

Roof and Ceiling Spaces

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. Governance, WHS Duties and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure of PCBU and officers to understand and discharge primary duties under WHS Act 2011 in relation to work in roof and ceiling spaces Absence of a documented WHS management framework specific to roof and ceiling space work (policies, procedures, responsibilities) Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives about risks peculiar to roof and ceiling spaces No systematic process to identify and monitor changes in legislation, codes of practice and Australian Standards relevant to electrical, asbestos, confined spaces and hot environments in ceiling spaces Poor integration of contractor management and roof-space work requirements within the broader organisational WHS governance structure 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and endorse a WHS governance procedure that explicitly references duties under the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations for work in roof and ceiling spaces (including electrical, fall, heat, asbestos and biological risks) Assign clear WHS responsibilities and accountability for roof and ceiling space risk management to officers, line managers, supervisors and project managers within position descriptions and performance plans Implement a formal legislative compliance register covering WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulation, relevant Codes of Practice (e.g. Managing Electrical Risks, Confined Spaces, Managing the Risk of Falls, How to Safely Remove Asbestos) and key Australian Standards, and review it at least annually Establish a documented process for consulting with workers and Health and Safety Representatives on changes to procedures, equipment and work methods for roof and ceiling spaces, including toolbox talks and WHS committee agendas Integrate roof and ceiling space risk requirements into the organisation's WHS Policy, Risk Management Procedure and Contract Management Procedure so they apply consistently to all sites and projects Require officers to undertake due diligence activities (e.g. site visits, audits, WHS performance reporting) to include verification that roof and ceiling space risks are identified, controlled and reviewed Ensure insurance and contractual documents (including with principal contractors and subcontractors) reflect responsibilities and expectations for safe work in roof and ceiling spaces 	Medium
2. WHS Risk Management Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal, repeatable risk assessment process specific to roof and ceiling spaces, leading to incomplete identification of system and management risks Risk assessments not completed before new or changed work in roof and ceiling spaces (e.g. refurbishments, new plant installation, cabling work) Failure to consider cumulative risks such as combined electrical, heat, confined space, biological and structural hazards Risk controls for roof and ceiling space work not recorded, tracked or reviewed in a central WHS risk register Lack of learning from past incidents, near misses or external alerts relating to ceiling and roof space work 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal WHS Risk Management Procedure requiring documented task and project risk assessments for all work involving roof and ceiling spaces, aligned with WHS Regulation risk management obligations Develop a standardised roof and ceiling space risk assessment template that prompts consideration of electrical, fall from height, structural integrity, heat stress, asbestos, hazardous chemicals, biological hazards, wildlife, confined space characteristics and access/egress issues Require risk assessments to be completed and approved by a competent person prior to planning or tendering work that involves roof or ceiling spaces, and re-assessed when conditions change (e.g. extreme weather, building alterations, new equipment) Maintain a WHS risk register entry specifically for roof and ceiling space work, with documented controls, risk ratings, responsible persons and review dates Introduce a formal process for capturing, investigating and analysing incidents and near misses in roof and ceiling spaces, and ensure corrective actions and lessons learned are incorporated into procedures and training Schedule periodic reviews (e.g. annually or post-project) of the effectiveness of system controls for roof and ceiling spaces, including consultation with workers on practicality of controls 	Medium

