

Trucks and Heavy Vehicles

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			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																									
Risk Rating & Required Action: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>4A</td> <td>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.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3H</td> <td>Review and approve additional controls before task starts. Senior supervisor sign-off needed.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2M</td> <td>Ensure all nominated controls are in place and effective. Proceed with caution; monitor conditions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1L</td> <td>Proceed, following standard operating procedures. Monitor and keep records.</td> </tr> </table>										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.																
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Notes on Hierarchy of Controls: Remember to apply controls in the preferred order shown by the coloured pyramid: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eliminate 2. Substitute 3. Isolate 4. Engineering 5. Administrative 6. PPE <p>Always document why a lower-order control is accepted if elimination or substitution is not reasonably practicable.</p> <p><i>aligned with Safe Work Australia's Managing the risk of fatigue at work (2023) and ISO 45001:2018 clauses 6–8.</i></p>																																	
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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 Safety Leadership for Heavy Vehicle Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear assignment of WHS due diligence duties for officers and PCBUs in relation to trucks and heavy vehicles Inadequate integration of heavy vehicle risks (including Chain of Responsibility obligations) into the organisation's WHS management system Failure to consult, cooperate and coordinate with other duty holders (e.g. consignors, consignees, prime contractors, maintenance providers) involved in heavy vehicle activities Insufficient resourcing (time, people, budget, technology) allocated to manage WHS risks associated with heavy vehicles, trailers and specialised configurations (e.g. low loaders, side loaders, quad-axle groups, prime movers and semi-trailers) Poor safety leadership and culture leading to normalisation of unsafe practices (e.g. rushing coupling/decoupling, bypassing pre-start checks, ignoring ladder and access system defects) Inadequate corporate policies for safe use and management of vehicles transporting dangerous goods, volatile substances and hazardous cleaning agents No formal framework for continuous improvement (e.g. no regular WHS management review specific to trucking and heavy vehicle operations) Lack of documented criteria for when work with heavy vehicles must cease due to unacceptable risk (e.g. poor weather when installing tyre chains or working on flatbeds) 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and document officer due diligence obligations under the WHS Act 2011 specific to heavy vehicles, including explicit oversight of fleet safety, maintenance systems, journey management and driver competency Develop and implement an organisation-wide Heavy Vehicle Safety Policy that covers all vehicle types (e.g. prime movers, semi-trailers, low loaders, side loaders, grapple trucks, haul trucks, tankers, tailgate loaders and flatbed trucks) and associated trailer operations Integrate heavy vehicle risk management into the overarching WHS management system, ensuring alignment with relevant WHS regulations, Heavy Vehicle National Law and Dangerous Goods and Chain of Responsibility requirements Establish a formal WHS governance structure (e.g. safety committee or transport safety leadership group) with clear terms of reference, meeting schedules and reporting lines for all truck and heavy vehicle risks Set measurable safety objectives and targets for heavy vehicle operations (e.g. reduction in near misses relating to coupling/decoupling, ladder access, journey incidents, loading/unloading dangerous goods) Ensure consultation with workers, health and safety representatives and key contractors on all proposed changes to systems that affect trucks and heavy vehicles (e.g. new vehicle types, new tanker operations, revised loading practices) Implement a documented process for consultation, cooperation and coordination with other duty holders in the supply chain, including formal agreements that define shared responsibilities for loading, unloading, scheduling and journey safety Allocate adequate resources for WHS in heavy vehicle operations, including competent WHS advisors, maintenance planners, training budget and technology (e.g. telematics, fatigue management systems, pre-start apps) Require regular WHS management reviews that specifically examine the effectiveness of controls for trucks and heavy vehicles, including incident trends related to access systems, ladders, landing gear, variable/quad axle operations and tanker operations Adopt a documented 'stop work' authority and escalation process that empowers workers to cease or refuse unsafe heavy vehicle work (e.g. unsafe access to flatbeds or low loaders, inadequate equipment for installing tyre chains, unsafe loading of dangerous goods) without fear of reprisal Embed heavy vehicle safety expectations into performance measures for managers and supervisors, including accountability for proactive risk assessments, spot checks on vehicles and closing corrective actions Maintain up-to-date legal registers and guidance material for WHS legislation, Heavy Vehicle National Law, Dangerous Goods Codes and relevant Australian Standards applicable to trucks and heavy vehicles, and review at least annually 	Medium
