

Suspended Ceiling 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:	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. Governance, WHS Duties and PCBU Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear allocation of WHS duties between principal contractor, ceiling contractor, labour-hire providers and building owner leading to gaps in risk controls for suspended ceiling works Inadequate WHS management system for managing high-risk construction work, including work at height and loads suspended overhead Failure to consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with other duty holders on site, resulting in conflicting work methods in the ceiling void and below Insufficient resources (time, budget, supervision) allocated to safely manage ceiling grid installation and hanging wire fixing Poor integration of suspended ceiling risks into the overall Construction WHS Management Plan and Site Safety Management Plan 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a documented WHS Management System aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation, explicitly covering suspended ceiling installation and high-risk construction work where applicable (e.g. work at height, falling objects) Define and document PCBU roles, responsibilities and due diligence obligations for all parties involved in ceiling grid and suspended system installation including subcontractor and labour-hire arrangements Include suspended ceiling activities in the principal contractor's Construction WHS Management Plan, with a dedicated section covering overhead work, access to the ceiling void, and interaction with other trades Implement a formal consultation, cooperation and coordination procedure with all duty holders (toolbox meetings, coordination meetings, documented decisions) specifically addressing shared risks in ceiling spaces and below work areas Require all ceiling installation subcontractors to provide documented WHS policies, company risk assessments and relevant safe work procedures that are reviewed and accepted before work starts Integrate WHS performance for suspended ceiling works into contract conditions, including clear expectations of supervision levels, reporting, and stop-work authority for unsafe conditions Establish a documented process for review and approval of work methods for non-standard or complex ceiling designs (e.g. heavy feature ceilings, seismic bracing, non-typical hanging arrangements) Undertake regular management reviews and audits of ceiling installation activities to verify implementation of system controls and rectify systemic deficiencies 	Medium
2. Design, Engineering and Structural Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ceiling grid and suspended loads not adequately designed or certified for imposed loads, services, fixings and potential seismic or other loads (where applicable) Lack of structural verification of fixing points for hanging wires and support systems into base building structure (slabs, beams, purlins, structural steel) Poor coordination between ceiling design, building services (HVAC, sprinkler, electrical, fire systems) and structural elements, leading to ad-hoc changes on site Reliance on generic manufacturer details without verification for project-specific conditions (spans, loads, environment, external influences) 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal design management procedure requiring all suspended ceiling systems to be designed or reviewed by a competent designer in accordance with relevant Australian Standards and manufacturer requirements Require written structural confirmation that the base building elements used for fixing hanging wires and suspension systems are suitable for the intended loads and spacing, including any concentrated loads Mandate coordinated design reviews (BIM/coordination meetings or drawing reviews) involving structural, services and architectural disciplines to identify clashes and ensure adequate support locations before installation Adopt a controlled design change process where any variation to ceiling layout, grid type, suspension method or fixing detail is reviewed and approved by the designer/engineer and manufacturer prior to implementation Specify in design documentation clear requirements for maximum hanger spacing, allowable loads per hanger, perimeter fixing details and bracing requirements, and make these available on site in an accessible format Ensure design documentation includes allowances for future access and maintenance within the ceiling void (e.g. walk-on platforms, access hatches, restricted load zones) to prevent overloading and unsafe work in the future 	Medium

