

Soft Fall Installation

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			<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. WHS Governance, Roles and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unclear WHS responsibilities between principal contractor, soft-fall contractor and subcontractors leading to gaps in risk control</li> <li>Inadequate consultation with workers, HSRs and client regarding soft-fall removal/installation risks and site constraints</li> <li>Failure to integrate soft-fall activities into the principal contractor's WHS management plan and construction management system</li> <li>Lack of documented WHS objectives and performance measures for soft-fall works</li> <li>Poor incident reporting and learning culture resulting in repeated systemic failures</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and document WHS governance structures for soft-fall projects, including clear allocation of PCBU duties, officer due diligence and worker responsibilities in line with WHS Act 2011</li> <li>Integrate soft-fall removal and installation into the principal contractor's WHS management plan, site-specific risk assessment and construction phase documentation</li> <li>Implement formal worker consultation processes (toolbox talks, pre-start briefings, WHS committee or HSR meetings) specifically addressing soft-fall system hazards and lessons learned</li> <li>Develop and communicate a soft-fall WHS policy statement and measurable WHS targets (e.g. incident reporting, audit completion, training compliance)</li> <li>Maintain a documented incident, near-miss and hazard reporting procedure with prompt investigation, root-cause analysis and feedback to workers</li> <li>Ensure officers (contractors, senior managers) receive due diligence training specific to construction and playground soft-fall activities</li> <li>Periodically review the WHS management system for soft-fall projects (at least annually or post-incident) and update procedures accordingly</li> </ul>	3H
2. Project Planning, Design and Scope Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soft-fall removal and installation commencing without adequate design review or technical specification</li> <li>Incompatibility between soft-fall system and existing sub-base, drainage or playground equipment design</li> <li>Inadequate planning for edge protection, access routes and interaction with other trades on site</li> <li>Failure to consider child safety concerns, fall heights and impact attenuation performance requirements (AS 4685 / AS 4422)</li> <li>Last-minute design changes causing rushed decisions and uncontrolled variations</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a formal project initiation process requiring review of drawings, specifications and performance requirements for soft-fall systems before works start</li> <li>Require designer or competent person sign-off that soft-fall thickness, materials and layout meet relevant Australian Standards and client requirements for critical fall heights</li> <li>Include soft-fall removal and installation methodology at a planning level in the Construction Management Plan, including interfaces with civil works, playground installers and landscapers</li> <li>Undertake and document a pre-commencement site assessment to confirm sub-base condition, drainage, edges, and compatibility with nominated soft-fall system</li> <li>Introduce a controlled design change and variation process with WHS impact assessment, risk review and client approval before implementing changes</li> <li>Program works to allow adequate curing/settling time, product-specific installation windows and sequencing so that WHS controls are not undermined by time pressure</li> </ul>	2M
3. Contractor, Supplier and Subcontractor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of contractors without verification of WHS competence, licences, insurances or past performance</li> <li>Poor coordination between multiple contractors (soft-fall, playground)</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a formal contractor prequalification process requiring evidence of WHS systems, insurances, licences, soft-fall experience and references</li> <li>Include WHS performance criteria and specific soft-fall standards (e.g. AS 4422, AS 4685 series) in contracts and purchase orders</li> <li>Require suppliers to provide product data sheets, test certificates, impact attenuation reports and installation guidelines for all soft-fall materials</li> </ul>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>equipment, civil, landscaping) creating unmanaged interface risks</li> <li>Use of suppliers without evidence of product conformity, testing data or safety information</li> <li>Inadequate induction of subcontractors into site-specific WHS systems and client requirements</li> <li>Commercial pressure in contracts discouraging adequate WHS resourcing and safe timeframes</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct site-specific WHS inductions for all contractors and subcontractors, covering traffic management, exclusion zones, environmental controls and emergency procedures</li> <li>Appoint a coordinator or principal contractor WHS representative to manage interfaces and scheduling between trades to avoid overlapping high-risk activities</li> <li>Include explicit WHS obligations, right to stop work, and adequate time allowances for safe methods in commercial agreements</li> <li>Monitor contractor performance through periodic WHS inspections, audits and review meetings, with clear corrective action processes</li> </ul>	
4. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers performing soft-fall removal or installation without competency in relevant plant, materials or standards</li> <li>Lack of training in manual handling techniques relevant to repetitive lifting, barrowing and raking of soft-fall materials</li> <li>Inadequate understanding of hazardous substances used in binding, cleaning or priming during installation</li> <li>Supervisors not competent to oversee technical quality (e.g. heights, thickness, compaction) and Vibration Monitoring</li> <li>Expired or unverified high-risk work licences or plant tickets</li> </ul>	4	<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
