

Rural and Wire Fencing Post Driving and Tensioning

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, Planning and Legislative Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of documented WHS management plan for rural fencing activities Inadequate understanding of WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations by managers and supervisors Failure to apply relevant Codes of Practice (e.g. managing risks of plant, manual tasks, working in rural and remote areas, electrical risks) No formal process for consultation with workers and contractors on fencing risks Poor integration of WHS requirements into tendering, contracts and project planning for fencing work Inadequate budgeting for safety controls (guarding, plant upgrades, training, PPE, communications, emergency equipment) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and maintain a documented WHS Management Plan specific to rural and wire fencing activities, aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Undertake and document legal compliance review covering relevant legislation, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards applicable to fencing, plant and electrical work Embed WHS requirements and risk controls into contracts, procurement specifications and job planning documentation for all fencing projects Implement a structured WHS consultation procedure (toolbox meetings, pre-start briefings, safety committees) that specifically addresses fencing risks and associated risks Allocate dedicated WHS budgets for engineering controls (e.g. guarded post drivers, tensioning devices, insulation tools, guarding on chain wire machines) and training Schedule periodic management reviews and internal audits of fencing operations to verify implementation and effectiveness of the WHS management system Ensure written procedures require WHS risk assessments to be completed and approved before commencing new or significantly changed fencing projects 	3H
2. Contractor, Labour Hire and Subcontractor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of subcontractors for rural fencing who do not have adequate WHS systems Insufficient verification of competency in post driving, tensioning, chain wire machine operation and fence installation Inconsistent safety standards between principal contractor and subcontractors Poor communication of site-specific hazards (e.g. underground services, existing electrified fences, terrain, vegetation) Lack of clarity about WHS roles, responsibilities and supervision arrangements Inadequate monitoring of contractor performance on safety requirements 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal contractor prequalification process that requires evidence of WHS policies, risk assessments, incident history, training records and licences applicable to fencing work Include clear WHS obligations and minimum standards in contracts and purchase orders for all fencing services Require subcontractors to provide task-specific WHS documentation (e.g. SWMS for post driving, wire tensioning, electric fence testing, chain wire machine operation) prior to work commencing Establish a site induction and communication process that covers local hazards, emergency procedures, electrical isolation controls and landholder requirements Define and document WHS responsibilities, supervision expectations and stop-work authority for both principal contractor and subcontractors Carry out regular site inspections and safety performance reviews of fencing contractors, with documented corrective actions and follow-up Require contractors to report notifiable incidents, near misses and hazards immediately and participate in investigation and corrective actions 	2M
3. Competency, Licensing and Training for Fencing Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers operating post drivers, tractors, tensioners and chain wire 	4A		2M