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a hierarchy of control decision tool during risk assessments to avoid over-reliance on PPE and administrative controls where higher-order controls are reasonably practicable 	
3. Design, Construction and Structural Integrity of Roof and Ceiling Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original building design not considering future worker access and safe movement within roof and ceiling spaces Unknown structural capacity of ceiling joists, trusses and roofing members to support loads, leading to potential falls through fragile surfaces Lack of permanent safe access systems (e.g. walkways, platforms, anchor points) for maintenance and inspection activities Inadequate documentation of as-built conditions, modifications and hidden services in roof and ceiling spaces Poor coordination between designers, engineers and WHS personnel during refurbishment or new works affecting roof and ceiling spaces 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a design review procedure requiring consideration of safe access, structural capacity and maintenance requirements for roof and ceiling spaces at the planning and design stages, consistent with designer duties under WHS legislation Require structural assessments by a qualified engineer before authorising regular worker access to existing roof and ceiling spaces where load capacity or integrity is uncertain Incorporate engineered controls such as permanent walkways, crawl boards, guardrails, access platforms, barriers and anchor points into building or refurbishment designs where reasonably practicable Ensure building design documentation (including structural drawings, service layouts and changes) is updated, controlled and accessible to those planning work in roof and ceiling spaces Implement a change management process so any structural alterations (e.g. removal of walls, addition of plant) trigger review of roof and ceiling space structural capacity and access design Coordinate early involvement of WHS specialists in design and planning meetings for projects that create or alter roof and ceiling spaces to ensure risk elimination or minimisation at source Specify in design briefs and project scopes that designers must identify residual risks associated with roof and ceiling spaces and communicate these in safety in design reports 	Medium
4. Electrical Safety and Services Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unidentified live electrical cables, junction boxes and equipment within roof and ceiling spaces Inadequate systems to ensure de-energisation, isolation or verification before work in proximity of electrical installations Unknown routing of electrical, gas, fire and other services in ceiling spaces, increasing risk of contact or damage Lack of coordination between electrical contractors, facilities management and other trades working in roof and ceiling spaces Insufficient maintenance and inspection regimes for electrical installations located in roof and ceiling spaces (e.g. insulation damage, overheating, poor terminations) 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium

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			[REDACTED]	
5. Access, Egress and Work Environment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate or unsafe permanent access points (e.g. small manholes, unstable ladders, poorly located access hatches) Restricted movement, low clearance and obstructed pathways within roof and ceiling spaces, impeding emergency egress Lack of lighting, poor visibility and trip hazards from cabling, ducting and framing members No systematic assessment of emergency escape provisions specific to roof and ceiling spaces Uncontrolled access by unauthorised or untrained persons into roof and ceiling spaces 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
6. Thermal Environment, Ventilation and Confined-Space-Like Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excessive heat and humidity in roof and ceiling spaces, creating risk of heat stress and heat stroke Poor ventilation leading to accumulation of fumes, dust or low oxygen levels, potentially approximating confined space hazards even where not legally defined as a confined space Lack of systematic assessment of roof and ceiling spaces against confined space criteria under WHS Regulations Inadequate organisational controls for working time limits, rest breaks and hydration in hot roof and ceiling spaces Insufficient contingency planning for extreme weather events (e.g. heatwaves) affecting temperature in roof and ceiling spaces 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

