

**Small Vessel Launch and Transport**

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:	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			<b>Elimination</b> Remove the hazard.	
LIKELY	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	4 ACUTE	4A ACUTE	DO NOT PROCEED	<b>Substitution</b> 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.	<b>Engineering</b> Isolate the hazard	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	<b>Administrative</b> Change	
								<b>PPE</b>	

  

Risk Rating & Required Action:	
<b>4A</b>	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.
<b>3H</b>	Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.
<b>2M</b>	Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.
<b>1L</b>	Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.

  

Consequence Scale:			
Consequence	People (injury/illness)	Project / Assets	Compliance / Reputation
<b>Catastrophic</b>	Fatality or permanent total disability	project shutdown	Significant regulator intervention; criminal prosecution
<b>Major</b>	Serious injury/illness (hospital > 5 days)	critical delay	Improvement notice; major media coverage
<b>Moderate</b>	Medical-treatment injury; lost-time > 1 day	moderate delay	Minor breach; adverse client comment
<b>Minor</b>	First-aid only, no lost time	negligible delay	Isolated non-conformance
<b>Insignificant</b>	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, Legal Compliance & Duty of Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of documented WHS management system specific to small vessel launch and transport operations</li> <li>Failure to identify and comply with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations 2011 and relevant maritime and road transport legislation</li> <li>Unclear PCBU roles, officer due diligence and contractor responsibilities across boating, jet ski hire and trailered vessel operations</li> <li>Inadequate integration of marine safety (e.g. state maritime authority rules) with workplace WHS obligations</li> <li>Poor consultation arrangements with workers, contractors and labour hire personnel on boating safety risks</li> <li>No formal process to review incidents, changes in legislation or Maritime Safety updates and revise procedures</li> <li>Insufficient enforcement of lifejacket, licensing and vessel operation requirements from a WHS perspective</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an integrated WHS management system that specifically addresses small vessel launch, slipway usage, jet ski hire and transport activities, aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations 2011</li> <li>Establish a legal register capturing relevant WHS, marine, road traffic, environmental and local council requirements; assign responsibility for quarterly review and update</li> <li>Define and document PCBU accountabilities, officer due diligence obligations and contractor interfaces in a governance plan for maritime operations</li> <li>Integrate state/territory maritime safety requirements (licensing, lifejacket rules, speed and distance-off rules) into WHS policies and procedures</li> <li>Implement structured consultation mechanisms (HSC/H&amp;S reps, toolbox talks, pre-season workshops) focusing on vessel launch and transport system risks</li> <li>Establish a formal management of change process for new vessel types, inflatable craft, slipway location, training or hire services (e.g. jet ski fleets)</li> <li>Schedule annual WHS and marine compliance audits, with corrective actions tracked to completion in a central system</li> <li>Include WHS and marine safety responsibilities in position descriptions, performance reviews and contractor agreements</li> </ul>	3H
2. Organisational Safety Leadership & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management emphasis on schedule and customer delivery at the expense of safe launch and transport practices</li> <li>Normalisation of deviance such as launching in marginal conditions, overloading trailers, or rushing slipway operations</li> <li>Tolerance of unsafe shortcuts in securing boats or inflatables to trailers due to commercial pressures</li> <li>Inadequate reporting culture leading to under-reporting of near misses involving vessels, customers and public</li> <li>Lack of learning from previous incidents related to slipway usage, vessel recovery, or customer handover</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Articulate a clear safety policy stating that safe boating and transport practices take precedence over customer deadlines and hire turnover</li> <li>Provide visible leadership by having managers regularly attend slipways, launch sites and depots to engage with crews about safety issues</li> <li>Implement a just culture framework that encourages reporting and learning from near misses, including launch mishaps, trailer incidents and customer-related hazards</li> <li>Introduce regular safety climate surveys focused on boating, jet ski hire and trailered transport to identify cultural issues and track improvement</li> <li>Integrate safety leadership training for supervisors and leading hands, emphasising decision-making regarding weather delays and go/no-go for launches</li> <li>Define and communicate clear 'stop work authority' for workers when conditions (weather, tide, ramp congestion) are unsafe</li> <li>Require contractors and labour hire providers to participate in safety meetings and align with the organisation's WHS expectations as a condition of engagement</li> </ul>	3H

