

**Handling Venomous Snakes | SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT (SWMS)**

**TASK OR ACTIVITY: Handling Venomous Snakes**

Business Name:	ABN:	SWMS#
Business Address:		
Contact Person:	Phone:	Email:

**THIS SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT IS APPROVED BY THE PCBU OF 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 safe work method statement (SWMS) is prepared before the proposed work starts.

Full Name:		
Signature:	Title:	Date:
Details of the person(s) responsible for ensuring implementation, monitoring compliance of the SWMS as well as reviews and modifications of the SWMS.		
Full Name:	Title:	Phone:

**ALL PERSONNEL PARTICIPATING IN ANY ACTIVITY ON THIS SWMS MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMUNICATED** | **NAME OF ALL RELEVANT PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN CONSULTED AND COMMUNICATED TO IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THIS SWMS**

Safety meetings or toolbox talks will be scheduled in accordance with legislative requirements to first identify any site hazards, then to communicate those hazards and then to further take steps to either eliminate or control each hazard.

If an incident or a near miss occurs, all work must stop immediately. Depending on the severity of the incident, a meeting will be called with all workers to amend the SWMS if required. The meeting may also be an educational opportunity.

Any changes made to the SWMS after an incident or a near miss must be approved by the Person Conducting Business or Undertaking and communicated to all relevant personnel.

The SWMS must be kept and be available for inspection at least until the work is completed. Where a SWMS is revised, all versions should be kept. If a notifiable incident occurs in relation to which the SWMS relates, then the SWMS must be kept for at least two years from the occurrence of the notifiable incident.

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CLIENT OR PRINCIPAL CONTRACTOR DETAILS

Client:	SCOPE OF WORKS
Project Name:	
Project Address:	
Project Manager:	
Contact Phone:	
Date SWMS supplied to Project Manager:	

ANY HIGH-RISK CONSTRUCTION WORK BEING CARRIED OUT

<input type="checkbox"/> involves a risk of a person falling more than 2 meters	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out on or near pressurised gas mains or piping
<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out on a telecommunication tower	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines
<input type="checkbox"/> involves demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out on or near energised electrical installations or services
<input type="checkbox"/> involves demolition of an element related to the physical integrity of a structure	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
<input type="checkbox"/> involves, or is likely to involve, disturbing asbestos	<input type="checkbox"/> involves tilt-up or precast concrete
<input type="checkbox"/> involves structural alteration or repair that requires temporary support to prevent collapse	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out on, in or adjacent to a road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor
<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out in or near a confined space	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out in an area of a workplace where there is any movement of powered mobile plant
<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out in/near a shaft or trench deeper than 1.5m or tunnel involving use of explosives	<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out in areas with artificial extremes of temperature.
<input type="checkbox"/> is carried out in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning.	<input type="checkbox"/> involves diving work.

ANY HIGH-RISK MACHINERY OR EQUIPMENT NEARBY

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RISK MATRIX							
LIKELIHOOD	INSIGNIFICANT	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR	CATASTROPHIC	SCORE	ACTION
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 starts.
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

**HEIRARCHY OF CONTROLS**

- Elimination**  
Remove the hazard.
- Substitution**  
Replace the hazard.
- Isolation**  
Isolate People from the hazard
- Engineering**  
Isolate the hazard.
- Administrative**  
Change the work.
- PPE**

**Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:** Elimination methods are the most effective and preferred when controlling a hazard. Substitution is the second most effective method of controlling a hazard. Engineering by isolation is the third most effective, while Administrative Controls by changing the work is the fourth most effective method. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) is the least effective method.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)											
Select the appropriate PPE above suitable for the equipment used or the job task being performed (if applicable).											
FOOT PROTECTION	HAND PROTECTION	HEAD PROTECTION	HEARING PROTECTION	EYE PROTECTION	RESPIRATORY PROTECTION	FACE PROTECTION	HIGH-VIS CLOTHING	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	FALL PROTECTION	SUN PROTECTION	HAIR/JEWELLERY SECURED
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other PPE Required:											
Permit or Licenses Requirements						Mandatory Qualifications and Training					

