

Vehicle Inspections and Pre-Start Checks

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	
								PPE	

Risk Rating & Required Action:	
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 for the task parts. 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.

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. Vehicle Procurement and Design Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of vehicles that are not fit-for-purpose for the tasks and environments in which they will be used Lack of clear organisational standards for minimum safety features (e.g. ANCAP rating, reversing cameras, in-vehicle monitoring systems) Failure to specify requirements for load restraint, tow capacity, rollover protection or off-road use in purchase/lease contracts Inadequate consultation with workers and HSRs on vehicle selection, leading to mismatch between vehicle capability and operational needs No process to verify that modified or specialised vehicles comply with Australian Design Rules and WHS legislative requirements 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a formal Fleet and Plant Procurement Procedure that specifies minimum WHS and safety design requirements for all vehicles (e.g. ANCAP star rating where available, ESC, AEB, ABS, airbags, reversing cameras, high-visibility markings) Include documented WHS specification schedules in purchase and lease contracts, including requirements for load restraint systems, cargo carrying, ROPS/FOPS where necessary, and appropriate lighting for work environments Require written assurance from suppliers that vehicles and any aftermarket modifications comply with Australian Design Rules, road transport legislation and relevant Australian Standards Undertake a risk-based fit-for-purpose assessment for each vehicle type, considering operating environment (on-road, off-road, urban, typical loads, towing, and passenger requirements) Consult with workers, Health and Safety representatives and fleet users when drafting vehicle specifications and prior to major fleet changes Implement a pre-commissioning inspection process before vehicles enter service, verifying all required safety features, pre-start inspection aids (e.g. checklists, labels) and communication equipment are installed and working Maintain a central register of vehicle specifications, safety features and intended use to support ongoing WHS risk management and change control 	3H
2. WHS Governance, Policies and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a documented WHS policy addressing vehicle use, inspections and road-related work activities Lack of clarity regarding PCBU, officer and worker duties under the WHS Act 2011 and associated Regulations for driving and vehicle inspections Inadequate integration of vehicle risk management into the organisation's WHS management system No formal process to review and update procedures in line with legislative, code of practice and standards changes Poor communication of legal obligations to contractors, labour hire workers and visitors who drive company vehicles 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and endorse a corporate Work-Related Driving and Vehicle Safety Policy that clearly articulates WHS responsibilities for PCBUs, officers, workers and contractors Integrate vehicle inspection and pre-start check requirements into the organisation's WHS Management System, including risk management, consultation, training and incident management elements Ensure senior management actively demonstrate due diligence in relation to vehicle risks by approving resources, monitoring performance indicators and reviewing audit outcomes Regularly review vehicle-related policies and procedures against current WHS legislation, Australian Road Rules, Safe Work Australia guidance and relevant Codes of Practice Include WHS and vehicle inspection expectations in contractor pre-qualification, induction and ongoing performance management processes Communicate legal obligations and organisational expectations on safe vehicle use, pre-departure checklists and defect reporting through policy briefings, toolbox talks and written guidance Undertake periodic external or internal legal/WHS compliance reviews of the vehicle risk management framework and implement corrective actions 	2M
3. Driver Competency, Licensing and Training Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drivers operating vehicles without appropriate class of licence or endorsements for vehicle type and use (e.g. heavy vehicles, passenger transport, towing) 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a Driver Competency and Licensing Procedure that requires verification and periodic re-checking of licences, endorsements and driving history for all authorised drivers 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate competency in conducting systematic pre-start inspections and interpreting dash instruments and warning lights Lack of training in hazard identification specific to vehicle condition, damage and mechanical defects No verification of training effectiveness or competency assessment for high-risk driving activities (e.g. off-road, remote, night driving) Inconsistent induction for new starters, labour hire workers and contractors regarding organisational vehicle inspection requirements 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide structured training modules on pre-departure checklists, documenting vehicle damage, reading dash instruments, and conducting pre-trip and post-trip inspections Include practical competency assessments for key vehicle inspection skills, such as identifying critical defects, use of inspection checklists and escalation requirements Deliver targeted training for specific risk profiles (e.g. 4WD, off-road, towing, remote area operations) including vehicle-specific inspection and recovery equipment checks Ensure all drivers complete a WHS and vehicle safety induction prior to being authorised to use any company vehicle, with refresher training at defined intervals Maintain a central training and competency register, links drivers to authorised vehicle types and documents completion of required training and assessments Periodically evaluate training effectiveness using incident data, inspection compliance rates, driver feedback and observation programs, and revise training content accordingly 	
4. Pre-Start Inspection Systems and Checklists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of a standardised pre-departure checklist leading to inconsistent inspection practices between drivers and sites Pre-start checks being rushed, skipped or treated as a mere 'tick and flick' exercise Checklists that do not adequately cover critical items such as tyres, brakes, steering, lights and wash/water systems No clear criteria for identifying what constitutes a critical defect versus a minor defect Paper-based systems that make it difficult to track completion, trends and non-compliances across the fleet 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Documentation and Management of Vehicle Damage and Defects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to document existing vehicle damage, leading to unreported structural or safety-related issues Normalisation of minor damage and cosmetic issues that may mask more serious underlying defects 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate process for recording, approving and closing out repairs arising from pre-trip and post-trip inspections Lack of clarity around responsibilities for reporting, investigating and rectifying damage discovered during inspections Poor record keeping preventing trend analysis, leading to repeated issues and missed systemic problems 		[REDACTED]	
