

Severe Weather Safety

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, Policy and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a formal severe weather safety policy aligned to WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Inadequate consideration of severe weather (rain, heat, wind) in the WHS risk management framework No clear allocation of due diligence responsibilities to Officers for severe weather risk Failure to consult workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on severe weather controls Inadequate review of policies following severe weather incidents or regulatory updates Lack of documented criteria for ceasing or modifying work during severe weather events 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a Severe Weather Safety Policy that explicitly references duties under the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations, including duty of care and risk management obligations Integrate severe weather (rain, heat, wind and combined conditions) into the organisation-wide WHS risk register and annual WHS planning cycle Assign clear governance responsibilities to Officers, Managers and Supervisors for overseeing severe weather risk, documented in position descriptions and delegations Establish a formal consultation process with workers and HSRs on development, implementation and review of severe weather procedures and triggers for work cessation Implement a scheduled review (at least annually and after significant weather events) of the Severe Weather Safety Policy and associated procedures Define and document objective criteria and decision trees for modifying, postponing or ceasing work under specified severe weather conditions (e.g. wind speed thresholds, heat stress indices, rainfall intensity) Ensure contracts with labour hire providers, contractors and subcontractors include explicit requirements to comply with the organisation's severe weather governance framework Maintain documented evidence of training, communication and policy acknowledgement to demonstrate due diligence 	3H
2. Weather Hazard Identification and Monitoring Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No systematic process to identify and monitor weather-related hazards (rain, heat, wind) at work sites Reliance on informal observation rather than objective data (e.g. BOM forecasts, on-site measurements) Failure to consider microclimate differences between site locations Inadequate monitoring of rapid weather escalation (e.g. thunderstorms, high wind gusts, flash flooding) Lack of clear responsibility for monitoring and acting on weather information Inaccurate or delayed communication of changing weather conditions to field crews 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal weather monitoring procedure using Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) forecasts, warnings and real-time data as primary reference sources Install appropriate on-site weather monitoring equipment where feasible (e.g. anemometers for wind speed, temperature and humidity sensors, rain gauges) and maintain calibration schedules Assign designated Weather Duty Officers or responsible supervisors for each site/shift to review and interpret weather data at defined intervals Develop triggers for heightened monitoring and pre-emptive controls (e.g. BOM severe weather warnings, forecast heatwave conditions, forecast heavy rain or damaging winds) Create a centralised weather dashboard or app (or use an approved third-party platform) that aggregates alerts and site-specific conditions for decision-makers and supervisors Ensure weather monitoring processes cover pre-start (planning) and intra-shift (dynamic) review, with documented time-stamped records Establish arrangements for localised field reporting (e.g. workers escalating on-the-ground observations of deteriorating conditions) Incorporate climate change and seasonal trends into planning, including high-heat seasons and storm seasons 	2M
3. Organisational Risk Assessment and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to undertake systematic risk assessment for severe weather across business activities and locations 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct formal WHS risk assessments focusing on severe weather risks (rain, heat, wind) for each key business function and representative site type 	2M

