# Tree Lopping and Pruning

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 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: |

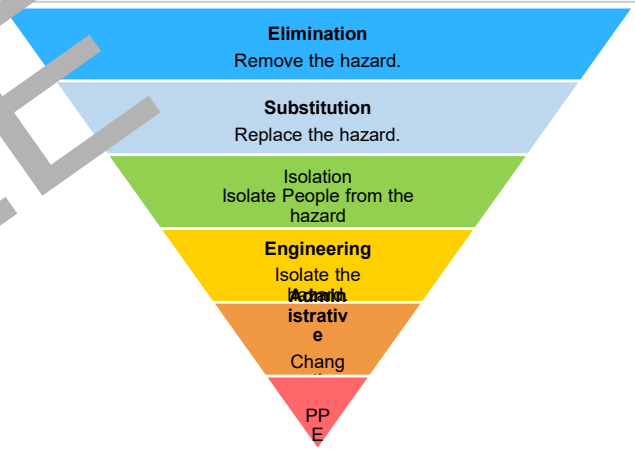
## CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

| | |
|---|---|
| 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. Governance, WHS Duties and Legal Compliance | • Failure to identify and discharge PCBU primary duty of care under WHS Act 2011 for high-risk tree lopping and pruning activities<br>• Lack of clear WHS roles, responsibilities and delegations for directors, managers, supervisors and workers engaged in tree work<br>• Absence of documented WHS policy and safety objectives applicable to arboriculture, tree felling and storm recovery operations<br>• Non-compliance with WHS Regulations, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards relevant to tree work, plant, falls, traffic control and emergency response<br>• Poor change management when introducing new techniques (e.g. chainsaw-free dismantling systems, mechanical felling, new rigging metho<br>• Inadequate due diligence by officers (directors/senior mana…), monitoring safety pe…ormance in complex operation…such as dismantling trees near houses …powe…<br>• Unclear arrangements when multip… PCBUs operate together (e.g. cou…, traffic control contractors, …ran…e, subcontract climbers after natural disasters) | High | • Establish and maintain a documented WHS …anagement system aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant guidance for arbo…ulture and t… felling activities<br>• Define and document WHS roles, responsibi…s, …thorities and accountability for officers, managers, supervisors, team leaders, plant operators, clim…s and ground…ew<br>• Develop and communicate a…HS policy endorse…by of…rs, specifically referencing high-risk activities such as tree felling (manual and…echanical), tree di…tling near houses, roadside clearance and emergency storm …spon…<br>• Create a le… and standa…s regist…cover…g applicable legislation, Codes of Practice (e.g. managing risks of falls, p…t, hazard…s manual …y), relevant Australian Standards for chainsaws, EWPs, cranes and tr…c contr…and …iew it at least annually<br>• Imple…s a form…officer due diligence program including regular safety performance reports, field safety …alk…audits …d review of incident trends relating to tree work<br>• Develo…a do…mente…change management procedure requiring risk assessment, consultation, trialling …d train…g bef… introducing new equipment (e.g. mechanised felling heads, chainsaw-free dismantling syst…s), …ew work methods or new client requirements<br>• Ensure d…cumented arrangements for consultation, cooperation and coordination with other PCBUs (… councils, utilities, traffic management companies, crane providers) including written interface ag…ements for shared worksites<br>• Set measurable WHS objectives and KPIs specific to tree operations (e.g. reduction in near misses for dropped branches, improvement in pre-start inspection completion rates, compliance with exclusion zones)<br>• Undertake annual management review of the WHS management system, including lessons learned from large tree removal, emergency tree recovery after natural disasters and complex dismantling near structures | Medium |
| 2. Planning, Job Scoping and Risk Management Processes | • Inadequate site assessment and scoping for complex tasks such as dismantling large trees near houses, fences and critical infrastructure<br>• Failure to identify unstable or uprooted trees, compromised root systems or storm-damaged branches during emergency recovery after natural disasters<br>• Poor hazard identification processes for overhead and underground services | High | • Implement a formal pre-job planning and scoping procedure requiring documented site inspection for all large trees, high-risk felling, dismantling near structures, and roadside or emergency works<br>• Standardise use of a structured risk assessment or SWMS template that addresses specific tree work hazards, including live tree felling, mechanical felling, emergency recovery, uprooting and chainsaw-free dismantling methods<br>• Require formal assessment and documentation of tree condition (lean, decay, cracks, root plate movement, storm damage) prior to selecting felling or dismantling methods<br>• Mandate service location checks (including Dial Before You Dig or equivalent) and consultation with utilities where overhead or underground services may be affected by tree works or root removal | Medium |

