Scaffold Inspection Tagging and Handover

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:

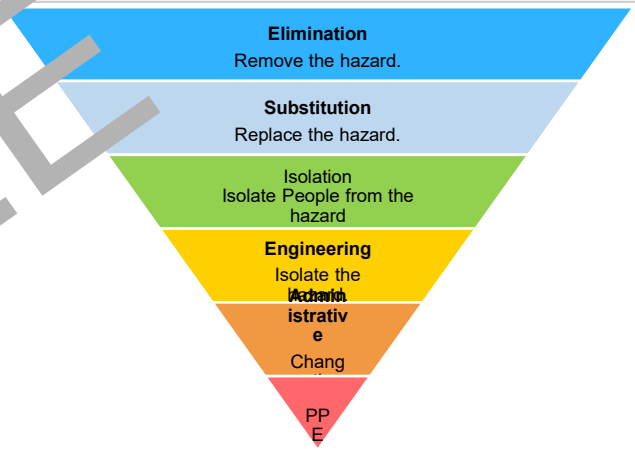
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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, Legal Compliance & Consultation	• Lack of clear organisational policy for scaffold inspection, tagging and handover leading to inconsistent practices • Failure to align scaffold inspection and tagging procedures with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 1576, AS/NZS 4576) • Inadequate consultation with workers, Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and principal contractors on scaffold safety requirements • Undefined roles, responsibilities and authorities for scaffold inspection, tagging and sign-off • Absence of a documented system for managing changes in legislation, Codes of Practice or manufacturer instructions • Insufficient oversight of subcontracted scaffold providers and their WHS governance arrangements	4A	• Develop and implement a Scaffold Safety Management Procedure that explicitly covers inspection, tagging, handover and re-inspection, aligned with the WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and current Australian Standards • Define and document roles, responsibilities and competency requirements for scaffolders, scaffold inspectors, supervisors and Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) representatives, including clear lines of authority for handover and re-tagging decisions • Establish a formal consultation process with workers, HSRs and subcontractor representatives to review scaffold inspection and tagging systems, including toolbox talks and safety committee meetings • Maintain a legal and standards register for scaffolding, with periodic review by a competent person to ensure procedures reflect current statutory and industry requirements • Include scaffold inspection and tagging obligations in all principal contractor and subcontractor WHS agreements and pre-qualification assessments • Implement periodic internal audits and management reviews of scaffold safety governance, reporting outcomes and corrective actions to senior management	3H
2. Competency, Licensing & Training of Scaffold Inspectors	• Use of unlicensed or inadequately trained personnel to inspect or tag scaffolds • Inspectors unaware of legal requirements for design, erection and inspection of scaffolds over 4 metres • Insufficient training on identification of structural defects, coupler and clamp failures, and deterioration due to weather or corrosion • No formal verification of inspector competency for specialised configurations (suspended, hung, cantilever, or high-risk scaffolds) • Poor understanding of control requirements for ice, snow, strong wind and other environmental conditions affecting scaffold safety • Inadequate refresher training, leading to knowledge gaps about current	4A	• Mandate that scaffold inspection and tagging are undertaken only by persons holding the appropriate High Risk Work Licence (where required) or demonstrable competency in accordance with WHS Regulations and relevant Australian Standards • Develop and deliver a scaffold inspection training program covering structural principles, defect recognition, footing stability, environmental hazards (including ice, snow and wind), and inspection of couplers and clamps • Implement a competency assessment and authorisation process for scaffold inspectors, including practical evaluation and sign-off by a senior competent person • Maintain a training and licence register with expiry dates and verification of external certifications, accessible to supervisors and WHS personnel • Provide periodic refresher training, toolbox sessions and technical bulletins when changes occur in scaffold systems, components or legal requirements • Require subcontractor scaffold providers to produce evidence of inspector competency and licensing as part of pre-qualification and ongoing performance reviews	2M