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	<p>fencing machines without formal competency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate training in safe installation of barbed wire and electric fencing systems • Lack of understanding of electrical hazards associated with energisers, live fences and fault finding • Insufficient training in mechanical hazards of powered tensioners and wire pulling systems • Limited knowledge of job planning, exclusion zones and safe work distances from overhead and underground power • No verification of competency for high-risk supporting tasks (e.g. operating machinery, working near live electrical installations) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a competency framework for rural fencing roles that specifies required skills, licences and training for each activity (post driving, chain wire machine use, tensioning wires, barbed wire installation, electric fence testing) • Require documented verification of competency (VOC) before workers operate post drivers, tractors, skid steers, chain wire machines or powered tensioning equipment • Provide task-specific training covering hazards of barbed wire handling, wire recoil, cutting and clipping, and use of mechanical tensioning systems • Implement formal training and assessment in electrical safety for workers installing and testing electric fencing, including lock-out/tag-out and safe testing procedures • Maintain a central training register detailing qualifications, expiry dates, refresher requirements and plant authorisations • Schedule regular refresher training and toolbox talks that incorporate incidents, near misses and regulatory or equipment changes • Ensure supervisors are trained in hazard identification, risk assessment and safe job planning for fencing operations 	
4. Plant and Equipment Selection, Design and Guarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of inappropriate or poorly designed post drivers with inadequate guarding, noise and vibration controls • Unguarded pinch points, rotating parts and drive mechanisms on chain wire fencing machines and mechanical tensioners • Inadequate guarding of PTO shafts and hydraulic hoses on tractors and post driver attachments • Selection of non-insulated tools and components for electric fence installation and testing • Use of outdated or poorly maintained cutting equipment (grinders, cutters) for wire and metal fencing • Lack of engineered barriers or reels to manage tensioned wire and prevent uncontrolled recoil 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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5. Plant Maintenance, Inspection and Pre-Use Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure of post drivers, hydraulic systems or chain wire machines due to poor maintenance • Undetected defects in cutting tools leading to disc failure or projectile hazards • Use of damaged or worn wire tensioners, grips and clamps that may slip or break under load • Hydraulic leaks creating fire, slip and environmental risks • Inadequate inspection of energisers, earth stakes and cabling on electric fences • No structured process for removing defective equipment from service 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Job Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fencing work commenced without systematic assessment of terrain, weather, vegetation and ground conditions • Failure to identify underground services and overhead power near proposed fence line • Inadequate consideration of the line of fire when tensioning wires or driving posts • Lack of assessment of interaction between multiple work groups, vehicles and plant along fence lines • Poor planning for proximity of new electric fences to existing electrical infrastructure, pipelines and public access areas • Failure to consider environmental constraints such as fire danger ratings, flood risks or extreme heat 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Remote, Rural and Isolated Work Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers installing and maintaining fences in remote areas without effective communication systems 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in emergency response due to distance, terrain and lack of accurate location information Working alone while tensioning wires, installing electric fences or operating post drivers Exposure to extreme weather, bushfire conditions, snakes, insects and aggressive livestock Fatigue and reduced decision-making capacity due to long travel times and extended work shifts 		[REDACTED]	
8. Traffic, Vehicle and Mobile Plant Interface Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collision between vehicles, tractors, post drivers and workers along fence lines or access tracks Poorly managed interaction with public road traffic when fencing along road reserves Uncontrolled vehicle movement on sloping, uneven or soft ground during post driving or wire tensioning Inadequate loading, securing or transport of posts, rolls of wire and fencing machines Lack of visibility in dusty, low-light or vegetated areas where fencing is undertaken 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Electrical Safety and Electric Fencing Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadvertent contact with live electric fences during installation, maintenance or testing Incorrect earthing or energiser installation leading to electric shock or arcing 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electric fence wires inadvertently contacting overhead or underground electrical infrastructure • Inadequate isolation, lock-out or tagging when working on existing electric fences • Use of non-compliant energisers or improvised equipment • Lack of clear signage and public warning for electrified fences near public access 		[REDACTED]	
10. Wire Handling, Tensioning and Stored Energy Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wire recoil or failure of tensioning equipment striking workers during tensioning or release • Uncontrolled release of tension when cutting, clipping or stapling fencing wire • Improper anchoring of strainers or posts leading to movement under load • Inadequate management of multiple tensioned wires (plain, barbed, electric) on the same fence line • Use of makeshift devices or inappropriate anchors for tensioning systems • Lack of controls for bystanders or other crews working in the line of fire 	1A	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Work Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive manual handling of posts, rolls of wire, barbed wire and tools causing musculoskeletal disorders • Awkward postures when clipping, stapling or tying off fencing wires at low or high positions 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrying heavy or unstable loads over rough terrain for extended distances Prolonged vibration exposure from hand-held tools or machinery controls Lack of job rotation and poor task planning leading to fatigue and strain 		[REDACTED]	
12. Hazardous Substances, Noise, Dust and Environmental Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exposure to noise from post drivers, compressors, tractors and cutting tools exceeding exposure standards Dust generation during ground preparation, vehicle movement and post driving, affecting respiratory health and visibility Exposure to fuels, oils, lubricants, paints or treatments used on posts and wire components Adverse effects of heat, cold, UV radiation and sudden weather changes on workers performing fencing tasks Increased fire risk during hot, dry and windy conditions when cutting grass or driving posts 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Public, Neighbour and Third-Party Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unauthorised access by members of the public to active fencing work areas, machinery or newly installed electric fences Inadequate communication with neighbours, landowners and utilities about fence alignments and electrification Straying livestock or wildlife being trapped or injured in partially completed fences and tensioned wires 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing activities impacting public roads, tracks, recreation areas or adjoining properties without controls Lack of clear delineation between work areas and public access zones 		[REDACTED]	
14. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Corrective Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-reporting of incidents, near misses and hazards during fencing work Repeat occurrences of similar failures in wire tensioning, plant operation or electric fence installation Inadequate root cause analysis leading to superficial corrective actions Failure to notify regulators of notifiable incidents in accordance with WHS legislation Poor communication of lessons learned to crews and contractors 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
15. Emergency Preparedness, First Aid and Rescue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed or ineffective response resulting in serious injury from vehicle collision, post driver incidents or electric shock Lack of first aid resources appropriate for remote fencing work, including bleeding control and immobilisation Workers unaware of emergency procedures or unable to provide accurate location details to emergency services No planning for rescue or retrieval from difficult terrain along fence lines Inadequate arrangements for psychological support following serious or traumatic incidents 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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16. Documentation, Records and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical safety information for fencing plant, procedures and training not controlled or kept up to date • Loss of maintenance, inspection and training records needed for compliance and decision-making • Inconsistent version control of procedures leading to confusion among crews and contractors • Lack of structured review of fencing systems, technology and incident data to improve risk controls • Over-reliance on informal practices rather than documented systems 	3H	<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>	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.