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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 |
| | (e.g. powerlines, telecommunications, underground utilities)<br>• Lack of systematic assessment of environmental conditions (wind, rain, soil saturation, flood impacts) affecting tree stability and access<br>• Inconsistent use of formal risk assessment, SWMS or job safety analysis for high-risk tasks such as tree felling (manual and mechanical), crane removals and roadside clearance<br>• Insufficient planning of drop zones, rigging paths and exclusion zones when dismantling trees with chainsaw or chainsaw-free methods<br>• Inadequate planning for traffic interface when clearing trees from roadways or working adjacent to public areas<br>• Poor planning of staging, access and egress for large-scale land clearing, mechanical tree felling and remote works<br>• Inadequate assessment neighbouring proper sks (e.g. damage to houses ences, sheds, pools, services) du g dism nd pruning | | • Include weather and ground condition assessment in planning (wind speeds, rainfall, soil saturation, flood damage) with defined triggers for postponing work or modifying methods<br>• Establish standard planning tools such as site pla sketches or digital mapping to design drop zones, rigging routes, mechanical plant positioning and clusion zones before commencing work<br>• Implement a requirement that traffic risk a essment and affic management planning be undertaken by competent persons for any work affecting ro ways or destrian paths<br>• Include neighbouring property and asset risk a ssment (roof ences, sheds, glazing, pools, gardens) in the planning process with eed protections o cess ar gements documented with the client<br>• Require verification and appro of job plans by a tent supervisor or consulting arborist for complex works (e.g tling e trees over hous s, multi-crane lifts, or large-scale land clearing)<br>• Maintain re s of risk as essme job pl and changes made during the job for review and continual imp ement | |
| 3. Worker Competency, Licensing and Training | • Workers performing manual or mechanical tree felling without fo al competency or adequate e ience<br>• Climbers dismantling trees near houses or fences without recognised arborist/ climbing training and supervised competency assessment<br>• Use of chainsaws, stump grinders, EWPs, cranes and mechanical felling equipment by untrained or uncertified operators<br>• Limited understanding of advanced rigging techniques and chainsaw-free dismantling systems, leading to unsafe setups | High | • Develop and implement a competency framework for all roles (climbers, ground crew, chainsaw operators, crane operators, EWP operators, traffic controllers, supervisors) based on recognised units of competency and industry standards<br>• Require verification of high-risk work licences, plant operator tickets and relevant qualifications before workers perform tasks (e.g. EWP, crane operation, traffic control, dogging/rigger where applicable)<br>• Provide formal training and assessment in arboriculture, tree climbing, aerial rescue, manual and mechanical felling, advanced rigging and dismantling techniques (including chainsaw-free systems)<br>• Implement a structured induction program covering WHS duties, company procedures, risk assessment, emergency response, fatigue management and reporting processes specific to tree operations<br>• Require task-specific training and supervised on-the-job assessments for high-risk activities such as dismantling trees over houses, uprooting trees and emergency storm recovery<br>• Schedule regular refresher and update training for chainsaw use, plant operation, traffic management, first aid, CPR and aerial rescue in line with industry best practice | Medium |

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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 |
| | • Inadequate training in dynamic tree behaviour, storm-damaged trees, uprooted trees and trees under tension/compression<br>• Lack of training in WHS duties, risk assessment, SWMS implementation and stop-work authority<br>• Insufficient competency in traffic management for tree clearance from roadways and work near live traffic<br>• Inadequate refresher training, particularly for emergency recovery work after long breaks or during surge events<br>• Language, literacy or cultural barriers preventing effective understanding of WHS procedures | | • Provide tailored training or coaching for identifying and managing storm-damaged, partially uprooted and tensioned trees, including decision-making on when to decline work or seek specialist assistance<br>• Address language, literacy and cultural needs thro… translated materials, visual aids, mentoring and verification of understanding rather than relying …ly on written procedures<br>• Maintain a central training and competen… register that …ludes expiry dates, refresher requirements and evidence of competency for each worke…<br>• Empower supervisors to verify competency be… assigning w…ers to high-risk roles and to reassign workers if competency is not …monstrated | |
| 4. Contractor, Subcontractor and Labour Hire Management | • Use of subcontract climbers, plant operators or labour hire workers without verifying competence or licences for high-risk tree work<br>• Inconsistent WHS standards between principal contractor and subcontractors during large tree remov… …dside clearance and disas… recovery<br>• Poor communica…n of job s… …isk controls and SWMS… …ntracto… and labour hire workers<br>• Lack of clarity about supervision arrangements and who h… …ority to stop work in unsafe conditions<br>• Subcontractors providing equipment (e.g. chainsaws, rigging gear, cranes) that does not meet company or legal safety standards<br>• Inadequate onboarding for short-term teams during emergency tree recovery surge operations<br>• Payment or contractual arrangements that incentivise speed over safety (e.g. piece-rate per tree) leading to risk-taking behaviours | High | [redacted] | Medium |