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
	standards and organisational procedures			
3. Scaffold Design, Engineering Verification & Change Control	• Use of generic or outdated scaffold designs not suited to site conditions, loadings or environmental exposures • Lack of engineering verification or design certification for complex or high-risk scaffold structures • Uncontrolled field modifications after initial erection, resulting in unverified structural integrity • Inadequate specification of tie patterns, bracing, permissible loads and restrictions in design documentation • Failure to consider wind loading, potential ice and snow accumulation, or ground movement in the design phase • No formal process for recording and approving design changes following inspection findings	4A	• Implement a formal scaffold design manag ent pro s requiring use of manufacturer's design data or site-specific engineered designs signed off by ied engineer for complex or high-risk scaffolds • Ensure design documentati specifies loading sses, tie brace details, allowable environmental conditions (including wind thre olds and ice/snow owa es), and any operational restrictions • Introduce a chang proc re where any mo ification to the scaffold configuration is documented, as ssed an pprov by a com ent person before re-tagging or continued use • Maintain a c trolled draw g and de gister linked to scaffold identification numbers and locations, acces le to in ectors d supervisors • Requ engine review of scaffolds in areas subject to strong wind exposure, unstable ground, or potenti fo e and ow accumulation, with design controls for these conditions • Integra de n assu tions and limitations into the scaffold handover documentation and user forma n to p vent overloading or unauthorised alterations	2M
4. Scaffold Erection Quality, Verification & Handover System	• Inadequate verification that erected scaffolds comply with design and manufacturer instructi s prior to tagging • Poor workmansh and as quality not detected handove users • Lack of structured interface bet en erection crew and inspecti personnel leading to miscommunication of residual issues • Incomplete documentation of initial handover inspection and acceptance criteria • Systemic tolerance for minor non-conformances which cumulatively compromise scaffold stability and safety • Failure to record and manage outstanding defects or limitations at the time of handover	4A	[redacted]	2M

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
5. Scaffold Footing, Ground Conditions & Stability Management	• Systemic failure to assess ground bearing capacity and subsurface conditions before scaffold erection and inspection • Inadequate systems to monitor changes to soil moisture, wash-outs, undermining or subsidence over time • Lack of documented criteria for acceptable sole boards, base plates and support arrangements • Poor control of excavations, services trenches or undermining activities adjacent to scaffold foundations • Failure to incorporate footing stability checks into routine inspection and tagging processes • Inadequate escalation process when significant settlement, cracking or movement is observed	4A	[redacted]	2M
6. Environmental & Weather Risk Management (Ice, Snow, Wind & Rain)	• Absence of a formal process for monitoring and responding to strong winds affecting scaffold integrity and safe access • Inadequate syste[redacted] to detect and control ice and sno[redacted] accumulation on scaffold decks, lad[redacted] ar[redacted] structural members • Failure to consider the effects of [redacted]avy rain, flooding or erosion [redacted] foundations and stability • No predetermined wind speed thresholds and response actions (e.g. work cessation, inspections, additional ties) • Limited communication of weather-related restrictions and emergency actions to supervisors and workers • Inconsistent re-inspection of scaffolds after severe weather or environmental events	4A	[redacted]	2M

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
7. Inspection Regime, Frequency & Coverage	• Inadequate inspection frequency leading to undetected deterioration, damage or unauthorised alterations • Failure to conduct inspections after events such as storms, impact, ground movement or significant modification • Inconsistent inspection standards between different inspectors, shifts or subcontractors • Inspections not covering critical components such as couplers, clamps, ties, ledgers, transoms, guardrails and access points • Poor integration of housekeeping, access clearances and exclusion zones into inspection routines • Lack of traceable records demonstrating that inspections have been completed and defects rectified	4A	[redacted]	2M
8. Coupler, Clamp & Component Integrity Management	• Systemic use of worn, damaged, incompatible or uncertified couplers an clamps in scaffold assemblies • Lack of a formal insp ion and segregation proces or scaffold components prior use and duri periodic inspection • Corrosion, metal fatigue or mecha al damage not detected or recorded maintenance systems • Mixing of components from different manufacturers without engineering verification of compatibility • Inadequate controls over torqueing and securing of couplers and clamps in accordance with manufacturer requirements • Poor traceability of defective components removed from service, resulting in inadvertent re-use	4A	[redacted]	2M
9. Scaffold Tagging System, Identification & Access Control	• Inconsistent use of scaffold tags leading to uncertainty about scaffold status and inspection dates	4A		2M

