

Working in Wet Weather Rain and Thunderstorms

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 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.

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. Weather Risk Governance, Policy and Legal Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a formal wet weather and thunderstorm policy aligned with WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Failure to define legal duties of PCBU's, officers, workers and contractors for work in severe and inclement weather Inadequate consideration of Australian Standards, Codes of Practice and industry guidance on electrical storms and outdoor work No clear criteria for when to cease, restrict or resume outdoor work during thunderstorms and heavy rain Lack of governance oversight for weather-related risk management and incident trends Poor integration of weather risk into the organisation's WHS management system and risk register 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and endorse a documented Wet Weather and Thunderstorm Risk Management Policy consistent with the WHS Act 2011 and WHS Regulations Define governance arrangements so that officers regularly verify that severe weather risks are identified, controlled and reviewed Incorporate relevant Australian Standards (e.g. AS/NZS 1772 Lightning Protection), Safe Work Australia guidance and industry best practice into policy requirements Establish clear measures/triggers for suspension, modification and resumption of work based on rainfall intensity, wind speed, lightning distance and weather warnings Integrate wet weather and lightning risks into the corporate WHS risk register and periodic due diligence reports to senior management and the Board Mandate that all projects and sites address inclement weather and thunderstorm risks within their WHS plans and contract documentation Implement a scheduled policy review cycle (at least every two years or post-incident) to ensure compliance with evolving legislation and guidance 	2M
2. Weather Monitoring, Forecasting and Early Warning Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliance on informal observation rather than structured monitoring of severe weather conditions No system for monitoring Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) warnings for thunderstorms, heavy rain or damaging winds Failure to detect rapidly changing weather and lightning risks at site or regional locations No automated alerting for supervisors and workers when severe weather thresholds are reached Inconsistent use of technology (e.g. lightning trackers, radar apps) leading to gaps in awareness 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal weather monitoring procedure requiring use of BoM forecasts, warnings and real-time radar for all outdoor work planning Subscribe to BoM or approved third-party severe weather alert services for lightning, storms, heavy rain and high wind events covering all work locations Deploy approved lightning detection / tracking tools and ensure they are integrated into site communication protocols and escalation processes Establish site-specific weather trigger points (e.g. lightning within 10 km, severe storm warning issued) that mandate pausing work and moving to shelter Assign clear responsibility to competent persons on each shift to monitor weather information and communicate changes to supervisors and workers Conduct periodic testing and drills of severe weather alerting and response systems to verify reliability and worker understanding 	2M
3. Planning, Scheduling and Work Authorisation in Inclement Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project programs that do not allow for delays due to severe weather, encouraging unsafe continuation of work Lack of pre-planning for alternative tasks that can be safely performed during wet weather 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate weather-related delays into project scheduling and resourcing to minimise production pressure to work in unsafe conditions Require a documented pre-job weather risk assessment for outdoor works, including lightning risks during outdoor installations and crane or EWP operations 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate assessment of seasonal and localised weather patterns during tendering and project planning No formal work authorisation process for outdoor tasks during unstable or rapidly changing weather Commercial pressure causing supervisors to override weather-related stop-work decisions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a library of pre-approved alternative indoor or low-risk tasks that can be scheduled when outdoor work is suspended due to bad weather Implement a permit-to-work or work authorisation process for high-risk outdoor activities when weather is unstable or storms are forecast Embed explicit contractual clauses addressing wet weather stand-downs, payment and programme adjustments to reduce commercial pressure on safe decisions Require senior management sign-off for any deviation from established severe weather work restrictions 	
4. Site Design, Layout and Drainage for Wet Weather Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor site drainage leading to pooling water, mud, slips, trips and falls during heavy rain Inadequate access and egress routes that become unsafe or impassable in wet conditions Location of work areas in low-lying or flood-prone zones without contingency planning Lack of designated safe shelters for thunderstorms and severe weather events Insufficient design consideration for safe parking and movement of vehicles and plant in wet and boggy conditions 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	1L
5. Electrical and Lightning Risk Management for Outdoor Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate system electrical isolation and protection from water ingress during rainfall Lack of engineered lightning protection systems where required by risk assessment Use of portable electrical equipment not rated for wet weather conditions Failure to control proximity to overhead power lines and conductive structures during thunderstorms Uncontrolled utilisation of electronic devices during thunderstorms increasing lightning strike risk 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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			[REDACTED]	