6. Maintenance, Servicing and Repair Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate preventive maintenance scheduling leading to mechanical failures during use Servicing conducted based only on time or odometer without consideration of harsh or remote operating conditions Use of unqualified repairers or inconsistent maintenance standards across locations Poor communication between drivers, fleet managers and maintenance providers about inspection findings and fault history Vehicles returning to service without effective verification of rectified defects 	1A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Journey Management and Vehicle Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate journey planning leading to extended driving hours, fatigue risk and inadequate time for pre-start checks Allocation of unsuitable vehicles for specific journeys or load types (e.g. no off-road capability for remote tracks) Lack of controls around departure times that incentivise skipping or rushing pre-departure inspections No requirement to confirm vehicle roadworthiness status before journey approval 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient contingency planning for breakdowns, vehicle faults or adverse weather 		[REDACTED]	
8. Remote and High-Risk Environment Vehicle Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicles used in remote or harsh environments without appropriate additional inspections and safety equipment Limited access to maintenance, fuel and recovery services increasing consequence of undetected defects Ineffective communication and monitoring systems hindering timely response to vehicle failures Pre-start and post-trip inspections not adapted for remote conditions (e.g. underbody checking after rough tracks dust affecting lights and instruments) Insufficient training in remote area vehicle checks and contingency planning 	4A	[REDACTED]	3H
9. Vehicle Safety Features, Monitoring and Engineering Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to utilise or maintain in-vehicle safety technologies (e.g. ABS, stability control, lane departure warning) due to lack of understanding or system faults Inadequate monitoring of harsh braking, speeding, or other driving behaviours that may correlate with vehicle damage and increased inspection needs Lack of engineering controls to prevent vehicle use when critical faults are present (e.g. ignoring warning lights) Poor integration of telematics and monitoring data into WHS risk management and training 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications or accessories interfering with visibility, lighting, cameras or sensors 		[REDACTED]	
10. Information, Instruction, Supervision and Safety Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers not understanding the importance of pre-trip and post-trip inspections and viewing them as a low-value administrative task • Supervisors not monitoring or reinforcing adherence to inspection and defect reporting procedures • Production, time or delivery pressures discouraging thorough pre-departure checklists and vehicle safety check-ups • Inconsistent messaging from management regarding safety versus productivity priorities • Limited worker involvement in improving inspection processes, leading to low engagement 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Records Management, Data Analysis and Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented or incomplete records of pre-start checks, defects, services and repairs, making it difficult to demonstrate due diligence • Inability to identify trends in vehicle faults, damage, or non-compliance due to poor data quality • Loss of historical records when changing systems or providers, limiting long-term analysis and learning • No formal review cycle to evaluate the effectiveness of inspection systems and management controls • Inadequate linkage between vehicle-related incidents and underlying system or process failures 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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12. Incident, Near Miss and Non-Conformance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle-related incidents and near misses not being reported or investigated adequately • Focus on driver error without identifying underlying system issues such as inadequate inspections or maintenance failures • Repeat occurrences of similar incidents due to ineffective corrective and preventive actions • Non-conformances with inspection procedures not being recorded or managed systematically • Lack of feedback to the workforce about changes implemented following incidents or non-conformances 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Contractor, Labour Hire and Third-Party Vehicle Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractors using vehicles that do not meet the organisation's safety and inspection standards • Assumptions that contractor drivers have equivalent training and competency in inspections and pre-start checks • Poor visibility of contractor vehicle defect, damage and maintenance records • Inconsistent application of pre-departure checklists and post-trip inspections across third-party providers • Contractual arrangements that prioritise cost or productivity over vehicle safety and compliance 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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14. Change Management and Introduction of New Vehicles or Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of new vehicle types, inspection technologies or apps without adequate risk assessment • Workers not consulted or trained before changes to inspection processes or tools are implemented • Legacy procedures and forms remaining in use, causing confusion and inconsistent inspection practices • New technology failures (e.g. app outages, connectivity issues) leading to missed or unrecorded pre-start inspection data • Insufficient testing of aftermarket modifications impacting inspection access points, visibility or safety systems 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
15. Fatigue, Health and Fitness for Duty in Relation to Inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers conducting pre-start and post-trip inspections while fatigued, distracted or unfit for work, increasing likelihood of missed defects • Roster and scheduling practices that limit time for proper pre-departure checklist completion • Failure to consider physical limitations or health conditions that may affect a worker's ability to perform thorough inspections (e.g. mobility, dexterity, vision issues) • No linkage between fitness for duty assessments and authorisation to operate or inspect vehicles • Inadequate worker awareness of fatigue risks associated with both driving and inspection activities 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
16. Site Access, Parking and Inspection Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-start inspections conducted in poorly lit, congested or uneven areas increasing the risk of missed faults or slips, trips and falls 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate designated areas for safe vehicle check-ups, especially for fleet yards and depots Exposure to other moving vehicles while inspecting, particularly when checking lights, damage or under-vehicle components No clear traffic management arrangements to protect workers carrying out pre-departure and post-trip inspections Environmental conditions (rain, heat, dust) not adequately considered when scheduling or designing inspection locations 		<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.