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate consideration of access and maintenance loads for future activities within the ceiling space Insufficient clarity in design documentation, resulting in workers improvising support arrangements and hanging wire patterns 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a design risk register that documents residual WHS risks associated with the ceiling system (e.g. sensitive connection points, areas not to be loaded, restricted access zones) and communicate these to installers and facility managers Require written certification from a competent person that the installed suspended ceiling and hanging wire system conforms to the approved design prior to client handover 	
3. Procurement, Supplier Management and Product Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of non-compliant or incompatible ceiling components, hanging wires, anchors and fixings that do not meet designer or manufacturer specifications Use of counterfeit, substandard or untested anchors and suspension hardware without traceable certification Substitution of specified grid systems or suspension components due to cost or availability pressures without engineering verification Inadequate supplier assessment, leading to provision of incomplete technical data, installation guidance or safe use instructions Lack of formal process for ensuring purchased items are suitable for fire, acoustic, environmental and other conditions as per design Insufficient lead times for procurement, pressuring installers to improvise or re-use old hardware and fittings 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a procurement procedure that requires verification of compliance of all ceiling grid systems, hanging wires, anchors and fixings with design documentation, Australian Standards and manufacturer guidelines before purchase Develop an approved supplier list for suspended ceiling components based on demonstrated quality management, product certification and provision of technical data sheets and installation manuals Require formal engineering and designer approval for any product substitutions, including a documented comparison of load ratings, material properties, fire performance and compatibility with existing design Specify in purchase orders that all structural and suspension components must be supplied with certificates of conformity or test reports, and maintain these records in a project-specific file Ensure procurement processes include consideration of environmental conditions (humidity, coastal exposure, chemical environments) and require corrosion-resistant materials where necessary Integrate a pre-delivery review step where technical staff confirm that ordered items (grid profile, hanger type, anchors, perimeter trims) match the approved design and specification Establish a non-conformance reporting and quarantine process for any supplied products that differ from specification, are damaged, or lack appropriate documentation Include contractual clauses requiring suppliers and manufacturers to provide up-to-date installation instructions, limitations of use and safety data relevant to handling and installation 	Low
4. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installers and supervisors lacking formal training or competency in suspended ceiling systems, ceiling grid installation and fixing hanging wires Insufficient understanding of design intent, load paths and limitations of ceiling systems resulting in unsafe installation decisions New workers and labour-hire personnel not inducted into site-specific ceiling risks, overhead work hazards and emergency procedures 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No structured training on safe use of access equipment (scaffolds, mobile platforms, ladders) used for ceiling installation Supervisors not competent to verify installation quality against design, manufacturer instructions and WHS requirements Inadequate training for managers and engineers on their WHS duties under WHS Act 2011 in relation to high-risk construction work 		[REDACTED]	
5. Planning, Scheduling and Coordination with Other Trades	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ceiling installation scheduled concurrently with overhead services installation, creating congestion in the ceiling void and below Multiple trades working beneath or above each other without planning, increasing exposure to falling objects and structural instability under partially installed grids Compressed project timelines encouraging unsafe practices, incomplete bracing or temporary supports not designed for the loads Unplanned changes to sequence of works (e.g. services relocated after grid installation) leading to re-work and ad-hoc modifications to suspension points Inadequate planning for safe isolation of services (electrical, fire, mechanical) when working around live systems in the ceiling space Lack of clear exclusion zones and work area demarcation for high-risk areas under partially supported ceiling grids 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
6. Site Access, Work Environment and Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate access and egress to ceiling work zones, including cramped 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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
Management in Ceiling Work Areas	<p>ceiling voids and congested floor areas beneath work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor control of mobile plant, scissor lifts and trolleys used to access and transport ceiling components, creating collision risks with workers and structures • Insufficient lighting and visibility within ceiling spaces leading to mis-fixing of hangers, incorrect anchor placement and slips or trips • Uncontrolled storage of grid sections, plasterboard, and hanging wire reels creating trip hazards and blocking emergency exits • Inadequate ventilation in ceiling voids where workers may be exposed to dust, heat, fumes or reduced oxygen levels • Lack of a systematic approach to safe pathways beneath partially installed ceilings and overhead work zones 		[REDACTED]	
7. Contractor Management, Supervision and Subcontractor Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceiling installation subcontractors operating under different WHS standards and procedures leading to inconsistent controls • Limited on-site supervision of ceiling crews, especially during critical activities such as initial grid support, heavy element installation or re-tensioning of hangers • Poor communication of site rules, high-risk work procedures and incident reporting expectations to subcontractor personnel • Use of secondary subcontractors or labour-only crews without proper vetting of their competency and WHS systems • Inadequate monitoring of subcontractor compliance with design specifications, manufacturer instructions and WHS requirements for overhead work 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure of lead contractor to review and integrate subcontractor risk assessments and safe work procedures for suspended ceiling installation 		[REDACTED]	
8. Documentation, Procedures and Work Instructions for Ceiling Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of clear written procedures for ceiling grid installation, fixing hanging wires and verifying suspension integrity Workers relying on verbal instructions or past practice instead of current design and manufacturer requirements Outdated or inconsistent versions of drawings, specifications and installation manuals being used on site Lack of documented criteria for inspection and acceptance of installed ceiling grids, hangers and fixings Inadequate documentation of temporary supports, steel installations and partial grid areas that may present instability No systematic record keeping for inspections, non-conformances or corrective actions related to ceiling works 	High	[REDACTED]	Low
9. Inspection, Testing, Assurance and Verification of Ceiling Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate inspection regimes failing to detect incorrectly fixed hangers, unsuitable anchors or missing bracing before ceiling closure No systematic verification that ceiling grids and suspension systems have been installed in accordance with design and manufacturer requirements Reliance solely on informal visual checks by installers without independent or supervisory verification 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to re-inspect ceiling systems after design changes, service relocations or rectification works in the ceiling void • Inspections not documented, leading to an inability to demonstrate due diligence or identify patterns of recurring defects • Lack of periodic post-installation inspections during the building's early occupancy phase to identify settlement or overloading issues 		[REDACTED]	
10. Incident, Near-Miss Reporting and Corrective Action Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-reporting of near misses such as partial grid drops, hanger failures or falling objects during ceiling installation • Lack of structured investigation into ceiling-related incidents leading to repeated systemic failures • Corrective action completion for incidents not tracked to completion, leaving known hazards unresolved • Inadequate communication of lessons learned from ceiling installation incidents across projects and crews • Failure to identify WHS Act 2011 notifiable incidents (e.g. serious risk from falling objects) related to suspended ceiling works 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low
11. Emergency Preparedness and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency plans not accounting for scenarios specific to suspended ceiling 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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
Response for Overhead Work	<p>work, such as partial ceiling collapse or worker injury in a ceiling void</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers unaware of emergency procedures, assembly areas and communication methods while working in or under ceiling grids Delayed rescue or medical response due to difficulties accessing injured persons in ceiling spaces or on elevated platforms Inadequate coordination of emergency response between principal contractor, ceiling contractor and other duty holders on site Lack of drills or practice of emergency scenarios involving overhead work and falling object risks 		<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>	

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.