Wildlife Handling Snake and Venomous Animal Safety

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:	

bluesafe.

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			
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	Review before work start	
UNLIKELY	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	4 ACUTE	2M MODERATE	Ensure control measures in place.	
RARE	1 LOW	1 LOW	2 MODERATE	3 HIGH	3 HIGH	1L LOW	Monitor and keep records.	

Hierarchy of Controls pyramid:
- **Elimination** — Remove the hazard.
- **Substitution** — Replace the hazard.
- Isolation — Isolate People from the hazard
- **Engineering** — Isolate the hazard
- **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 before the 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.

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, Legal Compliance and Duty of Care	• Lack of documented WHS policy specific to wildlife handling and venomous animal risks • Failure to identify and manage PCBU duties under WHS Act 2011 and relevant state wildlife legislation • No clear assignment of responsibilities for wildlife safety, animal welfare and incident management • Inadequate consultation with workers and contractors regarding wildlife and venomous animal hazards • Failure to consider WHS Regulations, Codes of Practice and Australian Standards relevant to animal handling, remote work and manual tasks • Inconsistent application of due diligence by officers (e.g. inadequate resources allocated to wildlife risk management)	4A	• Develop and endorse a WHS Governance Framework that explicitly addresses wildlife handling, venomous animals and zoonotic disease risk in line with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations • Assign clear roles and responsibilities for wildlife management, including an accountable senior manager and competent wildlife coordinator • Integrate wildlife and venomous animal risk into the organisation's WHS policy, risk management standard and safety management system • Ensure officers exercise due diligence by regularly reviewing wildlife-related incident data, risk assessment and control effectiveness reports • Establish and maintain procedures to identify, access and comply with relevant WHS legislation, wildlife and biosecurity laws and Codes of Practice (e.g. venomous snake handling, animal welfare) • Implement a formal consultation process with workers, HSRs and contractors regarding wildlife hazards and control measures, including toolbox talks and safety committees • Incorporate wildlife and venomous animal risks into contractor management and PCBU–PCBU consultation arrangements	3H
2. Wildlife Risk Identification, Assessment and Planning	• Inadequate assessment of wildlife and venomous animal risks in different locations and seasons • Failure to identify high-risk activities such as feeding cats or animal, handling venomous reptiles, or work near water bodies containing dangerous animals • Lack of systematic identification of areas prone to wildlife intrusions into buildings, vehicles and work areas • No standard process to assess risks at remote properties where animal attacks or bites may occur • Inadequate pre-task planning for work involving approaching wildlife or pests, or rescuing trapped wildlife • Poor integration of wildlife risks into project, event or site safety planning	4A	• Implement a formal wildlife and venomous animal risk assessment procedure applicable to all sites and projects, using a consistent risk matrix aligned with the WHS framework • Develop location-specific wildlife hazard registers that identify local snake, spider, insect and dangerous animal species and their typical habitats and behaviours • Incorporate wildlife risk assessments into project start-up, site establishment and event planning processes, including seasonal and weather-related variations • Require pre-task risk assessments (e.g. Job Safety Analyses) for high-risk wildlife tasks such as handling venomous reptiles, potentially rabid mammals, or working near crocodile-inhabited waters • Map and classify high-risk zones (e.g. water bodies with dangerous animals, known snake corridors, rubbish areas attracting pests, building entry points) and apply appropriate access controls • Review and update wildlife risk assessments following incidents, near misses, or significant environmental changes (e.g. flooding, construction works, vegetation changes)	2M