2. Vehicle and Trailer Procurement, Design and Engineering Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of trucks, trailers and specialised equipment without systematic WHS and human-factors review 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal heavy vehicle and trailer procurement procedure requiring WHS risk assessment and sign-off before purchase, lease or significant modification 	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate fall-prevention and access systems for climbing onto trailers, flatbeds, low loaders and trucks Ladders and steps on vehicles that are non-compliant, poorly positioned or difficult to use when carrying tools or hoses Lack of engineered controls for coupling and uncoupling prime movers, semi-trailers, low loaders, side loader trailers and multi-axle configurations Insufficient consideration of safe systems for installing tyre chains on heavy vehicles, including in remote or adverse weather conditions Poor design of tanker trucks, dangerous goods vehicles and vehicles transporting volatile substances or hazardous cleaning agents (e.g. no spill containment, inadequate isolation valves, poor venting and earthing arrangements) Inadequate load restraint provisions on flatbed trucks, side loaders, grapple trucks, low loaders and tailgate loaders leading to load movement or collapse Complex variable axle and quad-axle group pneumatic suspension arrangements without user-friendly controls, clear labelling and intuitive design Insufficient visibility and camera/sensor systems for manoeuvring heavy vehicles in tight spaces and during loading/unloading Procurement decisions driven by cost or productivity without life-cycle safety considerations (e.g. poor access, difficult landing gear operation, heavy manual handling tasks) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify compliance with relevant Australian Standards and industry best practice for truck steps, ladders, handrails, non-slip surfaces and fall prevention systems when climbing onto or off trailers, flatbeds, low loaders and tankers Standardise compliant access systems on all heavy vehicles, including three-point contact design, appropriate step spacing and clearly marked access paths avoiding the need to climb over drawbars, load restraints or equipment Require engineered fall-prevention or fall-protection solutions for roof-top and elevated tasks on tankers, semi-trailers and flatbeds (e.g. gantries, guardrails, anchor points, integrated walkways) where reasonably practicable Select coupling systems that reduce manual handling and pinch-point risks, and consider semi-automatic or automatic coupling where practicable, especially for high-frequency coupling/decoupling tasks Ensure landing gear, trailer loaders and variable axle controls are ergonomically designed, clearly labelled, lockable where appropriate, and able to be operated without excessive force or unsafe body postures For dangerous goods vehicles, tanker trucks and vehicles transporting volatile substances or hazardous cleaning agents, specify engineered safety features such as emergency shut-off valves, spill containment, overfill protection, ventilation, earthing/bonding provisions and segregated storage compartments Require vehicle designs that minimise the need to climb onto loads (e.g. side loaders, cranes, grapple arms, mechanical tarp systems) and that provide safe access for tying down and inspecting loads Install high-visibility lighting, reversing cameras, proximity sensors and audible alarms on vehicles expected to operate in tight spaces, depots, plants and customer sites Involve drivers, mechanics, loaders and WHS representatives in the evaluation of proposed vehicle models and trailer designs before procurement decisions are finalised Develop and maintain a standard specification library for different vehicle classes (e.g. haul trucks, multi-axle trucks, prime movers, tankers, grapple trucks, side loaders) that embeds health and safety requirements as non-negotiable criteria Ensure that any retrofitting of equipment (e.g. additional toolboxes, pumps, hose reels, tyre chain racks, variable axle controls) is subject to change management and engineering review to confirm hazards are not introduced or exacerbated 	
3. Safe Systems of Work, Procedures and Change Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of formalised procedures for key heavy vehicle activities, leading to 	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop, approve and maintain comprehensive safe systems of work and procedures that cover all major heavy vehicle activities at a system level (e.g. coupling and uncoupling prime movers and trailers, 	Medium

