

Upholstery Safety

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, Policies and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of a documented WHS management system specific to upholstery and staple-gun use</li> <li>Policies not aligned with WHS Act 2011, WHS Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice (e.g. Managing Risks of Plant in the Workplace)</li> <li>Unclear allocation of WHS responsibilities between PCBUs, officers, supervisors and workers</li> <li>No formal process for consultation with workers on upholstery safety risks</li> <li>Failure to monitor and review compliance with internal policies and legislative changes</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement a WHS management system that specifically addresses upholstery activities and powered/air staple guns, referencing WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations</li> <li>Establish a documented WHS policy endorsed by senior management that sets expectations for safe use, inspection and maintenance of staple guns and related upholstery tools</li> <li>Clearly define WHS roles, responsibilities and accountability for officers, managers, supervisors, workers and contractors in position descriptions and procedures</li> <li>Implement a structured consultation process (e.g. WHS committee, toolbox talks, safety reps) to discuss upholstery hazards, incident trends and improvement actions</li> <li>Schedule an annual compliance review against relevant legislation, Australian Standards and industry best practice for workshops and plant safety</li> <li>Integrate upholstery safety requirements into supplier contracts and contractor management procedures</li> </ul>	2M
2. Risk Management and Change Management for Upholstery Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal risk assessment process for upholstery tasks involving staple guns, adhesives and cutting tools</li> <li>Infrequent or ad hoc review of risks when new furniture designs, materials and equipment are introduced</li> <li>Failure to consider cumulative risks from multiple hazards (e.g. noise, vibration, sharps, chemicals) in the same workspace</li> <li>Poor management of change when altering layouts, purchasing new staple guns, or modifying computerised systems</li> <li>Lack of documented safe operating limits for tools, fixtures and jigs used in upholstery</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a documented risk management procedure in line with WHS Regulations (identify hazards, assess risks, implement and review controls) specific to upholstery processes</li> <li>Require formal risk assessments (and where necessary, SWMS) before introducing new staple guns, air compressors, materials or process changes</li> <li>Establish a Management of Change (MOC) process that mandates WHS review, worker consultation and sign-off for any significant change to equipment, layouts or production volume</li> <li>Use a standard upholstery risk register capturing hazards, controls, risk ratings and review dates, maintained by a nominated WHS coordinator</li> <li>Include consideration of combined exposures (noise, manual handling, sharps, dust, fumes) in all upholstery risk assessments</li> <li>Schedule periodic re-assessments (e.g. annually or after incidents) to verify the effectiveness of implemented controls</li> </ul>	2M
3. Competency, Licensing and Training for Staple-Gun Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate induction for new or young workers on upholstery-specific hazards, including high-velocity staples and sharp tools</li> <li>Workers using pneumatic or electric staple guns without documented competency or supervision</li> <li>Training limited to task demonstration without covering WHS obligations,</li> </ul>	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a structured induction and competency program for upholstery workers covering staple-gun operation, plant safety, manual handling, ergonomics and incident reporting</li> <li>Implement a competency-based training matrix with minimum training requirements for operating staple guns and related plant, and restrict use to authorised personnel only</li> <li>Provide formal training on WHS duties under the WHS Act 2011, including the right to cease unsafe work and the process for raising safety concerns</li> </ul>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hazard recognition and emergency procedures</li> <li>No refresher training or verification of competency after incidents, near misses or equipment upgrades</li> <li>Language, literacy or cultural barriers reducing understanding of safe work procedures</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule refresher training at defined intervals and after any incident, equipment change or introduction of new materials or processes</li> <li>Use multiple training formats (visual aids, demonstrations, translated materials, mentoring) to address language and literacy limitations</li> <li>Maintain secure training and competency records, including sign-offs by supervisors confirming observed safe work practices</li> </ul>	
4. Equipment Selection, Design and Guarding (Staple Guns and Tools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selection of staple guns without adequate safety features (e.g. contact trip safety, trigger locks, exhaust direction control)</li> <li>Use of non-compliant, modified or home-made tools and jigs in upholstery work</li> <li>Lack of guarding or misdirected exhaust on pneumatic staple guns leading to staple ricochet or foreign-body injuries</li> <li>Use of staple guns not ergonomically suited to the task, increasing risk of repetitive strain and loss of control</li> <li>Incompatibility between staples, guns and materials leading to misfires, jams and unexpected discharge</li> </ul>	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Inspection, Maintenance and Integrity of Staple Guns and Air Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of scheduled maintenance for staple guns, compressor and couplings</li> <li>Failure of seals, triggers, safety noses or pressure regulators leading to uncontrolled discharge</li> <li>Deteriorated air hoses creating trip hazards or hose whip</li> <li>Use of tools that are damaged, malfunctioning or missing safety components</li> <li>Inadequate system to remove defective tools from service promptly</li> </ul>	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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6. Workshop Layout, Housekeeping and Traffic Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor layout leading to close interaction between