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
3. Competency, Licensing and Specialist Training	• Lack of formal training in handling venomous reptiles, venomous insects and spiders, or potentially rabid mammals • Workers approaching wildlife or pests without understanding species-specific behaviours and defensive responses • Inadequate competency in recognising local snake and insect species and assessing risk levels • Improvised methods used to remove wild animals from premises or vehicles due to lack of training • Insufficient training for staff working closely with wildlife or feeding carnivorous animals in controlled facilities • No system to verify qualifications and experience of contractors providing wildlife capture or relocation services	4A	• Establish a competency framework defining the required skills, licences and experience for roles involving wildlife handling, relocation, feeding carnivorous animals and working with venomous species • Mandate accredited training for staff authorised to handle venomous reptiles, venomous insects and spiders, including species identification, safe capture techniques and emergency response • Provide induction and refresher training for relevant workers on local snake and insect species, typical habitats, signs of aggression and safe distances for observation • Ensure only trained and authorised personnel conduct tasks involving close contact with wildlife, and explicitly prohibit untrained staff from attempting capture or relocation • Develop a verification process for external wildlife handlers, ensuring they hold current permits, insurance and demonstrated experience with relevant species • Implement competency assessments, supervised practice and periodic re-authorisation for high-risk roles such as handling potentially rabid mammals or feeding large carnivores	2M
4. Safe Work Procedures and Wildlife Interaction Protocols	• Absence of standardised procedures for approaching wildlife or pests and managing wildlife intrusions • Inconsistent methods for dealing with wildlife in cars, buildings and outdoor work areas • No documented process for engaging with wildlife during outdoor cleaning or grounds maintenance • Poorly defined limits on when workers must cease work or withdraw due to aggressive or dangerous animals • Ad hoc approaches to rescuing trapped wildlife leading to increased risk of bites, scratches or attacks • Unclear procedures for safely working near water bodies containing dangerous animals	4A		2M

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
5. Information, Instruction and Local Species Awareness	• Workers unaware of local venomous snakes, spiders, insects and dangerous aquatic animals • Lack of signage and information at remote properties where wildlife attacks are more likely • Inadequate communication regarding seasonal patterns (e.g. breeding season aggression, increased snake activity in warm months) • Misunderstanding of rabies and lyssavirus risks associated with bats and other mammals • Incorrect assumptions about animal behaviour leading to unsafe attempts at feeding or interaction • Inconsistent briefing of contractors and visitors about onsite wildlife hazards	3H		1L
6. Engineering Controls, Physical Barriers and Habitat Management	• Buildings, storage areas and vehicles that allow easy entry or shelter for snakes, spiders and other pests • Poor site design around water bodies leading to frequent encounters with dangerous aquatic animals • Accumulation of rubbish, debris and vegetation providing harbourage for wildlife and pests • Inadequate barriers or enclosures for carnivorous animals or wildlife kept for display, rehabilitation or research • Lack of secure containment for captured or rehabilitating wildlife • Insufficient lighting in areas where wildlife may be encountered, increasing surprise interactions	3H		1L
7. Wildlife Handling Equipment, PPE and Maintenance Systems	• Inadequate or inappropriate equipment for handling venomous reptiles, insects and potentially rabid mammals	3H		1L

SAMPLE

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
	• Poorly maintained capture tools leading to failure during critical handling tasks • Lack of specialised PPE for high-risk wildlife activities (e.g. snake gaiters, bite-resistant gloves, face shields) • No system to ensure vehicles used for wildlife response are equipped with appropriate containment and handling equipment • Improvised use of general tools or household items to manage wildlife, increasing bite and scratch risk • Insufficient decontamination procedures for equipment exposed to zoonotic agents			
8. Remote and Isolated Work, Journey and Communications Management	• Workers exposed to wildlife and venomous animal risks at remote properties without effective communication systems • Delayed emergency response following snakebite, spider bite or animal attack due to distance and access issues • Inadequate journey planning for travel through areas with known wildlife hazards (e.g. kangaroos, livestock, feral animals on roads) • No formal check-in/check-out system for staff working alone near water bodies containing dangerous animals • Lack of procedures for sheltering in vehicles or safe areas during unexpected wildlife incidents in remote locations • Insufficient consideration of fatigue and time of day, increasing risk of wildlife–vehicle interactions	4A		2M
9. Health Monitoring, Zoonotic Disease and First Aid Preparedness	• Inadequate planning for snakebite, spider bite, insect sting or marine envenomation emergencies	4A		2M

