

Restricted Spaces and Voids (Ceilings - Subfloors)

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. WHS Governance, Duties and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of PCBU, officer and worker duties for work in restricted spaces and voids Inadequate consultation with workers, HSRs and contractors regarding specific ceiling and subfloor risks Absence of a documented WHS management plan for restricted space activities across sites Failure to integrate WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations (including Confined Spaces Code of Practice) into company procedures Poor oversight of contractor compliance with principal contractor WHS requirements Inadequate incident reporting and investigation processes for near misses in ceiling and subfloor spaces 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and document a WHS governance framework that clearly assigns responsibilities under the WHS Act 2011 for all work in ceiling cavities, roof spaces, wall cavities and subfloor voids Develop a company-wide Restricted Spaces and Voids WHS Management Standard applicable to ceiling spaces, subfloors, attic spaces and eave cavities, aligned with relevant Codes of Practice Implement formal consultation mechanisms (toolbox talks, WHS committee meetings, pre-start briefings) specifically addressing risks associated with ceiling and subfloor work Require all contractors to provide project-specific WHS documentation (WHS management plan, procedures, risk assessments, SWMS) and assess restricted spaces prior to mobilisation Implement a standardised incident, near miss and hazard reporting system, with specific categories for ceiling, roof spaces and subfloor events, and ensure investigation findings are shared and actioned Conduct periodic management reviews and audits of the restricted spaces WHS system, with corrective actions tracked to closure 	3H
2. Restricted Space and Confined Space Classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to correctly classify work areas as restricted spaces or confined spaces under WHS Regulations Inconsistent criteria for determining when a ceiling, eave cavity or under-floor void is a confined space Lack of documented inventory of known confined spaces and higher-risk restricted spaces across sites Unclear signage or labelling leading to unauthorised entry into hazardous cavities Over-reliance on worker judgement without formal assessment methodology 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a formal Restricted and Confined Spaces Classification Procedure applicable to ceiling cavities, roof spaces, wall voids and subfloors Create a register of all identified confined spaces and high-risk restricted spaces, including access locations, hazards, and entry requirements Use a documented confined space assessment tool to determine whether particular cavities (e.g. eaves, roof spaces with services, under-floor crawl spaces) are confined spaces Install durable signage and labelling at access points identifying confined spaces and restricted voids and any permit or isolation requirements Ensure new projects and refurbishments include a design-phase assessment for future classification of ceiling and subfloor spaces Periodically review and update the classification register when building layouts or services change 	2M
3. Permit-to-Work and Access Authorisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unauthorised entry into ceiling cavities, roof spaces and subfloors by untrained workers or visitors Absence of a permit-to-work process for high-risk entries (e.g. confined spaces, live services, asbestos risk) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal permit-to-work system for entry to identified confined spaces and nominated high-risk ceiling and subfloor restricted spaces Define permit authority roles, competencies and approval limits for supervisors issuing permits for ceiling and subfloor work Integrate checks for concurrent activities (e.g. hot work, pesticide application, electrical isolation) into the permit approval process 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permits issued without adequate assessment of concurrent work (hot works, electrical, fumigation) Poor record-keeping of who entered and exited restricted spaces, hindering emergency response Permit conditions not effectively communicated to all parties on site 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require sign-on/sign-off by all persons entering restricted spaces, with start/finish times recorded and retained for audit Mandate pre-entry briefings where permit conditions, isolation requirements, communication methods and emergency procedures are reviewed Conduct routine audits of permit quality, completeness and compliance and feed findings into supervisor coaching 	
4. Design, Access and Structural Integrity of Voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate access hatches to ceiling cavities, roof spaces and subfloors leading to awkward entry and exit Fragile or non-trafficable ceiling materials (plasterboard, fibre cement) not identified or protected Lack of engineered walkways or platforms in roof spaces and subfloors where regular access is required Unverified structural capacity of joists, beams and subfloor bearers to support workers and equipment Hidden voids, uneven surfaces, low clearance and protrusions leading to falls and musculoskeletal injuries Absence of design input to eliminate or reduce need for future access to hazardous voids 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Isolation of Electrical, Gas and Other Building Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live electrical cables, junction boxes and downlights within ceiling cavities and roof spaces not properly identified or isolated Unlabelled or poorly documented gas, water or refrigerant lines within subfloors and wall cavities Inadequate lockout/tagout procedures before working near energised services Third-party service work (e.g. by other contractors) re-energising systems during ceiling or subfloor work Damaged or deteriorated insulation on legacy wiring creating hidden electrocution and fire risks 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
