Inadequate planning of breaks, leading to fatigue and diminished balance or concentration</li> <li>Rushing tasks to meet deadlines, increasing risk of missteps or overreaching on stilts</li> <li>Lack of consultation with workers when programming complex or high workload ceiling activities</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Subcontractor and Labour Hire Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subcontractors using their own stilts and methods that do not meet principal contractor standards</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent training and competency verification for external workers performing high ceiling plaster works</li> <li>Lack of clarity around who controls and supervises subcontractors in shared work areas</li> <li>Inadequate integration of subcontractor SWMS and risk assessments into site-level WHS systems</li> <li>Commercial arrangements that incentivise speed over safe access methods</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
12. Information, Communication and Documentation Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers unaware of current procedures, limitations and rules for stilt use and high ceiling tasks</li> <li>Outdated or conflicting documents (SWMS, risk assessments, manufacturer manuals) in circulation on site</li> <li>Inadequate signage and visual cues in high risk areas and restricted stilt use zones</li> <li>Poor reporting of near misses and hazards related to high level access</li> <li>Language and literacy barriers preventing full understanding of requirements</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
13. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Response and First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of specific emergency procedures for incidents involving stilts or high ceiling work</li> <li>Delayed medical response due to unclear access routes or lack of trained first aiders in ceiling work areas</li> <li>No rehearsal of response to falls, entrapments or sudden illness while on stilts</li> <li>Inadequate incident investigation methods that fail to identify systemic causes related to high level access</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient emergency equipment positioned near high risk work zones</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
14. Monitoring, Auditing and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure to detect gradual drift from safe systems of work for high level access</li> <li>Infrequent or superficial safety inspections that overlook systemic issues</li> <li>Lack of performance indicators specific to still and high ceiling plastering risks</li> <li>No structured mechanism to capture and act on worker feedback about access systems</li> <li>Complacency following periods without reported incidents</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

SAMPLE

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE – CALL 000 FOR EMERGENCIES**

Ensure to have an Emergency Management Plan in place as well as adequate numbers of trained first aid staff with easy access to fully stocked first aid kits, rescue equipment, material safety data sheets, adequate access to emergency communication equipment and fire-fighting equipment suitable for all classes of fire and ignition sources.

**LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES**

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND CODES OF PRACTICE. DELETE THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCES FOR ANY STATE THAT ARE NOT APPLICABLE

**Queensland & Australian Capital Territory**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011  
 Legislation QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/work-health-and-safety-laws>  
 Codes of Practice QLD: <https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>  
 Legislation ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice ACT: <https://www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

**Victoria**

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004  
 Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017  
 Legislation VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice VIC: <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/compliance-codes-and-codes-practice>

**New South Wales**

Work Health and Safety Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2025  
 Legislation NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list-codes-of-practice>

**Western Australia**

Work Health and Safety Act 2020  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022  
 Legislation Western Australia: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice WA: <https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe/codes-practice>

**Northern Territory**

Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011  
 Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Regulation 2011  
 Legislation NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws>  
 Codes of Practice NT: <https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

**Safe Work Australia Links**

Law and Regulation (All States): <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/law-and-regulation>  
 Model Codes of Practice: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/resources-publications/model-codes-of-practice>

**South Australia**

Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)  
 Legislation for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/resources/legislation>  
 Codes of Practice for SA: <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/codes-of-practice#COPs>

**Model Codes of Practice**

- Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work
- Confined spaces
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals
- Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace
- Welding processes
- First aid in the workplace
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Hazardous manual tasks
- Managing the risk of falls in housing construction
- Managing electrical risks in the workplace
- Demolition work
- Excavation work
- Work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination
- Managing the work environment and facilities
- How to manage work health and safety risks
- Managing risks of plant in the workplace
- Construction work

**Tasmania**

Work Health and Safety Act 2012  
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional and Consequential Provisions) Act 2012  
 Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012  
 Work Health and Safety (Transitional) Regulations 2012  
 Legislation for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>  
 Codes of Practice for TAS: <https://worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/codes-of-practice>

Details of permits, licenses or access required by regulatory bodies (add or delete as required):

- Permits from local council
- Authorisation to commence work
- Any required documents.