5. Plant, Tools and Equipment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of unsuitable or poorly maintained plant (e.g. skid steers, excavators, compactors, concrete saws) during removal of existing soft-fall</li> <li>Unverified inspection and tagging of electrical tools, extension leads and portable RCDs</li> <li>Lack of guarding or safety features on cutting, grinding or compaction equipment</li> </ul>	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No system for plant pre-start checks leading to failures, hydraulic leaks or loss of control</li> <li>Inadequate segregation between operating plant and pedestrians, including children or public</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
6. Hazardous Substances and Environmental Health Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to fumes, vapours or skin irritants from primers, binders, adhesives, sealants or cleaners used in soft-fall systems</li> <li>Inadequate control of silica, dust and particulates generated when cutting or removing existing surfaces and sub-bases</li> <li>Lack of information and labelling on decanted chemicals and containers</li> <li>Improper storage and disposal of chemical waste, wash water and contaminated materials</li> <li>Failure to consider sensitive receptors (schools, childcare centres, neighbouring properties) during works</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Manual Handling, Ergonomics and Fatigue Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repetitive lifting, barrowing, shovelling and raking of loose or wet materials during removal and installation</li> <li>Sustained kneeling, bending or awkward postures while preparing base, levelling and finishing surfaces</li> <li>Extended work hours and high heat conditions leading to fatigue and decreased attention to hazards</li> <li>Lack of job rotation and insufficient rest breaks contributing to musculoskeletal disorders</li> <li>Inadequate consideration of individual capacity, pre-existing injuries or fitness for work</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
8. Site Access, Public Safety and Traffic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncontrolled access by children, school staff or public to the work zone during removal and installation activities</li> <li>• Vehicle movements for material delivery, spoil removal and plant floatation in pedestrian-dense environments (schools, parks, childcare)</li> <li>• Inadequate separation between loading/unloading areas and soft-fall work zones</li> <li>• Non-compliant traffic control on or near public roads during deliveries or waste removal</li> <li>• Poor signage and communication leading to confusion about restricted areas, alternate routes and temporary closures</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Environmental, Weather and Site Condition Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adverse weather (rain, heat, UV, wind) impacting installation quality and worker health</li> <li>• Slips, trips and falls due to uneven sub-bases, demolition rubble, hoses and tools in congested work areas</li> <li>• Poor drainage or water ingress undermining sub-base stability and soft-fall performance over time</li> <li>• Soft-fall installation undertaken on unsuitable substrate moisture or temperature conditions against manufacturer guidance</li> <li>• Environmental contamination from runoff carrying debris, chemicals or fine particles</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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10. Quality Assurance and Compliance of Soft-Fall System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installed soft-fall not meeting required impact attenuation or thickness, increasing injury risk to children</li> <li>Variations in material quality or mixing ratios not detected due to poor quality control systems</li> <li>Lack of documented inspections and testing leading to latent non-conformances</li> <li>Failure to integrate manufacturer installation instructions and standards into site practices</li> <li>Non-compliance with relevant Australian Standards for playground surfacing and equipment</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate planning for medical emergencies (e.g. chemical exposure, crush injuries, heat stress) during soft-fall works</li> <li>Lack of clear procedures for fire, spill or structural failure of adjacent equipment or infrastructure</li> <li>Workers and client representatives unaware of emergency contacts, assembly points or access routes for emergency services</li> <li>Insufficient first aid equipment and trained personnel on site during all phases of work</li> <li>Delayed response and poor communication in the event of an incident involving children or public</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Health Monitoring and Occupational Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undetected respiratory, skin or sensitisation issues arising from recurring exposure to dusts, vapours, or chemical components in soft-fall products</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise exposure from cutting, compaction and demolition plant exceeding safe thresholds over time</li> <li>Lack of system to identify workers who may be at greater risk (asthma, allergies, pre-existing conditions)</li> <li>Inadequate monitoring of heat stress and hydration during outdoor works</li> <li>Overreliance on PPE without verifying its suitability, fit and consistent use</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
13. Documentation, Record Keeping and Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inability to demonstrate compliance with WHS Act 2011 and regulations due to poor record keeping</li> <li>Loss of critical information about installed systems (materials, thickness, testing) affecting future maintenance or upgrades</li> <li>Failure to capture lessons learned from incidents, non-conformances and audits</li> <li>Out-of-date or uncontrolled documents leading to use of superseded procedures or standards</li> <li>Inconsistent or incomplete reports to the principal contractor and client</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
14. Post-Installation Handover, Inspection and Maintenance Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Client or facility operator unaware of inspection and maintenance requirements for the new soft-fall system</li> <li>Degradation or damage to soft-fall surfaces over time not detected due to lack of routine inspections</li> <li>Unauthorised modifications or repairs by untrained personnel reducing safety performance</li> <li>Lack of clarity about responsibilities for ongoing inspections between school, council, facility and contractor</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of a structured process for responding to user complaints or defect reports</li> </ul>		<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>	

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.