upholstery workstations, storage areas and walkways</li> <li>• Excess clutter, offcuts and packaging on benches and floors creating slip, trip and puncture hazards</li> <li>• Inadequate segregation of high-risk staple-gun work from visitors and other workers</li> <li>• Uncontrolled movement of trolleys, forklifts or vehicles through upholstery areas</li> <li>• Insufficient space around benches causing awkward postures and accidental bumping of tools or gun triggers</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Ergonomics and Manual Handling in Upholstery Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repetitive stapling at awkward angles leading to musculoskeletal disorders in hands, wrists, shoulders and neck</li> <li>• Manual handling of large or awkward furniture frames and rolls of fabric or foam without assistance</li> <li>• Poorly designed benches leading to sustained bending, reaching and twisting during stapling and fabric tensioning</li> <li>• Use of heavy or poorly balanced staple guns increasing grip force and fatigue</li> <li>• Lack of rotation between tasks with different physical demands</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
8. Hazardous Substances, Dust and Fume Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to solvent-based adhesives, sprays and cleaning products used in upholstery preparation</li> <li>• Inhalation of dust from foam, fabrics, timber and board during preparation and finishing</li> <li>• Inadequate ventilation in areas where staple guns disturb dust or where spraying and gluing occur</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of Safety Data Sheet (SDS) management and incorrect storage or decanting of chemicals</li> <li>Incompatible products used together, increasing risk of respiratory irritation or sensitisation</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
9. Electrical and Pneumatic Energy Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncontrolled release of pneumatic energy from hoses, regulators or guns causing hose whip or high-velocity ejections</li> <li>Inadequate isolation and lock-out procedures during maintenance of compressors or staple guns</li> <li>Use of damaged electrical cords, power boards or chargers for electric staple guns and tools</li> <li>Overloading of power circuits in upholstery bays with multiple tools and heaters</li> <li>Lack of pressure regulation or incorrect setting for staple-gun operation</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
10. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Management System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent provision of PPE such as safety glasses, hearing protection and hand protection</li> <li>PPE selected without considering comfort or suitability for upholstery tasks (e.g. gloves that reduce staple-gun control)</li> <li>No clear policy on mandatory PPE zones within upholstery areas</li> <li>Lack of systems for PPE replacement, cleaning and storage leading to non-use or contamination</li> <li>Reliance on PPE as the primary control rather than part of a hierarchy of controls</li> </ul>	2M	[REDACTED]	1L
11. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Corrective Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under-reporting of near misses and minor incidents involving staple guns, sharps and manual handling</li> <li>Lack of structured incident investigation leading to repeated</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staple-related injuries or musculoskeletal issues</li> <li>• Failure to identify systemic causes such as training gaps, poor layout or maintenance deficiencies</li> <li>• Corrective actions not tracked to completion or evaluated for effectiveness</li> <li>• Workers not aware of notifiable incident requirements under WHS legislation</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
12. Emergency Preparedness and First Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate first aid arrangements for puncture wounds, eye injuries and lacerations from staple guns and sharp materials</li> <li>• Workers not trained to respond to high-velocity foreign body or eye incidents promptly</li> <li>• Lack of clear procedures for managing serious injuries and contacting emergency services</li> <li>• Insufficient emergency equipment such as eye-wash stations, sharps disposal containers and stocked first aid kits</li> <li>• Poor communication systems for summoning help quickly from remote or noisy workshop areas</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
13. Contractor, Labour Hire and Visitor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractors or labour-hire workers using staple guns or working near upholstery operations without site-specific induction</li> <li>• Unclear division of WHS responsibilities between host employer and labour-hire provider</li> <li>• Visitors entering upholstery areas without awareness of staple-gun hazards and PPE requirements</li> <li>• Contractor work (e.g. maintenance on compressors, electrical upgrades) introducing additional risks to upholstery operations</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No verification that contractors have appropriate competencies and insurances</li> </ul>		[REDACTED]	
14. Fatigue, Work Scheduling and Psychosocial Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prolonged periods of repetitive stapling and high-pace production leading to fatigue and reduced attention</li> <li>Unrealistic deadlines or piece-rate pay systems encouraging shortcuts with safety in upholstery work</li> <li>Inadequate breaks and shift patterns contributing to errors with staple-gun handling and manual tasks</li> <li>Psychosocial stressors (e.g. bullying, poor supervision, lack of control over work) impacting safe decision-making</li> <li>Limited mechanisms for workers to raise concerns about workload and pace without fear of reprisal</li> </ul>	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
15. Information, Documentation and Record Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdated or inaccessible procedures for upholstery safety, staple-gun use and maintenance</li> <li>Inconsistent documentation leading to multiple versions of work instructions in circulation</li> <li>Poor retention of maintenance, training and incident records hindering legal defence and continuous improvement</li> <li>Workers unaware of when and current WHS documentation relevant to upholstery work</li> <li>Failure to document agreed controls from risk assessments and audits</li> </ul>	2M	[REDACTED]	1L

**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.