Suspended Scaffolds and Swing Stage Operations

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:

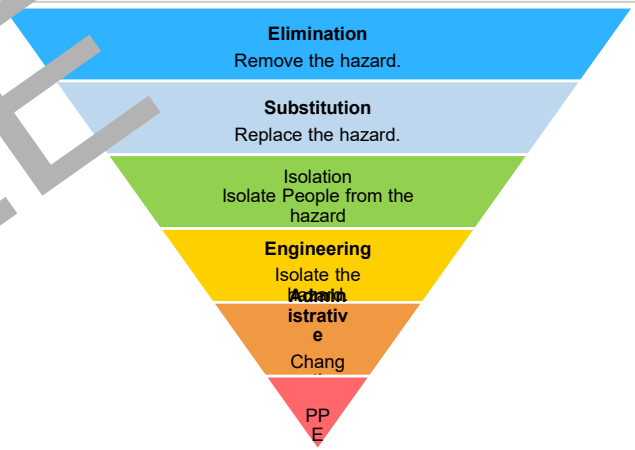
CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

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, Roles and Consultation	• Lack of clearly defined WHS responsibilities for suspended and swing stage scaffold operations • Inadequate consultation with workers, subcontractors and principal contractor about scaffold risks • Insufficient integration of WHS Act 2011 duties and WHS Regulations into company systems • Failure to appoint a competent person to oversee suspended scaffold activities • Poor coordination of safety responsibilities between PCBU, principal contractor, specialist scaffold contractor and building owner • Inadequate worker participation in hazard identification and risk control processes	4A	• Develop and implement a documented WHS governance framework that clearly allocates PCBU, officer, manager and supervisor responsibilities for suspended and swing stage scaffold operations in line with WHS Act 2011 • Establish a formal WHS consultation procedure that requires toolbox talks, pre-start meetings and consultation with Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) on design, erection and operation of suspended scaffolds • Ensure contracts and scope of work explicitly define WHS responsibilities for design, erection, inspection, use, alteration and dismantling of suspended scaffolds and swing stages • Nominate a competent suspended scaffold coordinator with demonstrated experience and formal training to oversee planning, design review, erection oversight, inspections and work authorisations • Integrate suspended scaffold risk management into the organisation's WHS Risk Register and ensure regular review by the WHS Committee and senior management • Require evidence of WHS systems (e.g. ISO 45001 or equivalent) from scaffold suppliers and subcontractors as part of prequalification • Implement a documented issue resolution procedure to promptly address scaffold-related safety concerns raised by workers or HSRs • Undertake periodic management reviews and internal audits focused specifically on suspended scaffold governance and performance • Ensure officers exercise due diligence by reviewing and acting on reports relating to scaffold risks, incidents and near misses	3H
2. Design, Engineering and Load Capacity Management	• Inadequate engineering design of suspended powered scaffolds and swing stages for building maintenance and loads • Overloading of scaffold platforms due to poor load management controls • Insufficient factor of safety in suspension systems, counterweights or anchorage design • Unverified structural adequacy of host building or support structure for suspension loads • Uncontrolled design variations and field modifications without engineering approval • Insufficient consideration of dynamic loads from wind, hoist operation and worker movement	4A	• Require all suspended and swing stage scaffold systems to be designed, verified and certified by a competent engineer in accordance with WHS Regulation, AS/NZS 1576 series and manufacturer specifications • Implement a formal design review process that considers maximum intended loads, number of persons, equipment, materials and dynamic effects for each installation • Mandate engineering calculations and drawings showing support structure capacity, anchorage points, counterweight requirements and tie-back design for each job-specific installation • Develop a standard load management policy for suspended platforms including maximum platform load signage, load charts and documented controls to prevent overloading • Require a written engineering sign-off for any alteration, extension, relocation or non-standard configuration prior to implementation on site • Ensure the structural adequacy of the host building or facade is verified by a structural engineer and documented before installation of suspension and anchorage systems • Implement a change management procedure for design variations, requiring risk assessment, engineering review and updated documentation prior to work continuing	2M