6. Identification and Management of Hazardous Substances (Asbestos, Dusts, Chemicals, Mould)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unidentified asbestos-containing materials (ACM) in eaves, insulation, ductwork, old linings and subfloor structures Accumulated dusts, rodent droppings and bird guano in ceiling cavities leading to respiratory disease Residual pesticides, termiticides or fumigants in subfloors and wall cavities Mould, fungal growth and contaminated insulation leading to allergic and respiratory reactions Lack of up-to-date asbestos registers and hazardous materials surveys for older buildings 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Atmospheric Testing, Ventilation and Thermal Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxygen-deficient or oxygen-enriched atmospheres in confined roof spaces and subfloor voids Accumulation of flammable gases or vapours from nearby plant, storage or soil contaminants High temperature and humidity in roof spaces leading to heat stress, dehydration and fatigue Inadequate ventilation resulting in build-up of dust, fumes or carbon monoxide from nearby sources Lack of atmospheric testing equipment or competency to interpret results 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Worker Competency, Training and Induction for Restricted Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers entering ceiling cavities, roof spaces and subfloors without specific training in restricted or confined space hazards Supervisors not competent to review and authorise work in voids and cavities 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate induction for contractors regarding site-specific ceiling and subfloor risks Reliance on informal on-the-job learning without formal competency assessment Lack of refresher training leading to skill fade in emergency response and permit systems 		[REDACTED]	
9. Planning, Scheduling and Fatigue Management for Ceiling and Subfloor Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate planning of work in roof spaces and under-floor crawl areas leading to rushed or improvised practices Work scheduled during peak heat or extreme weather increasing thermal and physiological stress Extended periods working in cramped, awkward postures causing fatigue and musculoskeletal strain Poor estimation of task duration resulting in overtime and cumulative fatigue Lack of consideration of access frequency and duration for service inspections in design and pre-work planning 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Emergency Preparedness and Rescue from Ceiling and Subfloor Voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a documented emergency response plan specific to ceiling voids, roof spaces, wall cavities and subfloors Inability to quickly extract an unconscious or injured worker from a confined roof or under-floor space Reliance on untrained co-workers for rescue without appropriate equipment or procedures Poor communication capability between workers in voids and standby or emergency responders Emergency services not familiar with building layout and restricted space access points 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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11. Contractor Management and Interface with Other Trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple contractors working simultaneously in and around ceiling cavities and subfloors without coordinated controls Variability in contractor WHS standards and understanding of restricted space requirements Inadequate communication about changes in building services, fumigation, or structural alterations affecting voids Trade interactions leading to new risks (e.g. hot works above while others are in roof spaces, demolition near subfloors) Lack of clarity about who controls the work area and issues permits for shared ceiling and subfloor spaces 	3H		2M
12. Health Monitoring, Ergonomics and Psychosocial Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undetected pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. respiratory, cardiac, claustrophobia) increased risk in confined roof and ceiling spaces Sustained awkward postures, kneeling and overhead work in ceiling cavities leading to musculoskeletal disorders Stress and anxiety associated with working in dark, cramped, confined, infested or dirty environments Insufficient consideration of individual fitness for duty before assigning tasks in restricted spaces Inadequate reporting and management of discomfort, early injury indicators and psychosocial concerns 	3H		2M
13. Plant, Tools and Equipment for Accessing and Working in Voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of unsuitable ladders, portable platforms or access equipment for reaching ceiling and subfloor entry points 	3H		2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power tools, lighting and cords creating trip, electrical and ignition risks in confined cavities • Lack of intrinsically safe or low-heat lighting in dusty or thermally stressed roof spaces • Poor maintenance and inspection regimes for specialised equipment used in restricted spaces • Improvised use of materials (e.g. loose boards over ceiling joists) instead of properly designed systems 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
14. Documentation, Records and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incomplete or outdated procedures, risk assessments and SWMS relating to ceiling and subfloor work • Loss of critical information about previous incidents or structural modifications in voids and cavities • Inconsistent record-keeping of permit training, inspections and monitoring results • Lack of systematic review of restricted space controls following incidents or near misses • Failure to capture worker feedback on practicality and effectiveness of existing controls 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	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.