

Working on Large Vehicles - Trailers

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:	

SAMPLE

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. Governance, WHS Duties and Contractor Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear allocation of WHS duties between PCBUs involved in trailer operations (owner, transport operator, loader, maintenance provider) Inadequate WHS policy framework for managing work on and around large vehicles and trailers Poor consultation and coordination arrangements with contractors, visitors and on-hire workers No formal process to verify contractor competence, insurances and WHS systems for trailer work at heights Failure to integrate WHS Act 2011 due diligence obligations into executive decision-making for fleet and yard operations 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and maintain a WHS governance framework that clearly assigns officer due diligence, PCBU duties and WHS accountabilities for all activities involving large vehicles and trailers Develop a documented WHS policy and supporting standards specifically addressing working around, on and at heights on large vehicles, loads and trailers Implement a contractor management procedure that includes pre-qualification, review of SWMS, verification of training competence and ongoing performance monitoring Formalise consultation, cooperation and coordination arrangements with all PCBUs sharing the workplace (transport companies, loader families, maintenance providers) Include WHS performance indicators for trailer and work at height risks in management review and board leadership WHS reports 	3H
2. Fleet and Trailer Design, Procurement and Modification Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement of trailers and large vehicles without adequate fall prevention or access systems Uncontrolled modifications to trailers affecting structural integrity, stability or anchor points Lack of engineered tie-down points, edge protection or fall protection on trailer decks and load areas Selection of equipment incompatible with the types of loads, heights and operating environments Insufficient consultation with workers and competent engineers during design and selection of trailers and access systems 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a fleet and plant procurement standard requiring risk-based selection of trailers and vehicles with integrated fall prevention, safe access and load restraint features Require engineering review and certification for any structural modifications, additional anchor points, or retrofitted walkways and guardrails on trailers Specify minimum safety features in procurement documents (e.g. non-slip surfaces, fixed ladders or stairs, compliant access platforms, guardrails, engineered tie-down points) Ensure new trailers are selected to minimise the need for work at height (e.g. side-loading systems, ground-based load restraint systems, curtain siders with ground-operated mechanisms) Establish a change management process for introduction or modification of trailers, including formal risk assessment and consultation with operators and maintenance personnel 	2M
3. Site Layout, Traffic Management and Loading Area Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congested loading areas increasing interaction between large vehicles, pedestrians, forklifts and mobile plant Insufficient space or unsuitable surfaces for safe access platforms, elevated work platforms (EWPs) or mobile stairs around trailers 	4A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a formal traffic management plan with clear separation of pedestrian pathways, plant operating zones and trailer parking/loading bays Designate purpose-built loading bays for large vehicles and trailers with level, stable surfaces and sufficient clearance for work at heights equipment and access systems Install appropriate fixed access and edge protection infrastructure (e.g. loading gantries, fixed work platforms with guardrails, overhead access walkways) where routine work at heights on trailers is required 	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor lighting in loading/unloading zones leading to slips, trips and vehicle impacts No designated safe zones for workers attaching or removing restraints or working at heights on trailers Inadequate separation between moving vehicles and static work at height activities around trailers 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide adequate lighting levels in loading/unloading and trailer work areas in accordance with relevant Australian Standards Use physical barriers, line-marking and signage to create exclusion zones around high-risk trailer height tasks and prevent unauthorised access during work 	
4. Working at Heights Management System (Trailers and Loads)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of a documented work at heights procedure for work on trailers and large vehicle loads Inconsistent application of the hierarchy of control leading to over-reliance on personal fall arrest systems Failure to identify non-routine or infrequent high-risk tasks (e.g. tarping, inspecting top of loads, accessing tanker hatches) Inadequate assessment of edge protection, anchor points, and compatibility of fall arrest equipment with trailers No permit or authorisation system for high-risk trailer work at height activities 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
5. Access, Egress and Edge Protection on Trailers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers climbing on trailer frames, wheels, drawbars or loads due to lack of safe access systems Unprotected edges on trailer decks and loads leading to falls from height Use of improvised access equipment (ladders, pallets, load components) not designed for the task Inadequate controls for accessing the top of loads (e.g. stacked pallets, pipe, machinery) on trailers Trailer movement or instability during access and egress activities 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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6. Load Design, Load Restraint and Tarping Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Load configurations that require workers to climb on top of loads for placement of restraints, covers or tarps • Inadequate load restraint system design leading to shifting loads, collapse or need for manual rework at heights • Manual tarping and untarping methods requiring walking on unstable or uneven load surfaces • Lack of standardisation of load restraint equipment and methods across the fleet • Use of damaged or unsuitable restraints, tarps and load securing hardware 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