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Planning for Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate consideration of cumulative and interacting hazards (e.g. high wind plus working at height plus rain-slick surfaces) Generic risk assessments that do not account for task-specific or site-specific severe weather exposures Lack of consideration of vulnerable worker groups (e.g. new workers, contractors, workers with health conditions) in severe weather planning Poor integration of severe weather risk findings into budgets, resourcing and project timelines No documented contingency plans for deferring or rescheduling work due to severe weather 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use structured methodologies (e.g. risk matrices, bow-tie analysis) to identify root causes, controls and escalation factors for weather-related risks Ensure risk assessments consider combined and sequential weather hazards, including impacts on plant, structures, ground conditions and human performance Include specific consideration of vulnerable workers and reasonably foreseeable health conditions (e.g. heat intolerance, cardiovascular issues) when assessing heat and weather risks Embed severe weather scenarios into business continuity planning and project risk registers, with associated contingency funding and time allowances Develop formal contingency plans for rescheduling and sequencing work in response to predicted or actual severe weather, including contractual allowances with clients Require project and site set-up documentation (e.g. Project WHS Plans) to address severe weather risks explicitly and link to the organisation's risk assessment Establish periodic review of severe weather risk assessments following significant events, incidents or near misses 	
4. Emergency and Incident Response for Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear emergency response procedures for sudden severe weather (e.g. storm cells, microbursts, lightning flash flooding, extreme heat onset) Inadequate evacuation, shelter-in-place or stand-down protocols during severe weather events Insufficient resources (shelter, vehicles, communications) to safely evacuate or secure sites Poor integration of severe weather events into existing emergency plans and drills Delayed or confused decision-making when severe weather impacts multiple sites simultaneously Lack of post-incident debriefing and investigation specific to weather-related emergencies 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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5. Communication, Alerts and Escalation Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate communication channels to relay weather warnings and instructions to dispersed or remote workers Delayed escalation of time-critical information about deteriorating conditions on site Workers unaware of organisational severe weather thresholds or misunderstanding the instructions given Over-reliance on a single communication method (e.g. mobile reception only) that may fail during storms or in remote areas Language, literacy or cultural barriers impacting understanding of severe weather messages No verification that critical messages (e.g. cease-work orders) have been received and actioned 	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>	2M
6. Training, Competency and Weather Hazard Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers and supervisors lack awareness of weather-related hazards (rain, heat, wind) and early warning signs of danger Inadequate competency to assess site conditions against organisation weather thresholds Lack of understanding of heat stress, dehydration, hypothermia and wind-related hazards such as flying debris Supervisors unable to confidently apply stop-work authority when required Training not refreshed, leading to outdated knowledge of procedures and systems Contractors and labour hire workers not inducted in the organisation's severe weather controls 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
7. Engineering and Infrastructure Resilience to Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worksites, temporary structures and shelters not designed or rated for local severe wind or heavy rain conditions • Poor drainage leading to localised flooding, erosion and slip hazards during rain events • Unsecured structures, scaffolds, hoardings or materials becoming projectiles in high winds • Inadequate shade, ventilation or cooling infrastructure exposing workers to excessive heat • Electrical installations, including temporary power, vulnerable to water ingress during heavy rain • Lack of redundancy in critical systems (e.g. power, communications) during storms 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Plant, Equipment and Maintenance Management in Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant and vehicles not specified or rated for operation in wet, windy or hot conditions • Inadequate maintenance systems increasing failure likelihood during severe weather • Lack of pre-use and post-event inspection regimes after heavy rain, strong winds or heatwaves • Unsafe operation of elevated work platforms, cranes or lifting equipment in high wind conditions 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooling and ventilation systems in vehicles and mobile plant insufficient for heatwave conditions • Failure to secure or park plant and vehicles safely prior to severe weather events 		[REDACTED]	
9. Work Scheduling, Fatigue and Heat Stress Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work scheduled during the hottest part of the day increasing risk of heat stress and related health issues • Insufficient breaks, hydration and recovery time during high heat or humidity conditions • Compressed schedules or productivity pressures discouraging work pauses despite severe weather • Extended hours or night work to avoid heat leading to fatigue and associated errors or incidents • Inadequate systems to identify and manage individual susceptibility to heat-related illness • No formal policy for adjusting workloads and staffing levels in response to extreme weather forecasts 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Site Access, Traffic and Journey Management in Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsafe road and site access conditions due to heavy rain, flooding, reduced visibility or storm debris • Wind and rain impacting vehicle control, braking distance and stopping capability • Inadequate journey planning for forecast severe weather, particularly in regional and remote areas 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers stranded or isolated due to cut access routes during storms or flooding Poor delineation of pedestrian and vehicle routes in wet or windy conditions Inadequate controls for oversize, high-sided or open vehicles in high wind environments 		[REDACTED]	
11. Contractor, Supplier and Third-Party Interface Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors not aligned with organisational severe weather policies and thresholds Suppliers continuing deliveries or high-risk activities during unsafe weather conditions Lack of clarity over who has authority to suspend multi-employer operations in severe weather Inconsistent weather risk control between principal contractors and subcontractors leading to confusion Limited oversight of third-party activities (e.g. crane hire, etc.) during severe weather events Contract terms that penalise weather-related stand-downs, discouraging safe decisions 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Worker Health, Welfare and Psychosocial Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat, cold and weather-related physical stress contributing to medical events or exacerbating existing conditions 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anxiety and stress among workers regarding travel to and from work during storms or flooding Psychological impact of repeated severe weather events or near misses on perceived safety Lack of systems to support workers who experience heat illness or weather-related injuries Pressure from management or peers to continue working in uncomfortable or marginally unsafe conditions Inadequate consideration of cultural or personal factors affecting worker response to severe weather risks 		[REDACTED]	
13. Information Management, Data and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor capture and analysis of severe weather incidents, near misses and trends Lack of integration between weather-related data, incident reports and maintenance systems Outdated or inconsistent documentation regarding thresholds and procedures Failure to learn from industry events, regulator guidance or emerging best practice on severe weather risk No performance indicators for severe weather risk management effectiveness Inadequate record-keeping to demonstrate compliance with WHS Act 2011 due diligence requirements 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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			[REDACTED]	
14. Remote and Isolated Work in Severe Weather Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers in remote or isolated locations unable to obtain timely assistance during severe weather events Limited access to reliable weather data and communications in remote regions Inadequate emergency supplies and shelter for stranded workers affected by storms, flooding or extreme heat Underestimation of travel times and conditions during remote journeys in adverse weather Failure to conduct remote area risk assessments considering seasonal severe weather patterns Over-reliance on a single worker making safety decisions without support or verification 	4A	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]	2M

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.