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subcontractors and casual staff not aligned with company safety expectations and values</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognise and reward teams that demonstrate proactive risk management, such as canceling or rescheduling unsafe launches</li> </ul>	
3. Competency, Licensing & Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers operating vessels or jet skis without appropriate marine licences or currency for the jurisdiction</li> <li>Insufficient training in vessel handling during launch, retrieval and transport scenarios</li> <li>Inadequate competency in securing boats and inflatables on trailers and roof racks for road transport</li> <li>Lack of training in use of slipways, tidal considerations, ramp etiquette and interaction with public users</li> <li>Poor understanding of emergency procedures such as man overboard, vessel capsize, or trailer detachment</li> <li>Seasonal and casual staff for jet ski hire not adequately inducted or supervised</li> <li>No formal verification of competency for high-risk tasks such as handling heavy inflatable boats, winches or powered slipways</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a competency framework and training matrix specifying required marine licences, driving licences and WHS training for each role</li> <li>Implement a verification of competency (VOC) program for vessel operators, trailer drivers and key launch crew, including periodic assessment</li> <li>Develop structured training modules on slipway operations, ramp safety, tides, currents, vessel retrieval and use of winches and tie-down systems</li> <li>Provide specific training on loading and securing boats and inflatable craft on trailers, including load distribution, tie-down points and use of rated restraints</li> <li>Establish mandatory emergency response training covering man overboard, vessel flooding, capsize scenarios and trailer fires during transit</li> <li>Ensure all jet ski hire staff receive customer briefing training, focus on clear communication of safety instructions and supervision standards</li> <li>Maintain central records of licences, competencies and expiry dates; implement automated reminders for renewals</li> <li>Require supervisor sign-off before new or seasonal workers are allowed to operate vessels or manage launches unsupervised</li> </ul>	2M
4. Asset Procurement, Design & Engineering Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase or lease vessels and trailers that are not fit for intended commercial use or conditions</li> <li>Boats, jet skis and inflatable craft lacking adequate safety features for hire and transport operations</li> <li>Trailer design not suited to vessel hull types, leading to poor support and potential structural damage during transport</li> <li>Insufficient redundancy in winches, tow points, anchors or tie-down systems</li> <li>Incompatibility between towing vehicles, tow bars, braking systems and trailer weights</li> <li>Failure to consider ergonomic design leading to hazardous manual handling</li> </ul>	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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	during launch, retrieval and securing activities		[REDACTED]	
5. Maintenance, Inspection & Pre-Start Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate scheduled maintenance of vessels, trailers, winches, braking systems and tow vehicles</li> <li>Failure of critical components such as tow hitches, safety chains, rollers, tyres, bearings or vessel bilge pumps</li> <li>Unreported minor defects that escalate into significant failures during launch or transport</li> <li>Lack of systematic checks on inflatable boat chambers, valves and repair quality</li> <li>Ineffective pre-launch and pre-trip checks, particularly during busy hire periods</li> <li>No documented process to remove defective equipment from service</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
6. Journey Management & Transport Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate planning of road routes for transporting boats to and from customer locations</li> <li>Exposure to high-risk roads, low clearance structures or uneven surfaces for heavy trailers</li> <li>Poor scheduling that drives time pressure, speeding or fatigue in drivers</li> <li>Lack of contingency planning for breakdowns, trailer issues or severe weather during transport</li> <li>Insufficient consideration of public risk when delivering vessels to busy foreshore or ramp areas</li> <li>No defined criteria for when transport or launch operations must be postponed or cancelled due to external conditions</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
7. Slipway, Ramp & Launch Site Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of slipways and ramps with inadequate surface condition, drainage or lighting</li> <li>• Congestion and conflict with public users, including recreational boaters, swimmers and pedestrians</li> <li>• Uncontrolled vehicle and trailer movements on steep, wet or algae-covered surfaces</li> <li>• Lack of standardised arrangements for traffic flow, parking, queuing and reversing at launch sites</li> <li>• Tidal variations, currents and wave action creating unstable launch and retrieval conditions</li> <li>• Insufficient control of public access to work areas during vessel recovery or large boat launches</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Vessel Loading, Securing & Stability Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper loading of boats and inflatables on trailers leading to instability or detachment during transport</li> <li>• Incorrect use of tie-downs, winches and restraints, including over-tensioning and damage to hulls or inflatable chambers</li> <li>• Failure to manage vessel centre of gravity, causing tipping risk on ramps or during towing</li> <li>• Inadequate processes to verify payload, including fuel, equipment and customer gear, relative to vessel and trailer capacity</li> <li>• Lack of procedures for securing jet skis and small craft for short-distance movements within marinas or yards</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No standard method for securing loose equipment within vessels during launch and transport</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
