Power Tools - Cordless

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:

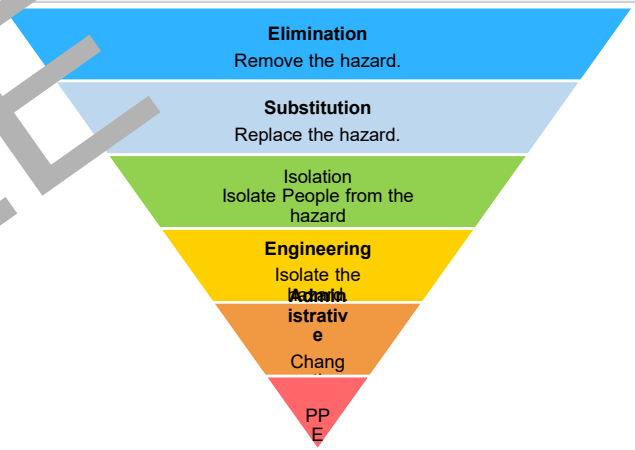
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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. Procurement and Design Selection	• Selection of cordless power tools that are not fit for purpose or non-compliant with relevant Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 60745, AS/NZS 62841) • Procurement decisions driven solely by price without consideration of safety features, vibration levels, noise output, guarding and ergonomic design • Lack of standardisation of tool brands and battery systems leading to incompatible chargers, unsafe workarounds and increased likelihood of misuse • Inadequate assessment of ignition risk in hazardous areas (e.g. flammable atmospheres) when selecting cordless tools • No consideration of manufacturer WHS information, safety alerts, recalls or safety bulletins during procurement	High	• Implement a formal procurement procedure requiring cordless power tools to comply with relevant Australian Standards and the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations, including evidence of compliance from suppliers • Establish minimum safety specifications for all cordless tools (e.g. automatic brake, two-handed controls where applicable, guards, low-vibration design, lock-off switches, dust extraction compatibility, noise limits) • Standardise brands and battery platforms across the organisation to minimise incompatibility and reduce the temptation to use non-approved chargers or modified batteries • Require pre-purchase risk assessments for new or high-risk cordless tools, including consideration of hazardous areas, task environment, and compatibility with existing controls • Include review of supplier safety documentation (user manuals, safety data, recall information, maintenance requirements) as part of the procurement approval process • Engage competent WHS and operational personnel in procurement reviews to ensure tools are fit for intended use and foreseeable misuse • Include lifecycle cost and safety performance (failure rates, warranty claims, serviceability) as selection criteria rather than purchase price alone • Maintain a central register of approved cordless tool models and battery systems that purchasing staff must use when ordering	Medium
2. Governance, Policies and WHS Legislative Compliance	• Absence of a formal cordless power tools policy leading to inconsistent practices and unmanaged risks • Lack of clear assignment of WHS duties under the WHS Act 2011 to PCBUs, officers, workers and contractors in relation to cordless tools • Failure to systematically identify, assess and control risks associated with cordless tools as required by WHS legislation • No formal process to review and update procedures in line with legislative changes, Australian Standards updates or incident learnings • Inadequate consideration of cordless tools within the overall WHS management system, resulting in gaps across sites and projects	High	• Develop and implement a company-wide cordless power tools policy that clearly outlines expectations, responsibilities, and minimum safety requirements in line with the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations • Integrate cordless tools risk management into the organisation's WHS management system, including documented procedures for procurement, use, maintenance, storage and disposal • Assign explicit responsibilities for cordless tool governance to specific roles (e.g. WHS Manager, Site Manager, Supervisors) and include these in position descriptions • Establish a documented risk assessment framework for cordless tools, requiring periodic review and consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives • Implement a scheduled review cycle (e.g. annually or after significant incidents/changes) for all cordless tool procedures and policies to ensure continuing legislative and standards compliance • Ensure officers exercise due diligence by receiving regular reports on cordless tool risks, incidents, maintenance status and compliance activities • Include cordless power tools in internal and external WHS audits, with actions tracked to completion through the organisation's corrective action system	Medium