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
	• Tags not clearly legible, weather-resistant or located at all intended access points • Unauthorised alteration, removal or bypassing of tags by workers or subcontractors • Tagging system not integrated with inspection registers, resulting in mismatched information • Failure to differentiate between safe for use, restricted use and out-of-service scaffolds • No formal protocol for immediate tag changes following identification of defects, strong winds, ice/snow events or structural concerns		[redacted]	
10. Handover Communication, User Information & Restrictions	• Inadequate communication of scaffold limitations, loading capacities and environmental restrictions at handover • Users unaware of requirements for housekeeping, snow/ice clearance and behaviour during strong winds • Misunderstanding between principal contractor, scaffold supplier and end users about who controls modifications and re-inspection • Failure to communicate residual risks or partial closures identified during inspection • Language barriers or literacy issues preventing workers from understanding handover information • Lack of feedback mechanisms for users to report emerging issues or observed defects	3H	[redacted]	2M
11. Housekeeping, Access Management & Overloading Controls	• Systemic poor housekeeping on scaffold decks leading to trip hazards and obstructed access during inspections	3H	[redacted]	2M

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
	• Accumulation of tools, materials, snow and debris adding unaccounted loads to scaffold bays • Lack of controls on storage of heavy items, pallets or equipment on scaffolds beyond design limits • Inadequate management of access ladders, stair towers and entry points causing congestion or misuse • No defined responsibility for routine housekeeping and snow/ice clearance on scaffolds between inspections • Failure to integrate housekeeping checks into the formal inspection and tagging process		[redacted]	
12. Change Management, Modifications & Unauthorised Alterations	• Workers or subcontractors making unapproved changes to scaffolds (removing guardrails, ties, planks or toe boards) without re-inspection • Lack of a structured process for planning and approving scaffold modifications or extensions • Inadequate supervision and monitoring of multi-trade use leading to gradual erosion of scaffold integrity • Failure to re-tag or update records after modifications, resulting in outdated safety information • Limited investigation of repeated or systemic unauthorised alterations to identify underlying causal factors • Misalignment between scaffold design assumptions and actual usage as the project evolves	4A	[redacted]	2M
13. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Response & Structural Failure Contingency	• No predefined response plan for suspected scaffold instability, partial collapse or serious defects identified during inspection • Inadequate emergency egress planning from scaffolds during extreme weather or structural concerns	3H	[redacted]	1L

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
	• Failure to promptly isolate and communicate unsafe scaffold areas following incident reports or near misses • Lack of incident investigation processes specifically addressing scaffold system and management failures • Poor integration of scaffold emergencies into site emergency drills and communication protocols • Delayed involvement of engineers or competent persons following significant scaffold incidents		[redacted]	
14. Monitoring, Audit, Continuous Improvement & Contractor Management	• No systematic performance monitoring of scaffold inspection, tagging and handover processes • Infrequent or superficial WHS audits that fail to identify systemic scaffold management deficiencies • Poor oversight of external scaffold contractors, including limited review of their inspection and tagging practices • Lack of key performance indicators (KPIs) or metrics for scaffold-related incidents, defects and non-conformances • Failure to act on audit findings, incident trends or worker feedback relating scaffold safety • Fragmented documentation and record-keeping hampering trend analysis and regulatory defence	3	[redacted]	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

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