

Removalist 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 for the task parts. 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. Governance, WHS Leadership and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear WHS responsibilities for directors, managers and supervisors under WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Inadequate due diligence by officers in relation to high-risk manual handling and transport activities Absence of a documented WHS management system specific to removalist operations Failure to consult workers on changes to work methods (e.g. new vehicles, lifting aids, specialty moves such as pianos) Inadequate contractor and subcontractor oversight for overflow or specialist removal jobs No process to review and implement changes from updated legislation, codes of practice or Australian Standards 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and document a WHS management system aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice, including manual tasks, traffic management and consultation Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for officers, managers, supervisors, workers and subcontractors in position descriptions and contracts Implement an officer due diligence framework including scheduled WHS performance reviews, site visits and review of incident trends for removal and delivery activities Develop a documented WHS policy endorsed by senior management that specifically addresses high-risk removalist activities (heavy furniture, stairwells, pianos, remote deliveries) Create and maintain a legal and standards register (legislation, Codes of Practice, Australian Standards, industry guidelines) with annual review cycle and assigned owner Implement a structured worker consultation and HSR (Health and Safety Representative) framework, including toolbox talks focused on manual handling, traffic interfaces and specialty moves Include WHS performance criteria and leading indicators (e.g. completion of risk assessments, training currency, vehicle inspection compliance) in management KPIs Establish a governance schedule for internal WHS audits, management review meetings and action tracking with particular focus on high-risk tasks like piano moves and stair transport 	3H
2. Risk Management and Planning for Complex Moves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic risk assessment process for different types of moves (heavy/awkward items, stairwells, limited access, pre-flooring work) Failure to assess site-specific conditions such as narrow corridors, uneven paths, steep driveways, or fragile flooring Inadequate planning for piano removal and transport, including route, load distribution and building protection Poor pre-move information gathering from clients, resulting in unexpected large items left by previous homeowners Lack of a formal process to escalate high-risk jobs (e.g. heavy safes, multi-storey stairwells, long carries) for additional controls or extra resources No standardised risk matrix or criteria for determining when work should be postponed or declined for safety reasons 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal WHS risk management procedure for all job types that requires pre-job risk assessment, including identification of heavy and awkward furniture, stairwells and access constraints Develop a structured pre-move questionnaire and site risk checklist that office staff must complete with the client (including photos of access, stairways, flooring and large items) Establish a classification system for jobs (e.g. standard, high-risk, complex) triggering additional planning, senior review and resourcing decisions Require documented site-specific risk assessments for complex work such as piano removals, tight stairwells, high-rise moves and moves prior to flooring installation Introduce a formal escalation process allowing supervisors to re-assess and allocate extra workers, specialised equipment or re-schedule where risk is above an acceptable level Use a standard risk matrix and risk criteria aligned with company WHS procedures to determine acceptable residual risk before work proceeds Include risk management requirements in customer service and sales procedures so that quoting staff do not commit to unsafe timeframes or manpower levels Periodically review incident and near-miss data to update job planning checklists, particularly for recurring risks (e.g. heavy pianos, large fridges, tight stairwells) 	2M

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3. Workforce Competency, Training and Supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate induction for new workers and labour hire staff regarding high-risk aspects of removal work Lack of competency in manual handling techniques for heavy and awkward furniture, including pianos and large whitegoods Insufficient training for working in stairwells, confined access ways and multi-level properties Supervisors not trained to identify and correct unsafe practices or to stop work when risk is unacceptable No verification of driver competence for large vehicles or vehicles towing trailers with heavy loads Insufficient training in communicating with clients about safety limitations (e.g. refusing unsafe item movements) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a structured induction program specific to removalist work, covering manual tasks, load restraint principles, stairwell access, site risk assessment and client interaction Implement competency-based training for manual handling of heavy, awkward and specialty items (including pianos), with practical assessments and refresh training at set intervals Provide targeted training on safe practices in stairwells, limited access moves, and carrying furniture over long distances or uneven surfaces Train supervisors and leading hands in WHS responsibilities, hazard identification, risk assessment, coaching and stop-work authority Ensure drivers have appropriate licences and complete a documented verification of competency (VOC) for vehicle sign towing, reversing and urban/intra-city navigation Provide communication and conflict management training for workers to enable clear explanation of safety restraints to customers and to handle pressure to undertake unsafe tasks Maintain training records and competency matrices to ensure only qualified personnel are allocated to complete high-risk moves Implement a buddy or mentoring system for new workers, pairing them with experienced staff for an initial period under increased supervision 	2M
4. Manual Tasks and Musculoskeletal Risk Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a formal program to manage hazardous manual tasks in accordance with relevant Codes of Practice Reliance on physical strength instead of engineering and administrative controls for heavy tasks No system for job design that considers task rotation, load sharing and recovery breaks during peak periods Inadequate process to identify and control repetitive or sustained awkward postures (e.g. twisting in stairwells, low doorway manoeuvres) Lack of medical restrictions management process, leading to injured or unfit workers performing heavy tasks Failure to consider increased risk when moving furniture before flooring installation (uneven substrates, trip edges, protective coverings) 	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