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3. Contractor and Labour Hire Management	• Contractors and labour hire workers using cordless tools that do not meet company or legislative safety requirements • Inconsistent standards where contractor procedures conflict with principal PCBU policies on cordless tools • Limited verification of contractor competency, licences and training related to high-risk cordless tool use • Lack of clarity over who is responsible for inspection, maintenance and tagging of contractors' cordless tools and batteries • Poor communication of site-specific cordless tool rules, exclusion zones and emergency procedures to contractors	High	• Include explicit cordless power tool safety requirements in contractor prequalification, tender and contract documentation, referencing company policies and WHS legislation • Require contractors to provide evidence of competency, induction records and relevant licences for workers using higher risk cordless tools (e.g. drills for structural works, grinders, saws) • Establish clear rules for acceptance of contractor-supplied cordless tools, including evidence of compliance with Australian Standards, inspection records and maintenance history • Specify in contracts who is responsible for inspection, testing, maintenance and replacement of cordless tools and batteries, and how records will be shared with the principal PCBU • Ensure contractors are included in site-specific inductions that address cordless tool rules, restricted areas, housekeeping, charging locations and incident reporting processes • Conduct periodic field verification (e.g. tool audits and observations) of contractor compliance with cordless tool procedures and address non-conformances promptly • Integrate contractor incidents and near misses involving cordless tools into the organisation's central incident management and learning systems	Medium
4. Training, Competency and Supervision	• Workers using cordless tools without adequate training in hazards, limitations and safe systems of work • Assumption that experience with corded tools equates to competency with higher powered cordless equivalents • Inadequate instruction on safe battery management, including charging, storage, transport and disposal • Supervisors lacking the knowledge or confidence to challenge unsafe cordless tool use or poor housekeeping • No verification of competency, refresher training or assessment for infrequently used or higher risk tools	High	[redacted]	Medium
5. Maintenance, Inspection and Asset Management	• Cordless tools and batteries remaining in service beyond their safe life due to lack of asset tracking • Inadequate inspection and preventive maintenance leading to worn components, damaged housings or	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	guards, and compromised safety features • Use of non-genuine parts or unapproved repairs that alter tool performance or safety characteristics • No formal process to quarantine, tag-out and dispose of defective tools and batteries • Poor record keeping, making it difficult to identify patterns of failures, recalls or recurring faults		[redacted]	
6. Battery and Charging Management (Including Fire Risk)	• Thermal runaway, fire or explosion from damaged, defective or improperly charged lithium-ion ba[redacted] • Use of incompati[redacted] chargers, non-genuine batteries [redacted] modified [redacted] packs increasing fi[redacted]ctric sh[redacted] risk • Inadequate control of charging locations leading to charg[redacted]egress paths, vehicles, or near combustible materials • Lack of procedures for handling, transporting and storing batteries, especially damaged or suspect units • Insufficient emergency preparedness for battery-related fires, including inappropriate fire extinguishers or lack of isolation procedures	High	[redacted]	Medium

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7. Storage, Housekeeping and Site Layout	• Uncontrolled storage of cordless tools and batteries leading to trip hazards, falling objects and unauthorised access • Poor housekeeping around work areas increasing the likelihood of slips, trips and falls while operating or moving tools • Inadequate segregation of storage areas from flammable substances, chemicals or food preparation areas • Lack of clear ownership and storage systems leading to tools being left on site, exposed to weather or damage • No system to manage transport of tools and batteries between sites, increasing risk of damage and non-compliant transport practices	Medium	[redacted]	Low
8. Ergonomics, Manual Handling and Human Factors	• Selection and use of cordless tools that are too heavy, poorly balanced or produce excessive vibration, leading to musculoskeletal disorders and fatigue • Insufficient consideration of reach, posture and access in planning with cordless tools, increasing strain and loss of control • Inadequate systems to rotate tools or limit exposure times for high-vibration or high-force tool use • Design of work schedules and productivity targets that encourage rushing, fatigue and risk-taking with cordless tools • Failure to account for individual factors such as physical capacity, pre-existing injuries or unfamiliarity when allocating cordless tool tasks	High	[redacted]	Medium
9. Noise, Vibration and Occupational Health Exposure	• Exposure to noise from cordless tools exceeding exposure standards, contributing to noise-induced hearing loss	High	[redacted]	Medium

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	• Prolonged or repeated exposure to hand-arm vibration from cordless tools increasing risk of vascular and neurological conditions • Lack of baseline and ongoing health monitoring for workers frequently using high-vibration tools • Insufficient planning for cumulative exposures where multiple noisy or vibrating tools are used on the same shift • Underestimation of noise and vibration risk because tools are cordless and perceived as less hazardous		[redacted]	
10. Safe Systems of Work, Planning and Permits	• Cordless tool activities proceeding without structured planning, resulting in ad hoc control of hazards such as working at heights, confined spaces o near services • Lack of integration between cordless tool use and other criti risk controls (e.g. isolation, lock , hot work, excavation permits • Inadequate assess environmental conditions (wet areas explosive atmospheres, weather) b ore authorising cordless tool • Failure to clearly identify and control interaction risks where multiple trades use cordless tools in the same area • No formal requirement for pre-start risk assessment or job planning for tasks involving higher risk cordless tools	High	[redacted]	Medium
11. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Management and Reporting	• Delayed or ineffective response to incidents involving cordless tools or batteries due to lack of procedures and training • Under-reporting of near misses, minor injuries and battery faults, limiting organisational learning	Medium	[redacted]	Low

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	• Emergency equipment and first aid resources not suited to likely cordless tool and battery incidents (e.g. lacerations, eye injuries, burns, fires) • Failure to notify regulators of notifiable incidents related to cordless tools as required under WHS legislation • Poor post-incident analysis leading to recurrence of similar events		[redacted]	
12. Consultation, Communication and Worker Engagement	• Decisions about cordless tool selection, procedures and controls made without meaningful consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives • Inconsistent communication of rules and changes across different sites, shifts and contractor groups • Lack of mechanisms for workers to raise concerns or suggestions about cordless tool safety and performance • Cultural acceptance of unsafe shortcuts with cordless tools due to production pressure or normalisation of risk	Medium	[redacted]	Low
13. Monitoring, Review and Continuous Improvement	• Controls for cordless tools becoming ineffective over time due to drift, complacency or changing conditions • Lack of systematic performance measurement, meaning emerging risks and trends are not identified • Failure to incorporate external learnings (standards updates, regulator guidance, industry alerts) into local systems	Medium	[redacted]	Low

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	• Inadequate management review of cordless tool risks, leading to under-resourcing of necessary improvements		[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