Residential Timber and Steel Fencing Installation

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:

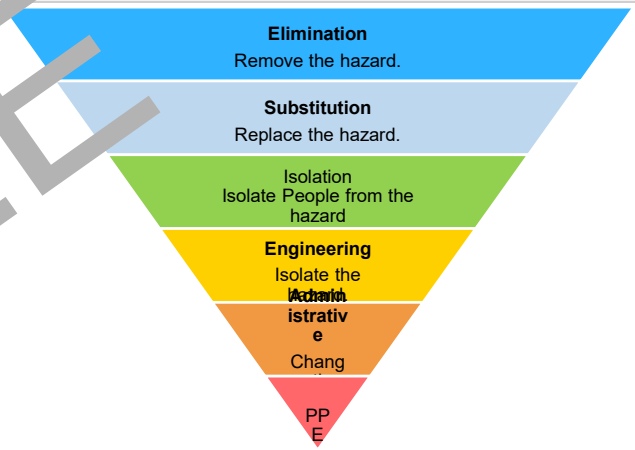
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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, Planning and Legal Compliance	• Lack of documented WHS management plan specific to residential fencing activities • Failure to identify and comply with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 3012, AS 1720, AS/NZS 1170, AS 1926 for pool/barrier fencing where relevant) • Inadequate consultation with workers and PCBUs involved in fencing works (principal contractor, subcontract installers, suppliers) • No systematic process for reviewing legislation, codes of practice and local council requirements relating to boundary and privacy fences • Poor integration of fencing risk controls into broader company WHS system and business planning • Lack of documented responsibilities and accountabilities for WHS across management, supervis[illegible] leading hands • Inadequate proc[illegible]s to ensu[illegible]ns for privacy screens, [illegible]teel or plastic fencing consider structural adequacy and safety in high wind a[illegible]as	4A	• Establish and maintain a do[illegible]mented WHS ma[illegible]gement sy[illegible]m aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Aus[illegible]ian Standards for [illegible]cing [illegible]d structural elements • Develop a fencing-s[illegible]ic WHS [illegible]anagement plan [illegible]mplate for residential projects covering timber, steel and plastic [illegible]cing, p[illegible]acy s[illegible]ens and wi[illegible]d bracing requirements • Define and [illegible]cument WH[illegible]roles, re[illegible]on[illegible]ities and delegations for directors, managers, supervisors and le[illegible]ding ha[illegible]s, includ[illegible]g authority t[illegible]op work for safety reasons • Impl[illegible]t a for[illegible]rocess to review changes in WHS legislation, codes of practice, local council fencing [illegible]ws and [illegible]undary/overlooking/privacy rules at least annually • Ensur[illegible] each [illegible]roject [illegible] documented verification that proposed fence types (timber, steel, plastic, privacy s[illegible]reens [illegible]omply with structural, pool safety and planning requirements • Int[illegible]at[illegible] WHS objectives and leading indicators (e.g. inspections completed, training currency, [illegible]orrecti[illegible]ctions closed) into business KPIs and management reviews • [illegible]equire written WHS provisions and performance expectations in all contracts with fencing su[illegible]contractors and labour hire providers	3H
2. Design, Engineering and Structural Adequacy of Fencing Systems	• Fence and privacy screen designs not structurally engineered for expected wind loads and soil conditions • Use of generic designs that do not account for ground levels, retaining walls, gradients, or gaps in fencing • Inadequate specification of post sizes, embedment depths and concrete footing design for timber and steel posts • Insufficient design detail for top and bottom rails, bracing systems and fixings for long spans	4A	• Adopt standard engineered designs for residential timber, steel and plastic fences and privacy screens, certified by a suitably qualified engineer and appropriate for local wind regions • Implement a formal design review process for non-standard or site-specific fence layouts (e.g. stepped fences on slopes, fences on retaining walls, extra-high privacy screens) • Develop design guidelines specifying minimum post dimensions, wind braces, rail sizes, fixing types and post embedment depths for typical soil conditions and fence heights • Require engineering verification for high-risk installations such as tall privacy screens, fences near retaining structures, or fences forming part of a pool barrier • Maintain a controlled library of standard detail drawings for setting fence posts in ground and concrete, fixing top and bottom rails, and securing wind braces, with revision control • Specify product performance criteria in procurement (e.g. corrosion resistance for steel, treatment class for timber, UV resistance for plastic fencing)	2M

