

Polishing Safety

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, Duties and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of WHS responsibilities for polishing operations under WHS Act 2011 Inadequate consultation with workers undertaking buffing, burnishing and polishing tasks Failure to involve Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) in reviewing polishing safety issues Poor integration of polishing activities into the organisation's WHS management system Inadequate oversight of contractors conducting marble polishing or metal buffing work Failure to review WHS performance metrics specific to polishing operations (injuries, near misses, exposures) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and document a WHS governance structure that assigns PCBUs, Officers and supervisors clear duties for all polishing and buffing activities in line with WHS Act 2011 Implement a formal WHS consultation procedure to ensure workers performing polishing, rubbing finishing compounds and burnishing tasks are regularly engaged on safety matters Ensure HSRs are elected where required and included in risk assessment, incident review and change management processes related to polishing activities Integrate polishing safety into the organisation's WHS policy, objectives and annual WHS plan, including targets for exposure reduction, housekeeping and incident reporting Develop a contractor management procedure that requires evidence of WHS competence, training and risk assessments for contract companies carrying out marble polishing, metal buffing or painted surface polishing Conduct periodic WHS audits and management reviews that include evaluation of polishing-specific hazards, control effectiveness and compliance with WHS legislation and relevant Codes of Practice 	3H
2. Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete identification of hazards associated with buffing wheels, burnishing machines and industrial-grade marble polishers Failure to consider cumulative risks from noise, vibration, dust, chemicals and manual handling across multiple polishing tasks No formal risk assessment for new or modified polishing processes, machinery, or finishing compounds Inadequate review of manufacturer's instructions and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) when introducing new buffing compounds or polishing equipment Failure to update risk assessments following incidents, near misses or plant modifications Inconsistent participation of frontline polishing workers in the risk assessment process 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a documented WHS risk management procedure requiring formal risk assessments for all polishing, buffing, burnishing and rubbing finishing compound activities Use a standardised risk assessment tool that considers interaction of multiple hazards such as airborne contaminants, noise, rotating machinery, electrical risks and slips from polishing residues Require formal Management of Change (MOC) reviews prior to purchasing or commissioning new metal buffing wheels, marble polishers, polishing counters or chemical compounds Ensure risk assessments reference current Australian Standards, Safe Work Australia guidance and supplier manuals for polishing equipment and products Include supervisors, HSRs and experienced polishing operators in all significant risk assessments and MOC reviews Establish a scheduled review cycle (e.g. annually or after incidents) to update polishing risk assessments and communicate changes to affected workers 	2M

