

**Tools and Material Handling at Height**

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.	Administrative Change PPE	

  

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, Legal Compliance and PCBU Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of formal WHS policy addressing tools and material handling at height</li> <li>PCBU, officers and supervisors not clearly aware of due diligence obligations under WHS Act 2011</li> <li>No systematic process to review compliance with WHS Act, WHS Regulation and relevant Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 1891, AS/NZS 1576, AS 1657)</li> <li>Inadequate consultation with workers and Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) about working at height and falling objects</li> <li>No defined responsibilities for managing dropped object risks across project management, site management and contractors</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a WHS governance framework that explicitly includes control of tools and materials at height and prevention of falling objects in line with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulation</li> <li>Assign and document clear WHS responsibilities for officers, managers, supervisors and workers regarding management of tools and materials at height and dropped object risks</li> <li>Establish a legal compliance register and review schedule that covers working at height, plant and structures, PPE, and falling object controls, including updates when legislation or standards change</li> <li>Integrate falling object risk management into the organisation's WHS policy, risk management procedure and safe design processes</li> <li>Ensure officer due diligence training includes specific content on hierarchy of control for work at height and control of falling objects</li> <li>Implement formal consultation mechanisms (toolbox talks, HSR forums, pre-start meetings) that regularly address system issues for material and tool control at height</li> </ul>	3H
2. Design of Structures, Work Platforms and Roof Access Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roofs, platforms and access ways designed without consideration of dropped object hazards</li> <li>Lack of edge upstand toe boards or mesh leading to an increased risk of tools and material sliding or rolling off</li> <li>Poor layout of roof work areas creating trip hazards, congestion and unsafe placement of materials</li> <li>Inadequate design of load points on roofs or elevated platforms for safe receipt of materials</li> <li>No integrated anchor points or systems for tool lanyards and material restraints at design stage</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply safe design principles at project planning and procurement stages to minimise the need to handle tools and materials at edges or unprotected areas</li> <li>Specify edge protection systems including toe boards, kick plates, containment mesh and solid infill where practicable to prevent objects being dislodged from platforms and roofs</li> <li>Ensure design of roof access systems incorporates designated material staging areas set back from edges and away from fall zones</li> <li>Design and specify engineered loading zones on roofs and platforms (e.g. loading bays, hoist landings, crane landing points) with barriers, guardrails and debris containment features</li> <li>Include permanent or temporary anchor points and attachment points for tool lanyards and material restraints in structural and access design documentation</li> <li>Engage competent engineers and WHS professionals at design review stages to verify that falling object risks are controlled as far as reasonably practicable</li> </ul>	2M
3. Procurement and Suitability of Tools, Equipment and Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase of tools and power equipment not designed for use at height or without integrated tethering options</li> <li>Use of makeshift or non-rated tool lanyards, pouches or bags that may fail under load</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a procurement standard requiring all hand and power tools intended for work at height to include dedicated tethering points and compatible lanyard systems tested to recognised standards</li> <li>Standardise the issue of rated tool lanyards, tool belts, holsters, buckets and bags designed for working at height and preventing dropped objects</li> <li>Specify that all lifting and materials handling equipment used to move tools and materials to height be engineered, load-rated, tagged and compatible with the loads and configuration (e.g. lifting bags with closure systems)</li> </ul>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials handling equipment (hoists, gin wheels, davits) not fit for purpose or not rated for loads handled at height</li> <li>Inconsistent specifications for tool belts, holsters and storage systems across contractors and teams</li> <li>No standardised selection criteria for drop-prevention features on hand and power tools</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include drop-prevention performance criteria in supplier evaluations and contracts (e.g. proof of testing for tool tethers, closure integrity of tool bags, impact resistance)</li> <li>Prohibit procurement or use of improvised storage containers (e.g. open buckets, milk crates) for tools and small materials at height through a documented purchasing and site rule</li> <li>Maintain an approved products list for height work equipment, including clear descriptions of intended use and limitations, and ensure purchasing staff use the list</li> </ul>	
4. Planning and Risk Management for Work at Height (Including Drop Zones)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work at height commencing without a formal risk assessment addressing falling object risks</li> <li>Lack of planning for drop zones beneath work areas, leading to uncontrolled exposure of workers or public</li> <li>Insufficient consideration of interaction between multiple trades working above and below each other</li> <li>Inadequate planning for tool and material storage on roofs or elevated platforms, resulting in clutter and instability</li> <li>No defined process for approval of high-risk activities involving work above public areas or live workplaces</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
5. Control of Access, Exclusion and Drop Zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unauthorised entry of workers or public into areas below overhead work</li> <li>Inadequate demarcation or signage of drop zones and exclusion zones</li> <li>Failure to adjust or expand drop zones when work methods or wind conditions change</li> <li>Emergency egress routes passing directly through drop zones without alternative paths</li> <li>Poor coordination of multiple overlapping exclusion zones, leading to confusion and non-compliance</li> </ul>	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