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			• Maintain an engineering document register for each suspended scaffold installation including certificates, calculations, layout drawings and revisions • Ensure design considers worst-case wind and environmental conditions, including suitable design wind speeds and emergency retrieval strategies	
3. Procurement, Selection and Supplier Management	• Procurement of non-compliant or incompatible suspended scaffold components • Use of second-hand or modified equipment without adequate inspection or certification • Reliance on suppliers or hire companies with inadequate WHS systems or technical competence • Inconsistent equipment types and brands leading to confusion, misuse and increased training burden • Inadequate specification of performance and safety requirements purchase or hire contracts	3H	• Establish procurement standards requiring suspended scaffold and swing stage equipment to comply with WHS legislation, AS/NZS 1576 series and relevant manufacturer requirements • Implement a prequalification process for scaffold suppliers and hire companies that assesses technical competence, WHS performance, inspection systems and maintenance records • Standardise, as far as reasonably practicable, on specified brands and models of motors, hoists, control systems and platforms to simplify training and maintenance • Require supplier documentation including certificates of conformity, design registrations (where required), inspection reports and operating manuals prior to acceptance of equipment on site • Include explicit safety and compliance clauses in purchase and hire contracts, covering inspection regimes, maintenance responsibilities, documentation provision and recall/defect notifications • Prohibit the procurement or use of modified, home-made or undocumented components, including custom cradles, counterweights and rigging attachments, unless they have formal engineering approval • Maintain an asset register for all company-owned suspended scaffold equipment, recording serial numbers, specifications, inspection dates and status • Require completion of a formal acceptance inspection by a competent person before any newly procured or hired suspended scaffold equipment is placed into service	2M
4. Planning, Site Assessment and Work Planning	• Inadequate pre-job risk assessment for site-specific conditions (facade features, access, overhead services) • Poor planning for access and emergency retrieval of personnel from suspended scaffolds • Failure to identify and control interaction with other trades, cranes, mobile plant or public areas • Inadequate planning for weather impacts including wind, storms and lightning • Insufficient consideration of drop zones, falling objects and public protection requirements	4A	[redacted]	2M

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			[redacted]	
5. Structural Support, Anchoring and Rigging Systems	• Failure of roof or floor support structures used for suspension due to inadequate design or condition • Incorrect anchorage, tie-backs or counterweight installation leading to scaffold instability or collapse • Use of inappropriate or damaged rigging gear, ropes or cables • Inadequate separation from edges or penetrations resulting in dropped or shifting counterweights • Uncontrolled movement or swing of platforms due to poor [redacted] configuration	4A	[redacted]	2M
6. Erection, Alteration and Dismantling Management	• Erection or dismantling of suspended powered scaffolds by untrained or unsupervised workers • Uncontrolled alterations to platform length, guardrails, toeboards or access arrangements during the job • Failure to isolate or tag-out incomplete or unsafe scaffold configurations • Inadequate planning and supervision of erection and dismantling activities	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• Introduction of compatibility issues when components are added or substituted during alterations		[redacted]	
7. Inspection, Testing and Preventive Maintenance Systems	• Failure to identify wear, corrosion or damage in motors, hoists, ropes, cables and structural members • Out-of-date or missed periodic inspections required by legislation, standards or manufacturer • Deficient functional testing of safety devices (e.g. overspeed [illegible]oad, emergency descent) • Lack of traceable [illegible]aintenance records and service history • Use of equipment that has exceede design life or service intervals	4A	[redacted]	2M
8. Electrical, Power Supply and Controls Management	• Electrical shock or electrocution from faulty power leads, control pendants or motors • Uncontrolled movement of platforms due to malfunctioning controls, emergency stops or limit switches	4A	[redacted]	2M