7. Vehicle and Trailer Inspection, Maintenance and Integrity Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate maintenance systems leading to failure of access equipment, guardrails, anchor points or trailer structures • Lack of scheduled inspections on fall protection systems, static lines and harness anchor points mounted to trailers • Unreported defects on ladders, mobile platforms, trailer decks and tie-down rails used for working at heights • Maintenance records not linked to specific trailers and access equipment leading to missed inspections • Use of trailers with compromised structural integrity for work at height tasks 		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
8. Competency, Training and Authorisation for Work on Large Vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workers undertaking work at heights on trailers without formal training or verification of competence • Supervisors and planners lacking knowledge of work at heights requirements and trailer-specific risks • Inconsistent induction content across sites regarding working on and around large vehicles and trailers 	4A	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No formal authorisation or licence-like system for workers using EWP, harness systems or specialised trailer access equipment Over-reliance on informal on-the-job training and undocumented instruction 		[REDACTED]	
9. Fatigue, Scheduling and Journey Management for Trailer Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long shifts, night work and irregular rosters leading to fatigue during high-risk work at heights on trailers Time pressure from schedules and delivery windows resulting in shortcuts when accessing trailer tops or loads Inadequate journey management plans for remote or regional work with limited safe access infrastructure Lack of coordination between transport scheduling and yard loading operations Insufficient rest breaks for workers performing physically demanding trailer loading and height tasks 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
10. PPE, Fall Arrest Systems and Equipment Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate system for selection, inspection and replacement of harnesses, lanyards and connectors used on trailers Use of incompatible or incorrect set up fall arrest equipment with trailer anchor points Lack of procedures for rescue after a fall from height or suspension in a harness Poor housekeeping and storage practices leading to damage or contamination of safety equipment Over-reliance on PPE instead of higher-order controls for routine work at heights on trailers 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
11. Emergency Preparedness and Incident Management for Trailer Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delayed response to falls from height or crush incidents around large vehicles and trailers 	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of clear communication protocols and equipment in loading and trailer work areas Inadequate first aid coverage and equipment for yard and roadside trailer incidents Poor incident reporting and investigation practices leading to recurring trailer-related events No drills or practice for high-risk emergency scenarios involving work at heights on trailers 		[REDACTED]	
12. Communication, Consultation and Worker Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers unaware of changes to procedures, equipment or layouts affecting trailer and work at height risks Limited involvement of operators and drivers in identifying practical controls for trailer access and loading Ineffective consultation mechanisms between management, HSRs and workers on WHS issues related to large vehicles Language or literacy barrier impacting understanding of trailer-related safety information Cultural issues discouraging reporting of hazards or near misses involving work at heights on trailers 		[REDACTED]	2M
13. Planning, Permits and Task Authorisation for Non-Routine Trailer Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad-hoc or unplanned non-routine tasks on trailers (e.g. repairs on top of loads, inspections at height) without formal risk assessment Use of inappropriate equipment for infrequent or specialised trailer work at heights Failure to identify when additional controls or specialist contractors are required No clear approval process for deviation from standard trailer loading or access methods 	3H	[REDACTED]	1L

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work undertaken during adverse weather or poor conditions increasing fall and stability risks 			
14. Health Monitoring, Manual Handling and Musculoskeletal Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual handling of heavy tarps, restraints and equipment on and around trailers leading to strains and sprains • Awkward postures and reaching while on trailer decks or loads, increasing risk of loss of balance and falls • Lack of consideration of worker physical capability for repetitive high-risk trailer tasks • Insufficient management of pre-existing injuries aggravated by trailer work at heights • No integration of health monitoring data into task design and shift allocation for trailer operations 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M
15. Assurance, Auditing and Continuous Improvement of Trailer WHS Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control measures for work at heights on trailers not effectively implemented or maintained over time • Lack of systematic verification that procedures, training and maintenance are being followed in practice • Failure to act on audit findings, miss data and worker feedback about trailer-related risks • No performance indicators for trailer and work at height safety outcomes • Complacency arising from infrequent serious incidents despite underlying systemic weaknesses 	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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.