9. Customer Interface, Hire Management & Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate customer briefing for boat and jet ski hire leading to unsafe operation</li> <li>Failure to verify customer competence, licences or understanding of local waterways and hazards</li> <li>Poor management of customer arrivals and departures at ramps or jetties causing congestion and collision risk</li> <li>Insufficient controls for customers handling inflatable boats or small craft with limited supervision</li> <li>Inadequate lifejacket allocation, fitment checks and enforcement for hire users</li> <li>Lack of processes for monitoring customer location and welfare while vessels are on hire</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Fatigue, Alcohol & Fitness for Work Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers performing launch and transport tasks with fatigue due to early starts, long shifts and seasonal peaks</li> <li>Drivers towing boats operating beyond safe driving hours or with inadequate breaks</li> <li>Tolerance of alcohol or drug use among staff or customers in a marine recreation context</li> <li>Physical overexertion when handling heavy equipment, inflatables or lines in adverse conditions</li> <li>Insufficient processes to manage fitness for work after incidents such as near drowning or cold-water immersion</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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11. Environmental, Weather & Waterway Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to rapidly changing weather, wind, tides and currents affecting safe launch and transport</li> <li>Operations proceeding in conditions beyond the capability of vessels, inflatables or staff</li> <li>Unmanaged interaction with commercial shipping lanes, ski areas or restricted zones</li> <li>Limited visibility due to fog, rain or night operations increasing collision and navigation risk</li> <li>Environmental hazards such as submerged objects, shallow areas or debris at launch sites</li> <li>Sun exposure, heat stress or cold stress for workers during extended outdoor operations</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Manual Handling, Ergonomics & Use of Mechanical Aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive or awkward manual handling of vessels, inflatables, boats, fuel containers and equipment at launch sites</li> <li>Lifting and carrying of heavy outboards, anchors or batteries without appropriate aids</li> <li>Pushing and pulling of trailers or dollies on uneven or inclined surfaces at slipways and depots</li> <li>Poor ergonomic design of workspaces for maintenance of inflatables and small craft</li> <li>Lack of formal systems for selection and use of mechanical aids such as trolleys, hoists and winches</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Communication, Navigation &	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate communications between shore-based supervisors, drivers and</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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Emergency Response Systems	<p>vessel crews during launch and transport operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of reliable marine and land communication equipment for remote or low-coverage areas</li> <li>Unclear emergency roles, responsibilities and escalation processes for on-water incidents or road transport emergencies</li> <li>Insufficient rescue equipment or poorly maintained emergency gear on vessels and at slipways</li> <li>No formal drills for man overboard, grounding, collision or fire scenarios involving hire customers or staff</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
14. Contractor, Labour Hire & Third-Party Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contractor skippers, drivers or launch crews operating outside commercial WHS systems</li> <li>Inconsistent safety standards between organisation and contracted jet ski operators or transport providers</li> <li>Poor coordination and communication at shared slipways with other commercial operators</li> <li>Lack of due diligence in selecting and monitoring contractors involved in launching, transporting or maintaining vessels and inflatables</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
15. Documentation, Records, Audits & Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical WHS and marine safety procedures for launch and transport not documented or version-controlled</li> <li>• Staff relying on informal practices rather than authorised procedures for vessel and trailer operations</li> <li>• Inadequate record keeping for inspections, maintenance, training, licences and incident investigations</li> <li>• Lack of systematic review of risk assessments for new boat types, inflatable models or service offerings</li> <li>• Failure to identify trends in incidents or near misses related to slipway usage, customer behaviour or transport routes</li> </ul>	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>	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/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.