6. Systems for Transporting Tools and Materials to Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of manual carrying on ladders or unsafe ad-hoc lifting methods to get tools and materials to height</li> <li>• Overloading of ladders, temporary stairs or scaffolds with materials beyond design capacity</li> <li>• Lack of controlled lifting systems (e.g. hoists, cranes, rope systems) resulting in dropped loads</li> <li>• Inadequate procedures for loading and unloading materials at roof edges or platform landings</li> <li>• No check process to ensure lifting bags, containers and attachments are properly closed and secured</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Storage, Housekeeping and Control of Tools and Materials at Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unsecured tools, fixings and off-cut left near edges, on parapets or in walkways</li> <li>• Overcrowded roof or platform areas with poor segregation between work, access and storage</li> <li>• Wind or vibration causing lightweight materials or tools to move and fall</li> <li>• Inadequate end-of-shift clean-up systems leading to misplaced or unaccounted tools</li> <li>• Reliance on workers' memory rather than system-based controls to ensure tools are kept on belts or in secured containers</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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8. Use of Tool Lanyards, Belts and Tethering Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of a formal system requiring tethering of tools at height, leading to reliance on individual behaviour</li> <li>Incorrect use or attachment of tool lanyards resulting in failure or entanglement</li> <li>Tool belts overloaded or poorly arranged, causing balance issues and dropped items when accessed</li> <li>No standard for when tools must be secured to the person, structure or plant (e.g. while travelling vs working)</li> <li>Failure to inspect and retire worn, damaged or inappropriate lanyards and attachment points</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
9. Operation of Power Tools and Equipment at Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power tools operated at height without drop protection for the tool or its components (e.g. battery guards, attachments)</li> <li>Lack of systems to manage kickback, snagging or sudden stops which could dislodge tools or materials</li> <li>Inadequate procedures for changing blades, bits or consumables at height resulting in dropped components</li> <li>Power tool cords, hoses or leads creating trip and snag hazards on roofs and platforms</li> <li>Insufficient maintenance systems leading to equipment malfunction and loss of control</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Competency, Training and Supervision for Work at Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workers and supervisors unaware of system requirements for drop zones, tool control and material handling at height</li> <li>No formal verification of competency for working at height or operating</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<p>specific equipment used to lift tools and materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient training on the hierarchy of control for falling object risks, leading to over-reliance on PPE</li> <li>• Supervisors not trained to identify systemic non-compliance with tool tethering and storage requirements</li> <li>• Contractors inducted but not assessed against site-specific standards for control of tools and materials at height</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
11. Contractor Management and Interface with Public/Other Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractors using inconsistent or lower standards for tool and material control at height compared with PCBU requirements</li> <li>• Lack of clarity around who controls public interfaces, footpaths, car parks and shared zones below overhead work</li> <li>• Inadequate communication with building occupants, tenants or neighbours about timings and locations of overhead work</li> <li>• Conflicting work methods between multiple PCBUs leading to gaps in dropped object controls</li> <li>• Failure to coordinate overlapping worksites where one contractor is working at height over another's personnel</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
12. Inspection, Monitoring, Incident Reporting and Corrective Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dropped tools and materials not reported or investigated unless they cause injury or damage</li> <li>• Lack of systematic inspections focused on tool control, material handling at height and drop zone integrity</li> </ul>	4A	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No trend analysis of near miss events to drive improvements in systems and design</li> <li>Corrective actions from incidents or audits not closed out, allowing repeat failures</li> <li>Over-reliance on informal observations rather than structured monitoring of compliance</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
13. Emergency Preparedness and Response to Dropped Object Incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No predefined response plan for incidents involving falling tools or materials striking persons or critical infrastructure</li> <li>Confusion over roles and responsibilities following a dropped object event, leading to delays in medical response or area isolation</li> <li>Inadequate arrangements for rapid securing of the work area after an incident to prevent secondary events</li> <li>Lack of training or drills related to overhead work emergencies, including rescues from height</li> <li>No process to communicate incident learnings promptly to all affected workers and contractors</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
14. Change Management, Design Variation and Seasonal/Environmental Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncontrolled changes to work methods, equipment or sequencing affecting tool and material handling at height</li> <li>Introduction of new tools or materials without reassessment of dropped object risks</li> <li>Environmental changes such as wind, rain, heat, poor lighting or seasonal storms increasing the likelihood of items being dropped</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to review controls when site layout or adjacent land use changes (e.g. new pedestrian routes, traffic flows)</li> <li>• Temporary works (scaffolds, temporary roofs, hoardings) altered without consideration of their role in containing falling objects</li> </ul>		<div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100%; height: 15px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></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.