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	<p>inconsistent practices between drivers, locations and shifts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on undocumented custom and practice for high-risk activities such as coupling/decoupling, operating tailgate loaders, loading and unloading dangerous goods or operating side loaders and low loaders • Inadequate systems for tasks that require working at height on vehicles and trailers, including climbing attached ladders, steps and accessing flatbed or tanker tops • Poorly developed or generic procedures that do not address site-specific and vehicle-specific hazards (e.g. unique features of quad-axle suspension systems, variable axle operation, or particular tanker configurations) • Lack of integrated procedures for the safe transport of volatile substances and hazardous cleaning agents, including decanting, venting and emergency response steps at a system level • No formal change management process for introducing new vehicle types, new routes, new tanker operations, or modified coupling and suspension systems • Inadequate documentation and communication of safe operating envelopes for manoeuvring heavy vehicles in tight spaces and confined yards • Procedures that fail to address interactions between vehicles and other plant, pedestrians, subcontractors and customers during loading, unloading and tanker operations 		<p>loading/unloading, tanker operations, use of tailgate loaders, variable axle operation, grapple truck operations, installing tyre chains)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure procedures explicitly reference and align with WHS legislation, Heavy Vehicle National Law, relevant Codes of Practice and Australian Standards, particularly for dangerous goods and volatile substance transport • Design procedures to address system-level controls (e.g. mandatory use of pre-start apps, checklists, communication protocols, exclusion zones, speed limits and isolation/lock-out) rather than focusing on minute task instructions alone • Incorporate clear rules for when work on or around heavy vehicles must not proceed (e.g. prohibition on climbing onto trailers without fall protection, suspension operations in severe weather when installing tyre chains or operating on icy surfaces) • Standardise procedures across the business wherever practicable, while allowing controlled local variations documented via risk assessments and approval • Implement a formal document control system to ensure only current versions of heavy vehicle procedures are in use, with clear version control and review dates • Introduce a mandatory change management process for new vehicles, new technologies (e.g. new variable axle systems), new tanker operations, new substances and routes, requiring risk assessment, trials and worker consultation before full deployment • Embed requirements for coordination with other parties (e.g. customer depots, loading terminals, maintenance providers) within procedures for loading/unloading, tanker operations and manoeuvring in tight spaces • Ensure procedures and system documentation explicitly address access to vehicles (ladders, steps, attached platforms), coupling/decoupling sequences, parking/isolating vehicles, raising and lowering landing gear and operating suspension controls at a system level • Translate complex or high-risk procedures into practical visual aids (e.g. laminated cab cards, in-cab posters, quick-reference guides, digital apps) that are consistent with the controlled procedures • Introduce a formal process for workers to suggest improvements or raise issues with existing heavy vehicle procedures, and ensure all changes are risk assessed and approved by competent persons • Schedule periodic review of procedures following incidents, near misses, technology changes or legislative updates, with specific focus on systems involving dangerous goods, volatile substances and hazardous cleaning agents 	
4. Driver and Operator Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers and operators of heavy vehicles not holding the correct class of licence or required endorsements for specific vehicle types (e.g. dangerous 	High		Medium

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and Scheduling Controls	<p>vehicles (e.g. steep gradients, poor road shoulders, limited clearance, inadequate space for manoeuvring and installing tyre chains)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scheduling practices that contribute to driver fatigue, speeding or pressure to bypass safety controls (e.g. skipping coupling checks, rushing dangerous goods loading/unloading) Failure to account for weather conditions, road closures and seasonal hazards (e.g. snow/ice requiring frequent tyre chain installation, heat stress for tanker operations) Insufficient management of higher-risk journeys involving haul trucks, heavy dump trucks, side loader operations and low loader transport of large or awkward loads Lack of system-level controls to manage rest breaks, hours of work and cumulative fatigue for heavy vehicle drivers Poor communication and escalation procedures for route deviations, breakdowns, dangerous goods incidents and exposure to volatile substances or hazardous cleaning agents Inadequate controls for manoeuvring in tight spaces at customer sites, depots and loading facilities, especially when using large multi-axle or articulated vehicles 		[REDACTED]	