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	• Use of inappropriate power sources, extension leads or temporary power boards • Contact with overhead powerlines or live electrical installations near the facade • Inadequate lock-out/tag-out procedures for defective electrical components		[redacted]	
9. Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	• Operators and riggers lacking competency in suspen[redacted]ifold and swing stage system • Inadequate verifi[redacted]tion of lic[redacted] high-risk work auth[redacted]or qualifications • Insufficient training on site-speci[redacted] hazards, emergency proc[redacted] and manufacturer instructions • Competency degradation over time due to infrequent use or lack of refresher training • Language, literacy or cultural barriers leading to misunderstanding of instructions and safety information	4A	[redacted]	2M

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10. Access, Fall Protection and Edge Protection Systems	• Falls from height due to inadequate guardrails, toeboards or gaps in platform edge protection • Inadequate fall arrest systems, anchor points or rescue arrangements for workers on suspended platforms • Unsafe access and egress to platforms from the building, roof or other work areas • Uncontrolled movement or swing causing loss of balance and falls • Failure to integrate personal fall protection with the design of the suspended scaffold system	4A	[redacted]	2M
11. Operational Control, Permits and Work Authorisation	• Unauthorised use of suspended platforms by untrained personnel or other trades • Operation of suspended powered scaffolds outside design parameters or in unsafe conditions • Inadequate communication between operators, spotters, building occupants and ground personnel • Work on platforms while maintenance or adjustments are being carried out on rigging or power systems • Failure to cease operations when critical defects or unsafe conditions are identified	4A	[redacted]	2M

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			[redacted]	
12. Falling Objects, Materials Handling and Public Protection	• Tools, materials or debris falling from suspended platforms onto workers or public below • Inadequate control of loose items, waste and small components on platforms • Insufficient segregation of public areas and traffic routes under or near swing stages • Uncontrolled lifting or lowering of loads onto platforms using cranes or hoists • Failure to plan for and manage increased loads from stored materials on platforms	4A	[redacted]	2M
13. Environmental, Weather and Site Condition Management	• Adverse weather (high winds, storms, lightning, heavy rain) affecting stability and safe operation of suspended platforms • Slippery surfaces on platforms due to rain, dust, mud or product overspray • Corrosive or harsh environments accelerating deterioration of structural and mechanical components • Reduced visibility from fog, smoke, glare or night work lighting issues	3H	[redacted]	2M

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	• Sudden changes in site conditions (e.g. nearby demolition, excavation, crane operations) impacting scaffold safety		[redacted]	
14. Emergency Response, Rescue and Incident Management	• Delayed or ineffective rescue of workers suspended at height due to mechanical failure or medical emergency • Lack of tested proced[redacted] platform retrieval, evacuation[redacted] rescue • Inadequate comm[redacted]nication [redacted] between platform, g[redacted] emergency responders • Poor post-incident investigation [redacted]ding to repeat events • Panic or unsafe self-rescue attempts by workers due to fear or lack of information	4A	[redacted]	2M
15. Health, Fatigue and Psychosocial Risk Management	• Worker fatigue, reduced concentration and impaired decision-making during extended or repetitive platform operations	3H	[redacted]	2M

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	• Anxiety, vertigo or acrophobia in workers operating at height leading to panic or unsafe behaviours • Thermal stress (heat or cold) affecting worker performance and health on exposed platforms • Psychosocial stressors including time pressure, production demands and conflict with building occupants or other trades • Inadequate health screening for workers assigned to high-exposure suspended scaffold work		[redacted]	
16. Documentation, Records and Continuous Improvement	• Critical information abo[redacted]ffold design, inspections, [redacted]ects and controls not recorded or ea[redacted]y retrievable • Outdated proced[redacted]s, dr[redacted]gs o[redacted] permits being used in [redacted]eld • Failure to learn from incidents, ne[redacted] misses and audit findings [redacted]lat[redacted]o suspended scaffolds • Non-compliance with legislative record-keeping requirements under WHS Act 2011 and associated regulations • Poor version control leading to confusion over current engineering designs and instructions	3H	[redacted]	2M

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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 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