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3. Plant and Equipment Design, Guarding and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate guarding or design of metal buffing wheels and rotating polishing equipment leading to entanglement or contact with moving parts Use of non-compliant or modified industrial-grade marble polishing machines without appropriate engineering verification Poorly maintained polishing machines causing vibration, imbalance or mechanical failure Lack of systems for inspection of power tools, extension leads and portable RCDs used in polishing tasks Inappropriate selection of pads, wheels or attachments for the surface being polished (e.g. painted surfaces vs stone or metal) leading to tool failure Use of counterfeit or sub-standard polishing components without traceability or conformity assessment 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and enforce a plant and equipment standard for all buffing, polishing, burnishing and grinding equipment in line with WHS Regulations and relevant Australian Standards Ensure all polishing machines and metal buffing wheels are supplied with appropriate guarding, emergency stops, interlocks and labels as specified by the manufacturer and verified during commissioning Implement a planned preventive maintenance and inspection program for polishing machinery, including documented schedules, checklists and competent maintenance personnel Introduce a pre-use inspection system for polishing tools and accessories (pads, wheels, backing plates) with clear criteria for removal from service and tagging out defective equipment Maintain an equipment register that includes serial numbers, service history, and confirmation of electrical testing and tagging for all powered polishing equipment Prohibit unauthorised modifications to polishing plant and accessories, with any engineering changes subject to risk assessment and competent approval 	2M
4. Chemical Safety and Finishing Compounds Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate identification and labelling of polishing and finishing compounds, including solvents, dyes, abrasives and metal polishes Absence of current SDS for buffing compounds, metal polishing pastes and marble polishing chemicals Use of compounds containing hazardous substances (e.g. flammable solvents, silica, corrosives) without appropriate controls Poor storage and segregation of incompatible polishing chemicals leading to fire or release risks Inadequate systems for decanting, handling and disposing of polishing residues and waste Failure to control fumes and vapours from heated buffing processes or solvent-based compounds 	4A	<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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5. Airborne Contaminants, Dust and Fume Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of fine dust from buffing and polishing metal, stone, marble and painted surfaces leading to respiratory exposure • Inhalation of fumes, vapours or mist from heated polishing operations and solvent-based finishing compounds • Inadequate general or local exhaust ventilation in indoor polishing areas, booths or counters • Accumulation of combustible metal dust in polishing areas and extraction systems creating fire or explosion risk • Failure to conduct exposure monitoring where dusts or fumes of concern (e.g. respirable crystalline silica, metal oxides) may be present • Reliance on PPE alone without higher-order controls for airborne contaminants 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Noise and Vibration Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged exposure to high noise levels from industrial buffing and polishing machines exceeding exposure standards • Hand-arm vibration from prolonged use of portable polishers and finishing tools • Lack of baseline and periodic noise surveys in polishing work • Inadequate maintenance of equipment leading to increased vibration and noise output over time • Failure to manage cumulative exposure for workers who rotate through multiple noisy polishing tasks • Over-reliance on hearing PPE without engineering or administrative controls 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Electrical Safety and Power Supply for Polishing Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of damaged cords, plugs or portable RCDs on powered polishers, buffers and burnishers 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate electrical testing and tagging regime for portable polishing tools and extension leads Use of polishing equipment in wet areas or on damp marble floors without appropriate protection Overloading of circuits or use of daisy-chained power boards to run multiple polishing machines Lack of clear procedures for isolation and tag-out of faulty polishing equipment Inadequate training of workers to recognise and report electrical defects on polishing tools 		[REDACTED]	
8. Surface Condition, Housekeeping and Slips Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accumulation of polishing residues, slurry and finishing compounds creating slippery floors and work surfaces Inadequate systems for prompt clean-up of spills from marble polishing metal buffing or painted surface polishing Obstructed access and egress routes due to storage of polishing pads, tools and waste in walkways Poorly managed cords and cables from polishing machines creating trip hazards Inconsistent signage and barricading around wet or freshly polished counters and floors Failure to plan housekeeping responsibilities for after-hours or contractor polishing works 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Ergonomics, Manual Handling and Work Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repetitive movements and sustained awkward postures when polishing vertical surfaces, low benches or floors Manual handling of heavy industrial-grade marble polishing machines or large metal components being buffed 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor workstation layout around polishing counters leading to twisting, reaching and over-extension Insufficient job rotation and task variation for workers performing continuous buffing and rubbing of finishing compounds Lack of consideration of ergonomic design when purchasing polishing tools and accessories Inadequate training in safe manual handling techniques relevant to polishing tasks and equipment transport 		[REDACTED]	
10. Competency, Training and Supervision for Polishing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers using high-powered buffing wheels or industrial marble polishing machines without formal competency assessment Inconsistent understanding of hazards associated with specific surfaces (e.g. painted counters vs bare metal vs marble) Insufficient training on correct selection, set-up and use of polishing pads, wheels and compounds Lack of supervision of new or young workers during initial polishing tasks Inadequate refresher training and competency verification as equipment, processes or products change Failure to provide training in emergency response, including dealing with entanglement, fires and chemical exposures related to polishing 	3A	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inconsistent provision and use of PPE for polishing tasks involving dust, chemicals and noise Selection of inappropriate PPE types or ratings for specific polishing hazards (e.g. wrong glove material for compounds) 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of fit testing and training for respiratory protection used during dusty or fume-generating polishing operations Poor maintenance, cleaning and replacement systems for reusable PPE used in polishing areas Over-reliance on PPE instead of higher order controls in the polishing process design Inadequate storage leading to contamination or damage of PPE near polishing stations 		[REDACTED]	
12. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Management for Polishing Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of specific emergency procedures for fires involving polishing compounds, dust extraction systems or electrical polishing equipment Inadequate first aid arrangements for eye injuries, cuts, entanglement and chemical splashes associated with buffing and polishing Poorly understood isolation and emergency stop arrangements for fixed polishing machinery Delayed response to incidents or near misses due to unclear reporting lines for polishing workers and supervisors Failure to investigate polishing-related incidents to identify root causes and systemic control weaknesses Insufficient drills and practice for emergency scenarios specific to polishing operations 	3L	[REDACTED]	1L
13. Contractor and Visitor Management in Polishing Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract polishing crews operating without alignment to the host PCBU's WHS standards and procedures Inadequate induction and supervision of contractors using buffing and marble polishing equipment on client sites Visitors and other trades entering polishing zones without awareness of 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<p>hazards such as airborne contaminants, noise and slippery surfaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting work activities (e.g. hot work near polishing dust or solvent-based finishing compound use) leading to increased risk • Poor communication of isolation, lock-out and restricted area controls when contractors service polishing plant • Lack of verification that contractor risk assessments and insurances adequately cover buffing and polishing hazards 		[REDACTED]	
14. Environmental and Waste Management from Polishing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrolled discharge of polishing slurry, metal particles and chemical residues to stormwater or general waste • Inadequate segregation of hazardous polishing wastes (e.g. solvent-contaminated rags, metal dust) from general rubbish • Air emissions from polishing operations and extraction systems impacting neighbouring areas or sensitive receptors • Lack of clarity on environmental obligations relating to waste transport and disposal from various polishing tasks • Ineffective systems for managing noise and dust impacts on surrounding work areas or adjacent businesses • Insufficient monitoring of waste management contractors handling polishing by-products 		[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.