7. Traffic Management, Manoeuvring and Site Interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled interaction between trucks, heavy vehicles, other mobile plant and pedestrians at depots, 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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	<p>workshops, loading sites and customer facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient planning and controls for manoeuvring heavy vehicles in tight spaces, including reversing, docking at bays and positioning low loaders or side loaders • Lack of clearly defined and enforced exclusion zones during loading, unloading, tanker transfer and grapple truck or tailgate loader operation • Inadequate controls when climbing up or down vehicle ladders, accessing trailers or operating on flatbeds in congested areas • Poor communication protocols between drivers, spotters, loaders, forklift operators and site personnel during complex manoeuvres • Limited consideration of site-specific constraints in contracts and service agreements with customers, leading to unsafe docking areas and access routes • No systematic assessment of the suitability of customer premises for large or specialised vehicles such as quad-axle trucks, heavy trucks, low loaders and multi-axle combinations 		<p>[REDACTED]</p>	
8. Dangerous Goods, Volatile Substances and Hazardous Cleaning Agents Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate system-level controls for transport, loading and unloading of dangerous goods, volatile substances and hazardous cleaning agents • Failure to maintain current Safety Data Sheets and substance registers for all transported and handled hazardous chemicals • Poor segregation, packaging, labelling and placarding systems for dangerous goods and volatile cargoes on tankers, semi-trailers and flatbeds • Lack of integrated emergency response planning for spills, leaks, fires 	High	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	Medium

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	<p>or exposures during storage in transit, transfer operations and deliveries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient controls for static electricity, earthing and bonding for tanker and volatile substance operations • Inadequate training and competency systems for workers involved in operating dangerous goods vehicles and tanker trucks • Poor coordination with customers and third parties regarding dangerous goods unloading facilities, venting arrangements, spill control and emergency response capabilities 		[REDACTED]	
9. Working at Height, Access and Fall Prevention on Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systemic reliance on workers climbing onto trailers, flatbed trucks, low loaders and tankers without adequate fall prevention or protection • Use of non-compliant or poorly maintained ladders attached to vehicles, damaged steps, missing handholds or slippery access surfaces • Lack of organisational rules around when access to loads or trailer rooftops is permitted, restricted or prohibited • Inadequate consideration of environmental conditions (rain, ice, mud, uneven ground) that increase slip, trip and fall risk when accessing vehicles • Absence of a controlled process for installing tyre chains or conducting inspections that require access near or under heavy vehicles 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient supervision and monitoring of working at height practices in depots, lay-down areas and customer sites 		[REDACTED]	
10. Contractor, Supplier and Chain of Responsibility Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of contractors, labour-hire drivers and third-party transport providers without adequate assessment of their WHS and fleet safety systems No clear allocation of WHS and Chain of Responsibility duties between consignor, consignee, operator, loader, scheduler and prime contractor for heavy vehicle tasks Inconsistent standards across suppliers for coupling/descoupling, tanker operations, installation of tyre chains, loading/unloading of dangerous goods and managing multi-axis or variable axle equipment Limited oversight of how contractor manage work at height on vehicles, vehicle maintenance, job management and dangerous goods compliance Commercial arrangements that inadvertently encourage unsafe practices (e.g. unrealistic time windows for deliveries, penalties that drive speeding or short-cutting safety checks) 	High	[REDACTED]	Medium
11. Incident Reporting, Monitoring and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-reporting of incidents, near misses and unsafe conditions involving trucks and heavy vehicles 	Medium	[REDACTED]	Low

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of systematic analysis of data relating to coupling/decoupling failures, working at height incidents, dangerous goods events, maintenance defects and journey-related incidents Failure to implement and track corrective and preventive actions from incident investigations, audits and inspections Inadequate feedback loops to inform updates to training, procedures, procurement and maintenance systems No structured approach to reviewing the effectiveness of WHS risk controls for heavy vehicle operations over time 		<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.