SAMPLE

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			[REDACTED]	
7. Hazardous Materials: Asbestos, Dusts and Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of asbestos containing materials (ACM) such as insulation, eaves, pipe lagging or ceiling linings within or adjacent to roof and ceiling spaces • Disturbance of accumulated dusts, rodent droppings, bird droppings, moulds or other biological contaminants during access or work • Inadequate asbestos registers and hazardous materials surveys for older buildings with accessible roof and ceiling spaces • Lack of organisational controls to prevent unlicensed or untrained workers from disturbing ACM in roof and ceiling spaces • Insufficient consideration of hazardous chemicals (e.g. stored pesticides, sealants, residues) not properly used or above ceiling areas 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
8. Biological Hazards, Vermin and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rodent, bird or insect infestations in roof and ceiling spaces, leading to exposure to droppings, nesting material, bites and stings • Potential presence of snakes, possums or other wildlife within roof and ceiling voids, particularly in regional or semi-rural locations • Lack of systematic pest management plans targeting roof and ceiling spaces • Inadequate information provided to workers and contractors about known or likely biological hazards before entering roof spaces 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of organisational processes for safely managing and reporting wildlife encounters in roof and ceiling spaces 		[REDACTED]	
9. Working at Heights and Fall-Through Prevention Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled exposure to fall-through risks from fragile roofing materials, ceiling panels or weak joists during work in or above roof and ceiling spaces Lack of systematic fall prevention planning for tasks involving roof platforms, skylights or suspended ceilings Insufficient engineering controls such as fall-prevention barriers, guardrails or static line systems for roof access Over-reliance on PPE such as harnesses without organisational systems for inspection, maintenance and competency verification Inadequate integration of ceiling space fall-prevention requirements into contractor management and project planning 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
10. Competency, Training and Information Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers and contractors entering roof and ceiling spaces without adequate competency, induction or awareness of specific risks Training programs not tailored to hazards unique to roof and ceiling 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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	<p>spaces (e.g. electrical proximity, heat, structural fragility, biological hazards)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic verification of licences, qualifications and experience for personnel undertaking specialised work in roof and ceiling spaces (e.g. electrical, HVAC, asbestos, height safety) Inconsistent communication of site-specific information such as as-built drawings, asbestos registers and known hazard reports Knowledge loss when experienced staff leave, due to lack of documented procedures and captured learnings about roof and ceiling space hazards 		[REDACTED]	
11. Contractor and Procurement Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of contractors who lack appropriate WHS systems or experience for work in roof and ceiling spaces Procurement processes focused on cost and time without adequate weighting of WHS competence and roof-space-specific controls Inconsistent contractor inductions and handovers regarding hazards and controls in roof and ceiling spaces Poor coordination between multiple contractors working in shared roof and ceiling spaces, leading to interface risks Subcontracting chains that dilute accountability and oversight of WHS obligations in roof and ceiling spaces 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
12. Plant, Equipment and Technology Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of unsuitable or poorly maintained plant and equipment (e.g. ladders, portable lights, test instruments, access platforms) in roof and ceiling spaces 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of standardisation in equipment used for access, lighting, communication and environmental monitoring in roof and ceiling spaces No formal inspection, maintenance or replacement schedules for critical equipment used routinely in roof and ceiling spaces Insufficient adoption of available technology to reduce exposure (e.g. remote inspection tools, thermal imaging, cameras) Inadequate organisational controls over storage and transportation of equipment through occupied areas to roof and ceiling access points 		[REDACTED]	
13. Health Monitoring, Fatigue and Psychological Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical strain and musculoskeletal disorders due to awkward postures, confined movement and manual handling in roof and ceiling spaces Fatigue from physically demanding work in hot, cramped and low-visibility conditions, particularly during extended or after-hours work Psychological stress or anxiety associated with claustrophobic conditions, darkness, pests and perceived danger in roof and ceiling spaces Inadequate organisational systems for health monitoring where exposure to specific hazards (e.g. heat, biological agents, asbestos) warrants surveillance Lack of consideration of individual health and fitness to work in demanding roof and ceiling space environments 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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			[REDACTED]	
14. Emergency Planning, Incident Response and Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed or ineffective emergency response due to restricted access and egress in roof and ceiling spaces • Lack of pre-planned rescue procedures for incapacitated persons within roof and ceiling spaces, particularly when working at heights or near electrical hazards • Poor communication systems for workers operating in remote or concealed roof and ceiling spaces • Emergency response teams and first aiders not familiar with the specific constraints of roof and ceiling space environments • Failure to coordinate emergency planning with external emergency services for complex roof and ceiling configurations 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
15. Monitoring, Audit and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to detect deteriorating controls or emergency response procedures associated with roof and ceiling spaces over time • Inconsistent application of organisational procedures for roof and ceiling space work across different sites and business units • Limited visibility of WHS performance indicators specific to roof and ceiling spaces for managers and officers • Audit programs that do not adequately cover roof and ceiling space hazards due to access difficulties or low awareness • Lack of structured continuous improvement activities targeting system-level controls for roof and ceiling space risks 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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			[REDACTED]	
			[REDACTED]	

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/factsheets-and-resources/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.