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	• Failure to consider load effects of gates, privacy screens or attached structures on fence posts • Designs that introduce climbable features in areas that should restrict access (e.g. pool barriers or fall hazards) • No systematic review of supplier-provided plastic or modular fence systems for UV stability, brittleness or impact resistance over service life		• Ensure buildability reviews are completed so that designed gap sizes, tolerances and fixing locations can be reliably achieved on site without ad-hoc changes	
3. Site Assessment, Planning and Consultation	• Inadequate pre-start site assessment leading to unrecognised underground and overhead services along fence lines • Failure to identify shared boundaries, neighbouring properties and public areas affected by fence construction • Poor planning for access, material handling and storage on constrained residential sites • No consideration of environmental factors such as unstable [illegible]d, steep slopes, erosion, drainage paths and flood zones • Lack of engagement with [illegible] neighbours about temporary gaps in fencing and site security during installation • Failure to identify nearby schools, playgrounds or high pedestrian traffic areas that may be affected by open excavations or stored materials • No systematic assessment of existing structures (sheds, retaining walls) that will support or connect to new fencing	4A	• Implement a standardised pre-construction site assessment checklist for residential fencing, including services, ground stability, access, adjacent hazards and public interfaces • Require documented Dial Before You Dig (or equivalent) enquiries and service plans, with onsite verification before post holes are excavated • Establish a planning process to determine material delivery points, storage locations and panel transport routes that minimise manual handling distances and interaction with the public • Include in the planning process an assessment of temporary fence gaps, security and child/pet containment arrangements with the client and neighbours • Mandate written communication protocols with neighbours where boundary lines, shared fences or temporary removal of existing fencing is involved • Require a competent person to inspect and record the condition and capacity of existing structures that will support new fencing or privacy screens • Ensure site-specific controls for slopes, erosion and drainage are incorporated into the job plan (e.g. staged excavation, temporary shoring, diversion of surface water)	2M
4. Contractor, Subcontractor and Labour Hire Management	• Use of installers without verification of competency or trade qualifications in fencing installation • Inadequate vetting of subcontractors' WHS systems, insurance and incident history	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• Poor coordination between multiple PCBUs on residential sites (builder, fencing contractor, landscaper, pool installer) • Lack of clarity on who controls and supervises fencing work when multiple trades share the work area • Inconsistent induction processes for subcontract and labour hire workers across different sites • Commercial pressures resulting in unsafe work practices, shortcuts or inadequate supervision		[redacted]	
5. Training, Competency and Supervision of Installers	• Installers lacking competency in structural aspects of fencing (post spacing, wind bracing, concrete curing requirements) • Inadequate training in hazard identification for tasks such as setting fence posts in concrete and securing wind braces for posts • Workers unfamiliar with the system of work for transporting and installing long, heavy or flexible fencing panels • Limited understanding of specific hazards associated with steel, timber and plastic fencing products (splinters, sharp edges, UV-degraded plastics) • Insufficient supervision of new or inexperienced workers on occupied residential sites • No formal verification of competency for leading hands responsible for layout, alignment and structural integrity of fences	4A	[redacted]	2M
6. Plant, Equipment and Tooling Management	• Inadequate maintenance and inspection of powered tools and plant	4A		2M

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	used in fencing works (augers, compactors, drills, grinders, nail guns) • Use of non-compliant or poorly maintained vehicles and trailers for transporting fencing panels and posts • Lack of standardisation of guarding, emergency stops and safety features on tools used for cutting and drilling steel and timber • Inappropriate plant selection for ground conditions (e.g. heavy augers on unstable or sloped ground) • Uncontrolled introduction of new or hired equipment without hazard assessment and instructions • No system for managing damaged tools or equipment removed from service		[redacted]	
7. Materials Specification, Handling and Storage	• Procurement of sub-standard or non-compliant timber, steel or plastic fencing components • Inadequate systems for storing long posts, top and bottom rails and panels, leading to collapse or uncontrolled movement • Poor management of hazardous substances such as concrete additives, post-setting compounds, paints and sealants • Lack of controls for manual handling of heavy or awkward items such as concrete bags, posts and privacy screen panels • Insufficient labelling and traceability of treated timber products and galvanised or powder-coated steel • Unprotected storage of materials on residential verges or shared driveways increasing public risk	3H	[redacted]	2M

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8. Traffic Management, Transport and Logistics	• No formal traffic management planning for deliveries and removal of spoil in residential streets and driveways • Inadequate systems for securing long fencing panels, rails and posts during transport, creating risk of load shift • Poor coordination of delivery times leading to congestion, reversing and interaction with pedestrians • Lack of controls for off-loading and moving materials on sites with limited access or shared driveways • No documented process for route planning and fatigue management for drivers undertaking multiple residential runs • Insufficient guidance on segregating vehicle movements from manual handling areas where panels are carried along boundaries	4A	[redacted]	2M
9. Excavation, Ground Disturbance and Post Footing Systems	• Inadequate system for locating and protecting underground services prior t post hole excavation • Uncontrolled exca tion near structures, retainin walls or unstable ground leading to collapse subsidence • No standard criteria for post hole geometry, depth and spa for different fence types and soil conditions • Poor quality control of concrete mix, placement and curing for setting fence posts in ground or concrete • Failure to ensure posts remain plumb and adequately braced while concrete cures, resulting in misalignment and structural weakness • Lack of guidance on managing excavated spoil, preventing trip hazards and controlling run-off into drains	4A	[redacted]	2M