6. Plant, Vehicle and Equipment Management in Wet Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of plant selection criteria for safe operation on wet, slippery or unstable ground Inadequate braking and traction performance of vehicles and mobile plant in heavy rain No system to restrict the use of EWPs, cranes and lifting equipment during thunderstorms or high winds Absence of wet weather modifications such as mudguards, wipers, demisters and appropriate tyres Poor maintenance systems leading to failure of safety-critical components in wet conditions 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
7. Systems for Slips, Trips, Falls and Ground Stability in Wet Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate systems for managing slippery surfaces, mud and reduced ground friction during rain Failure to monitor and manage ground stability for scaffolding, temporary structures and excavations in prolonged wet weather Lack of formal process to restrict access to high-risk areas such as slopes, embankments and excavations when saturated Poor design of pedestrian routes that channel water flow and create trip hazards Insufficient controls for working at heights when surfaces are wet, windy or exposed to storms 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
8. Worker Competency, Training and Weather Hazard Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of training on recognising severe weather indicators and lightning risk during outdoor installations Inadequate competency of supervisors in applying weather-related stop-work criteria 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited understanding of the health impacts of cold, wind, rain and storm exposure Failure to communicate changes to weather risk procedures to all workers and contractors Complacency and underestimation of thunderstorm and flash flooding risks 		[REDACTED]	
9. Communication, Alarm and Emergency Response in Extreme Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear communication channels for escalating severe weather warnings to the workforce No standard alarm or notification system for lightning proximity or extreme rain events Ineffective emergency response planning for weather-related incidents such as lightning strike, structural failure or flooding Failure of primary communication systems (e.g. mobile networks) during major storms Lack of clarity in roles, responsibilities and authority during fast-escalating weather emergencies 	4A	[REDACTED]	2M
10. Fatigue, Health and Welfare Management in Wet and Cold Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate systems in place to monitor exposure to cold, wind chill and prolonged rain leading to hypothermia and reduced cognitive performance Poor management of extended shifts due to weather-driven schedule compression or recovery works Insufficient welfare facilities such as drying areas, warm rest shelters and hot drinks for workers soaked by rain Health issues exacerbated by damp conditions, including respiratory problems and reduced immune response Workers continuing in poor weather due to lack of rest breaks and inadequate welfare planning 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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11. Contractor Management and Interface Coordination for Severe Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractors operating under inconsistent or inadequate wet weather and thunderstorm procedures Lack of clarity on who has authority to stop contractor work during storms Poor coordination of multiple contractors sharing the same site during rapidly changing weather Subcontractors using non-compliant electrical and temporary works equipment in wet conditions Inconsistent communication of site-specific severe weather triggers and shelters to all parties 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L
12. Safe Use of Technology and Electronic Devices During Thunderstorms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncontrolled use of mobile phones, tablets, laptops and radios in exposed areas during active thunderstorms Dependence on handheld electronic devices for work guidance in open fields, rooftops or scaffolds during storms Charging stations and power supplies located in areas susceptible to water ingress and flash flooding Lack of procedure for safely shutting down and storing sensitive electronic equipment before severe storms Electromagnetic interference affecting critical control systems during lightning activity 	2H	[REDACTED]	1L
13. Documentation, Reporting and Continuous Improvement of Weather Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incomplete documentation of weather-related risk assessments, decisions and stop-work events Lack of systematic recording and investigation of incidents and near misses related to inclement weather Failure to learn from internal and industry weather-related incidents and apply corrective actions 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdated procedures not reflecting changing climate patterns and more frequent extreme weather No performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of wet weather and thunderstorm controls 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	
14. Integration with Broader WHS Management System and Other Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather risks managed in isolation and not integrated with other critical risk controls (e.g. working at heights, confined spaces, electrical work) Conflicting procedures between weather controls and other safety systems creating confusion on priority actions Failure to consider combined effects of severe weather with psychosocial risks, fatigue, traffic and public safety Inconsistent application of weather-related controls across different sites and business units Insufficient oversight of how weather risk management interacts with broader emergency, environmental and quality systems 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	1L

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.