

Retail Stocking Merchandising and Shelf Management

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 Contractor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear allocation of WHS responsibilities between PCBUs, store management, merchandisers and labour-hire workers Inadequate consultation, cooperation and coordination between retailers, suppliers and contractors under WHS Act 2011 Absence of a documented WHS management plan specific to retail merchandising and shelf management Failure to verify contractor WHS competence, licences and insurances (including for vending machine installers) Poor incident reporting and investigation systems leading to repeat events Lack of review of WHS performance indicators (e.g. manual handling injuries, near misses from falling stock, display collapses) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a documented WHS management system aligned with WHS Act 2011 and relevant WHS Regulations, including specific procedures for stock merchandising, display unit setup and vending machine handling Define and document WHS roles, responsibilities and due diligence obligations for officers, managers, supervisors, and key contractors involved in retail stocking and merchandising Implement formal consultation and coordination arrangements (e.g. WHS committee, toolbox meetings, contractor interface meetings) between the PCBU, store management, merchandisers, display installers and vending service providers Develop and enforce a contractor management procedure requiring pre-qualification, WHS capability assessment, and approval prior to engaging merchandising or vending contractors Implement a standard risk assessment process for all new merchandising activities, display unit setups, vending machine installations and significant product resets Establish a robust incident and near-miss reporting, investigation and corrective action system, including mandatory reporting of self collapses, falling objects and manual handling injuries Monitor WHS performance using leading and lagging indicators (e.g. training completion, audit scores, musculoskeletal injury rates, near-miss reports) and review quarterly at management level Ensure regular legal and standards review (Australian Standards, Safe Work Australia guidance) so policies and procedures remain current 	2M
2. Store Layout, Traffic Management and Customer Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congested aisles limiting safe use of ladders, stock trolleys and roll cages No defined pedestrian or stock movement paths leading to collisions between staff, contractors and customers Poorly planned locations for promotional displays and dump bins causing trip hazards or blocking emergency exits Inadequate separation of merchandising activities from customers during busy trading times Uncontrolled access of customers into areas where display units or vending machines are being installed or moved Insufficient signage and exclusion zones during restocking and display setup work 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a documented store traffic management plan that defines pedestrian routes, stock movement routes, staging areas and no-go zones for customers during merchandising work Set design standards for aisle width, end-of-gondola displays, and promotional dump bins to maintain clear egress and comply with fire and building regulations Implement a planning process so high-risk activities (e.g. restocking high shelves, vending machine installation, large promotional display setups) are scheduled during low-customer or closed trading periods where reasonably practicable Establish procedures requiring temporary barriers, cones, and clear signage when merchandising tasks encroach on customer pathways Require all new floor layouts, promotional display concepts and vending machine placements to undergo WHS review before implementation Incorporate traffic management expectations into contractor induction, including safe movement of stock cages and trolleys through customer areas Audit compliance with clear access to exits, fire equipment and services, and promptly rectify non-conformances 	2M

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3. Racking, Shelving and Display Unit Design, Procurement and Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate engineering design or rating of shelving, display units and gondolas for product weight and height Use of unstable or non-compliant freestanding promotional displays and dump bins Poorly designed or unanchored display units for heavy or bulky goods (e.g. beverages, bulk packs) leading to tip-over Failure to follow manufacturer installation specifications for shelving and display units Lack of system for periodic inspection and maintenance of shelves, pegs, brackets and fixtures Display units interfering with sprinkler systems, emergency lighting or fire equipment 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify that all shelving, racking, gondolas and major display units meet relevant Australian Standards and manufacturer ratings for load capacity and configuration Implement a formal approval process for procurement of new display units and shelving, requiring WHS and engineering review of stability, anchoring requirements and load capacity Mandate that heavy or tall display units, including loading machines, are fixed or anchored according to manufacturer recommendations and site risk assessment outcomes Develop standard configuration rules for shelving height, span, pitch, overhang, and maximum stock weight per shelf or hook Implement a scheduled inspection program for all shelving and display systems, with documented checks for damage, loose fittings, overloading and stability Maintain a register of shelving and display assets including installation dates, engineering certifications, and inspection records Require contractors and merchandisers to follow documented installation instructions, with supervision and verification for high risk or complex display setups Ensure display and shelving design is coordinated with fire safety, emergency egress and illumination requirements 	2M
4. Stock Handling, Manual Tasks and Ergonomic Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systemic reliance on manual lifting, carrying and reaching for stock replenishment and merchandising Inadequate manual tasks risk assessments for repetitive stocking, carton breakdown and high placement Lack of engineered aids for moving heavy or awkward cartons and for restocking products on high shelves Inappropriate shelf heights forcing frequent bending, twisting, over-reaching or work above shoulder height High workload during peak seasons leading to rushed, unsafe lifting techniques Failure to accommodate workers with pre-existing musculoskeletal conditions or limited capacity 	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> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Working at Height and Use of Ladders for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inappropriate selection and use of ladders or step stools for restocking 	4A		2M