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10. Structural Integrity, Alignment and Gap Management	• Absence of system controls to verify line, level and structural alignment of posts, rails and panels before handover • Inconsistent management of gaps in fencing, leading to security, child containment or privacy failures • Insufficient design and installation controls for fixing top and bottom rails, causing sagging or rail detachment over time • Poor specification and verification of wind braces for posts, particularly in high wind or exposed sites • No formal criteria for inspecting and accepting privacy screens and plastic fencing systems for rigidity and fixings • Ad-hoc field modifications by installers that compromise structural integrity or design intent	4A	[redacted]	2M
11. Working Environment, Public Safety and Site Security	• Insufficient controls for [redacted]ing in and around occupied hom[redacted], including children, pets and [redacted]itors • Open post holes, [redacted]rtially [redacted] fences and temporary [redacted]aps creating [redacted] and entrapment risks for the public • Inadequate segregation [redacted] areas from public paths, neighbours' yards or common access ways • No systematic approach to securing sites after hours where fencing is incomplete or privacy screens are not installed • Poor lighting in early morning or late afternoon work on residential blocks • Lack of emergency and first aid planning tailored to dispersed residential work locations	4A	[redacted]	2M

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12. Hazardous Manual Tasks and Ergonomics Management	• No structured assessment of hazardous manual tasks associated with lifting and carrying posts, rails and fencing panels • Repetitive bending, twisting and overhead work during fixing of top and bottom rails and privacy screen panels • Handling of cement bags, concrete, and wet post-setting products without mechanical aids or job rotation • Inadequate guidance on team lifting and coordination when manoeuvring long steel or timber rails around obstacles • Limited consideration of age, fitness and pre-existing injuries when allocating physically demanding tasks • Insufficient monitoring of musculoskeletal injury trends across fencing crews	3H	[redacted]	2M
13. Hazardous Substances, Dust, Noise and Environmental Management	• Poorly controlled exposure to dust fro cutting or drilling timber, fibre cement products or masonry fo and screen fixings • Noise from powe ools and affecting workers a resid without proper controls • Inadequate management of fum and vapours from paints, coa adhesives and concrete curing products • Improper disposal of surplus concrete, wash-water, plastics off-cuts and timber waste impacting the environment • No system for assessing hazardous materials in existing structures that fencing may attach to (e.g. asbestos in old fences or eaves) • Lack of environmental planning for sediment, erosion and run-off around post locations and disturbed soils	3H	[redacted]	2M

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14. Electrical Safety and Utilities Interaction	• Contact with underground electrical or communication cables during post hole excavation • Inadequate clearance from overhead power lines when handling long steel rails or fencing panels • Use of temporary electrical equipment on sites without compliant RCD protection and test and tag systems • Fencing designs unintentionally creating conductive paths near electrical installations (e.g. meter boxes, outdoor power points) • Poor coordination with utility providers when working near easements, transformers or substations • Lack of worker awareness of safe approach distances and emergency response in case of contact with live services	4A	[redacted]	2M
15. Documentation, Records, Inspections and Audit	• Incomplete or inconsistent documentation of risk assessments, SWMS, site plans and in[redacted]on results • Failure to conduct [redacted]egular site inspections to veri[redacted]mplementation of WHS controls on fo[redacted] • Poor retention and retrieval of reco[redacted]s relating to design, materials, bracin[redacted]and post footing details • No systematic internal audit program to test the effectiveness of the WHS management system across multiple residential sites • Inadequate close-out of identified non-conformances and corrective actions from inspections and incidents • Limited management visibility of recurring issues across fencing projects	3H	[redacted]	1L
16. Incident Management, Emergency Response	• Lack of clear procedures for reporting, investigating and responding to incidents and near misses during fencing works	3H	[redacted]	1L

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and Continuous Improvement	• Inadequate first aid coverage and emergency preparedness for crews working across dispersed residential locations • Failure to notify regulators of notifiable incidents in line with WHS Act 2011 requirements • Poor communication of incident learnings and corrective actions to all crews and subcontractors • No structured process for periodically reviewing WHS performance and updating fencing risk controls • Complacency over time resulting in erosion of safety standards and a tolerance of unsafe practices		[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