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
	• Lack of awareness of rabies and Australian bat lyssavirus risks associated with handling bats and potentially rabid mammals • Insufficient availability of first aiders trained in pressure immobilisation and other relevant techniques • No structured access to medical advice for suspected zoonotic exposures (e.g. bites, scratches, faecal contamination) • Inadequate vaccination or prophylaxis programs for high-risk workers (e.g. rabies pre-exposure for bat handlers) • Poor recordkeeping of exposures, bites and attacks preventing effective health surveillance			
10. Emergency Preparedness, Incident Response and Rescue	• Lack of coordinated response plan for serious bites, maulings or drowning incidents linked to wildlife encounters near water • Unplanned and unsafe rescue attempts when animals or people are trapped or attacked • Ineffective communication and site control during wildlife emergencies • Inadequate drills for managing aggressive wildlife intrusions into public or work areas • Absence of clear authority and decision-making roles during high-consequence wildlife incidents • Poor debriefing and learning from wildlife-related emergencies or near misses	4A		2M
11. Contractor, Visitor and Public Interface Management	• Contractors performing wildlife-related tasks without alignment to the organisation's WHS and wildlife procedures • Members of the public exposed to wildlife hazards on or near the	3H		1L

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
	workplace (e.g. visitor centres, parks, tourist facilities) • Insufficient supervision of contractors engaged for wildlife removal from premises or remote properties • Inadequate controls when feeding or displaying carnivorous animals to visitors or clients • Poorly managed community expectations regarding wildlife presence and control methods, leading to pressure on workers to take unsafe actions • Lack of clear demarcation between public and high-risk wildlife zones			
12. Psychosocial Risks, Worker Wellbeing and Fatigue Management	• Anxiety and stress among workers due to fear of snakes, spiders, bats or large carnivorous animals • Exposure to traumatic events involving severe animal attacks or deaths of animals in care • Fatigue from long hours working in remote areas or conducting nocturnal wildlife monitoring activities • Pressure to continue working conditions due to production or operational demands • Inadequate support following incidents, resulting in reduced concentration and increased risk of error • Stigma or reluctance to report mental health concerns associated with wildlife work	3H		2M
13. Environmental Conditions, Seasonal Factors and Change Management	• Increased wildlife activity due to seasonal conditions (e.g. breeding season, drought, floods, heatwaves) not considered in planning • Uncontrolled changes to habitat or site layout that inadvertently increase wildlife presence near work areas	3H		1L

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
	• Failure to reassess wildlife risks after construction, vegetation clearing or changes to water bodies • Weather extremes forcing wildlife into buildings, vehicles or sheltered workspaces • Inadequate contingency plans for sudden spikes in wildlife encounters (e.g. post-flood snake migrations) • Lack of coordination between environmental management and WHS teams				
14. Incident Reporting, Investigation and Continuous Improvement	• Under-reporting of near misses and minor wildlife encounters, limiting learning opportunities • Superficial investigation of wildlife-related incidents that fails to identify root causes in systems, training or environment • Lack of trend analysis for wildlife incidents across multiple sites or projects • Failure to share lessons learned from serious wildlife events within the organisation and with key contractors • No systematic review of the effectiveness of existing wildlife control measures • Inadequate recordkeeping of wildlife sightings, encounters and control activities	3H			1L
15. Governance Review, Audit and Management Oversight	• Insufficient management oversight of wildlife and venomous animal risk controls across the organisation • Failure to integrate wildlife safety performance into regular WHS reporting and management review processes • Inconsistent implementation of wildlife procedures between sites and business units	3H			1L

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
	• Lack of independent assurance (e.g. internal audit) on compliance with wildlife-related legislation and internal standards • Inadequate resourcing for ongoing wildlife risk management, training and equipment • Management focus on reactive response rather than proactive risk reduction			

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 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/legislati...
Codes of Practice NSW: https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/list...codes-of-practi...

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-s...ty-laws
Codes of Practice NT: https://worksafe.nt.gov.au/f...nd-resourc...s/co...s-of-...actice

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/le...lation
Codes of Practice for SA: https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/wor...aces/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