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High Shelves and Displays	<p>products on high shelves and setting up overhead displays</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a system for ladder inspection, maintenance and replacement • Overreaching from ladders, carrying heavy or bulky stock while climbing, and standing on top steps • Use of makeshift access (e.g. stock cages, pallets, shelves) instead of approved access equipment • Insufficient controls to manage work at height during trading hours around customers • No documented competency requirements for workers using ladders or small platforms 		[REDACTED]	
6. Stock Storage Systems, Back-of-House and Product Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly controlled stock levels in back-of-house leading to over-stacking unstable pallets and blocked access ways • Inadequate segregation of heavy, bulky and fragile items increasing risk of collapse or breakage • Lack of systematic product rotation procedures (FIFO) contributing to rushed handling and poor stock keeping • Unclear demarcation between staff-only storage areas and customer accessible spaces • Inadequate lighting and signage in storage areas impacting safe access and stacking • Inefficient stock flow process from receiving to shelf, increasing handling steps and manual task exposures 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
7. Use of Operating Reorder Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-reliance on automated reorder systems causing overstocking and congested storage or display areas 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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and Inventory Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inaccurate data entry or system parameters leading to urgent, last-minute restocking and rushed work Lack of integration between inventory systems and WHS considerations such as weight, handling frequency and storage limitations Insufficient training in handheld scanning devices or stock management software leading to distraction and poor situational awareness in aisles Device charging and cabling creating trip or electrical hazards in merchandising areas 		[REDACTED]	
8. Promotional Display and Display Unit Setup Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short lead times and commercial pressure for promotional launches resulting in inadequate WHS planning Complex or oversized promotional displays that are unstable, obstruct sight lines, aisles or emergency exits Display unit setup occurring during busy trading periods with no exclusion or supervision Use of non-standard fasteners, adhesives or temporary supports not rated for the loads applied Lack of clear responsibility for inspecting and maintaining temporary promotional displays across the promotion period 	1A	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Vending Machine Installation, Relocation and Restocking Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate planning and risk assessment for delivery, positioning and anchoring of heavy vending machines Uncontrolled movement of machines on uneven floors or ramps leading to crush or impact risks 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical hazards from incorrect connection, damaged cords or lack of isolation points • Insufficient clearance around machines for maintenance, restocking and emergency access • Inadequate training and procedures for safe restocking, including manual handling of heavy products and access to internal components • Lack of clear ownership of WHS responsibilities between the retailer and vending service provider 		[REDACTED]	
10. Training, Competence and Supervision for Merchandising Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers and contractors performing merchandising, display setup and restocking tasks without adequate induction or role-specific training • Inconsistent understanding of safe systems of work between directly employed staff and external merchandisers • No formal verification of competence for high-risk tasks such as ladder use, heavy stock handling or vending machine work • Insufficient supervision, particularly for new or young workers, during peak trading and high-pressure promotional periods • Lack of refresher training leading to drift from procedures over time 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
11. Fatigue, Workload and Scheduling for Replenishment and Merchandising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended or irregular shifts for overnight or early-morning replenishing stock and display setup • High workloads during promotional changes and seasonal peaks leading to rushed work and reduced adherence to procedures 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient staffing levels for large product resets or complex display installations • Lack of consideration of rest breaks during physically demanding stocking and merchandising tasks • Pressure to complete merchandising tasks during short windows, increasing risk of shortcutting controls 		[REDACTED]	
12. Plant, Equipment and Tools Used for Stocking and Merchandising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate maintenance and inspection of trolleys, roll cages, pallet jacks and other handling equipment • Poor design or selection of equipment leading to instability, excessive push/pull forces or pinch points • Uncontrolled use of powered equipment (e.g. ride-on or walk-behind equipment, compact order pickers) around customers • Lack of standard operating procedure for safe use, parking and storage of merchandising equipment • Improvised tools or modifications made to equipment without assessment 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
13. Hazard Communication, Labelling and Chemical/Product Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient information provided to staff and merchandisers about hazardous products (e.g. cleaning chemicals, aerosols, pressurised containers) • Inadequate management of damaged or leaking products leading to slip, trip or exposure risks • Poorly controlled disposal of waste packaging, shrink wrap and strapping creating trip and entanglement hazards during restocking • Lack of clear labelling and signage for heavy or awkward products on shelves and in stockrooms 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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14. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Response and Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear procedures for responding to shelf collapses, falling objects, or display unit failures in customer areas Inadequate first aid coverage during early morning, late night or promotional changeovers Poor communication paths for escalating serious incidents involving contractors or visitors Emergency exits and equipment obscured by stock, display units or vending machines Lack of drills or training specific to merchandising-related emergencies (e.g. product spillage, glass breakage, electrical fault in vending unit) 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	1L

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.