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			[REDACTED]	
5. Vehicle, Plant and Equipment Procurement and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement of vehicles and lifting equipment without adequate safety specifications for removal work • Inadequate preventive maintenance system for trucks, utes, trailers and lifting aids • Failure of tail lifts, ramps, winches or stair climbers due to poor inspection regimes • Use of unsuitable or damaged equipment such as worn straps, broken trolleys or defective piano skids • No process to ensure vehicles used for heavy loads have appropriate ANCAP rating, load capacity and restraint fittings • Subcontractor vehicles and equipment not subject to the same standard 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Load Restraint, Vehicle Loading and Stability Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic failure to comply with load restraint requirements under the Load Restraint Guide and road transport legislation • Inadequate procedures for securing heavy and awkward furniture, including pianos and whitegoods, leading to shifting loads • Poor load planning affecting vehicle stability, axle loads and centre of gravity • Inconsistent use or inspection of load restraint devices (straps, chains, tensioners, blankets) • No standard process for determining when second vehicles or trips are required to avoid overloading 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of documented procedures for safe loading and unloading on uneven or sloping ground 		[REDACTED]	
7. Traffic, Parking and Site Access Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic process for assessing on-street parking, driveway gradients and proximity to public traffic and pedestrians Uncontrolled interaction between removal vehicles, workers and other road users at kerbsides and shared driveways Inadequate traffic management at multi-dwelling or commercial sites, including strata properties and shopping centres Lack of arrangements with clients/building managers for safe access (e.g. goods lift, loading docks, stairwells) Poor planning for narrow streets, cul-de-sacs and limited turning space leading to high reversing risk Failure to consider emergency vehicle access and blocking of fire exits during loading 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Stairwell, Limited Access and Building Interface Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal process for assessing suitability of stairwells and corridors for large or awkward furniture and pianos Damage to building elements (walls, balustrades, glass, flooring) creating secondary hazards such as sharp edges or trip points Workers forced into extreme postures or unsafe holds due to tight corners, low ceilings or narrow stairs Inadequate planning for using alternative access methods (balconies, 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<p>external hoists, cranes) where internal access is not safe or feasible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of coordination with builders or flooring contractors when moving furniture before final flooring installation Absence of clear criteria for when to refuse or modify a move due to unsafe stairwell or access conditions 		[REDACTED]	
9. Fatigue, Scheduling and Workload Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate management of fatigue risk associated with long shifts, back-to-back bookings and seasonal peaks Unrealistic job scheduling that does not allow sufficient time for safe manual handling practices, travel and breaks Extended driving times on jobs without adequate rest opportunities Lack of a process to identify and manage cumulative fatigue across consecutive days, especially for workers performing repetitive heavy lifting Workers taking secondary employment or overtime without disclosure, increasing fatigue risk Pressure from clients or operations staff to complete additional moves at the end of a long day 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Contractor, Labour Hire and Third-Party Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of subcontractors and labour hire workers without equivalent WHS standards or training to direct employees Lack of clarity about WHS roles and responsibilities between host business and labour suppliers 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent induction and supervision of temporary workers on complex removal tasks • Failure to verify licences, competencies and insurances of subcontracted drivers and specialised piano removal services • Commercial pressure on contractors that discourages reporting of hazards and incidents • No mechanism to monitor WHS performance of contractors over time 		[REDACTED]	
11. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-reporting of injuries, near misses and property damage due to time pressure or fear of blame • No structured process for investigating incidents related to manual handling, vehicle use or stairwell access • Failure to identify systemic root causes, leading to repetition of similar events • Inadequate feedback loop from investigations into procedures, training and planning tools • Lack of data analysis to detect trends in specific job types (e.g. piano moves, pre-flooring moves, stair-heavy jobs) • Insufficient communication of lessons learned to field crews and supervisors 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Emergency Preparedness, First Aid and Remote Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of planning for medical emergencies or serious injuries during moves, particularly when working in 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> multi-storey or remote residential locations • Inadequate first aid resources carried in vehicles or available on site • No clear procedure for managing vehicle breakdowns or incidents while carrying heavy or awkward loads • Insufficient communication and location tracking for crews working in unfamiliar or semi-remote areas • Unclear arrangements for emergency egress when stairwells or narrow access ways are partially blocked by furniture during moves • Workers untrained in responding to acute manual handling injuries or crush incidents (e.g. dropped piano or large item) 		[REDACTED]	
13. Client Communication, Expectations and Property Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients pressuring crews to move items that exceed safe weight or size limits, especially on stairs or through tight spaces • Lack of clear pre-move communication regarding what can and cannot be moved safely, including not moving large appliances • Disputes over property damage leading to reluctance to use protective measures or slowing down work to stay safe • Clients or other occupants entering work areas, stairwells or vehicle loading zones, creating additional hazards • Inadequate information provided to clients about requirements prior to flooring installation moves (e.g. cleared pathways, substrate readiness) • Verbal-only agreements resulting in confusion about service limits, access conditions and timing 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
14. Psychosocial Risks, Violence and Aggression Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exposure of crews to aggressive or abusive clients in high-stress moves (e.g. evictions, items left by previous homeowners, time-critical relocations) • Stress and anxiety from conflicting demands of speed, customer satisfaction and safety compliance • Lack of systems for reporting and managing work-related violence or threatening behaviour • Workers feeling unable to refuse unsafe instructions from clients or supervisors due to fear of reprisal • Insufficient support for workers following traumatic incidents (serious injuries, property damage disputes, verbal abuse) • No consideration of psychosocial hazards in overall WHS risk management 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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.