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| | | | [redacted] | |
| 5. Plant, Equipment and Technology Management | • Inadequate selection and procurement of chainsaws, stump grinders, mechanical felling equipment, cranes, EWPs and rigging systems for the type and size of trees being worked on<br>• Use of poorly maintained or damaged equipment increasing likelihood of failure during tree dismantling or felling<br>• Insufficient inspection systems for ropes, slings, pulleys and mechanical devices used in tree dismantling and chainsaw-free systems<br>• Plant not fit for purpose for steep, unstable, waterlogged or debris-cover ground in post-disaster environments<br>• Inadequate guarding, emergency stop or safety features on me al plant used for tree felling and land clearing<br>• Failure to integra emerging technologies (e.g. saws, cranes, mechanised harveste safely into existing systems of work<br>• Lack of standardisation ment leading to inconsistent safety features and training requirements<br>• Uncontrolled modification of plant or rigging systems outside manufacturer recommendations | igh | [redacted] | Medium |
| 6. Safe Systems of Work and Procedures | • Absence of standardised procedures for high-risk tasks such as large tree felling, sectional dismantling near structures, roadside tree clearance and emergency storm response | High | [redacted] | Medium |

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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 |
| | • Inconsistent application of SWMS or safe work procedures across crews and locations<br>• Failure to define exclusion zones, drop zones and no-go areas in procedures for tree felling and dismantling<br>• Lack of documented decision-making criteria for choosing between manual, mechanical and chainsaw-free methods of tree removal<br>• Procedures not adapted for special situations such as uprooted trees, flood-affected trees or trees laden with debris after storms<br>• Overly complex or generic procedures that workers do not read, understand or follow<br>• No formal process to review and update procedures following incidents, near misses or changes in legislation standards | | [redacted] | |
| 7. Traffic, Public Interface and Property Protection Management | • Inadequate traffic management wh clearing trees from roadways or wo ng adjacent to live traffic lanes<br>• Members of the public entering drop zones or exclusion areas during tree felling and pruning near houses, parks and footpaths<br>• Damage to houses, roofs, fences, sheds, vehicles and other property during tree dismantling or felling near boundaries and structures<br>• Poor communication with residents and businesses about access restrictions, noise, dust and vibration from land clearing and large tree removals<br>• Insufficient planning for emergency vehicle access during large-scale | High | [redacted] | Medium |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | roadside tree clearance or disaster recovery works<br>• Confusion about which PCBU controls traffic management when multiple parties (council, utility, contractor) operate at the same site | | [redacted] | |
| 8. Emergency Preparedness, Response and Crisis Management | • Lack of structured emergency response plans for incidents such as serious injury, tree or limb collapse, plant rollover, contact with powerlines, struck-by events<br>• Inadequate preparedness for large-scale emergency t[redacted]overy after storms, bushfir[redacted], cyclones or floods<br>• Insufficient aerial [redacted] workers aloft in trees or EWPs<br>• Poor communication systems (radio/phone coverage) i[redacted] or disaster-affected areas<br>• Fatigue and cognitive overload during extended emergency response operations<br>• Unclear coordination with emergency services and local authorities when worksites overlap<br>• Failure to plan for mental health impacts on workers exposed to traumatic events during emergency recovery | 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 |
| | | | [redacted] | |
| 9. Fatigue, Workload and Psychosocial Risk Management | • Extended working hours and inadequate rest during emergency tree recovery after storms, bushfires and floods<br>• High physical and mental workload when dismantling large hazardous trees near houses and critical infrastructure<br>• Pressure from clients, insurers or the public to clear trees and reopen roads quickly, leading to rushed decisions<br>• Exposure to traumatic scenes during disaster recovery, including property destruction and fatalities<br>• Remote or isolated work increasing stress and reducing support for worke<br>• Conflicts within teams or poor supervisory practices aff mental health and decision-m king<br>• Stigma or lack of wareness about reporting stress, fa ue or lth concerns | High | [redacted] | Medium |
| 10. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Continuous Improvement | • Under-reporting of incidents, near misses and hazards related to tree felling, dismantling and storm recovery<br>• Superficial investigations that focus on worker behaviour rather than underlying system and management causes<br>• Failure to identify and act on recurring themes such as dropped limbs, equipment failures or traffic near misses<br>• Poor communication of lessons learned across crews and regions | High | [redacted] | Medium |

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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 |
| | • Lack of integration between WHS data, plant maintenance records and training systems, resulting in missed trends | | [redacted] | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

## 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

**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