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. Preparation	Incorrect handling techniques, Unsuitable equipment and materials	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a thorough risk assessment of the area prior to commencing activities.</li> <li>- Provide comprehensive training for all personnel in venomous snake handling and identification.</li> <li>- Ensure all handlers are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, including heavy-duty gloves and boots.</li> <li>- Develop and implement a site-specific snake handling procedure.</li> <li>- Keep a current venomous snake first aid kit on-site with easy access.</li> <li>- Regularly inspect and maintain equipment to ensure it is in good working condition.</li> <li>- Use appropriate snake handling tools such as snake hooks and tongs made from non-conductive materials.</li> <li>- Establish clear communication protocol among the team to alert others if a snake is sighted.</li> <li>- Mark and isolate the work zone with visible barriers where snake activity is anticipated.</li> <li>- Schedule working times when snakes are less active, such as cooler parts of the day.</li> <li>- Engage local wildlife experts or snake catchers for consultation and support.</li> <li>- Implement a buddy system to ensure no worker is alone in high-risk areas.</li> <li>- Provide information on emergency contacts, including nearest medical facilities.</li> <li>- Maintain a log of known snake habitats and sightings to inform future worksites.</li> </ul>	2M
2. Personal Protective Equipment Selection	Inappropriate PPE selection, PPE not fitting correctly	3H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Select PPE that is specifically designed for handling venomous snakes, such as long protective gloves and snake gaiters.</li> <li>- Ensure all personnel are trained in the correct use and fitting of PPE before engaging in snake handling tasks.</li> <li>- Confirm that the selected PPE has been approved to meet the relevant Australian safety standards.</li> <li>- Conduct regular inspections of PPE for any signs of wear or damage prior to each use.</li> <li>- Provide a variety of sizes to ensure that PPE fits correctly and accommodates all body types.</li> <li>- Implement a system for checking PPE fit and function regularly during snake handling operations.</li> <li>- Offer training sessions for workers on how to adjust and secure PPE properly for optimal safety.</li> <li>- Ensure replacement PPE is readily available in case current equipment becomes compromised.</li> <li>- Maintain an inventory log to track the condition and usage of PPE assigned to individual personnel.</li> <li>- Encourage feedback from personnel on the comfort and effectiveness of the PPE used.</li> <li>- Use high-visibility vests to ensure handlers are easily seen by other team members.</li> </ul>	1L

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide face protection if there is a risk of direct contact or snake spitting venom.</li> <li>- Regularly update the PPE selection based on advancements in safety technology and feedback from handlers.</li> <li>- Include measures for decontaminating PPE after each use to prevent cross-contamination and ensure longevity.</li> </ul>	
3. Environment Assessment	Physical obstructions, Foreign objects in the area	2M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a visual inspection of the area to identify potential physical obstructions such as rocks, logs, or debris that may hinder movement or access.</li> <li>- Remove any foreign objects or clutter from the work area that could impede safe handling or increase the risk of an incident.</li> <li>- Clearly mark and delineate pathways in the work area to ensure easy navigation and avoid unnecessary contact with unassessed surfaces.</li> <li>- Establish a clear zone around the identified snake habitat to minimise disturbance and avoid unnecessary risks during the handling process.</li> <li>- Use appropriate signage to warn of the presence of venomous snakes and highlight restricted areas to all personnel and visitors.</li> <li>- Brief all team members on specific environmental hazards present on site before commencing operations, ensuring everyone is aware of potential risks.</li> <li>- Equip staff with portable lighting if working in low visibility conditions to enhance the identification of physical obstacles and increase safety.</li> <li>- Implement a buddy system for workers handling snakes, ensuring ongoing monitoring and immediate aid if necessary.</li> <li>- Maintain clear communication using hand signals or radios to coordinate movements and report any new hazards or changes in the environment.</li> <li>- Deploy barriers or temporary fencing around high-risk areas to control access and limit the potential for unauthorised entry or accidental encounters.</li> <li>- Perform regular checks throughout the handling process to ensure environmental conditions have not changed, introducing new hazards.</li> <li>- Develop an emergency response plan tailored to the specific environmental risks of the site, including procedures for safe evacuation and medical intervention.</li> </ul>	1L
4. Venomous Snake Detection	Incorrect identification of snakes, Inadequate lighting	3H	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>	2M

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
5. Approach and Secure Snake	Snake bite, Sudden movement causing injury	4A	[REDACTED]	3H

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
6. Handling Snake	Inadvertent snake bites, Dropping or losing control of snake		[REDACTED]	3H
7. Transfer of Snake to Container	Vanomous snake escaping, Hand accident during transfer	4A	[REDACTED]	1L

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
8. Secure and Label Container	Mislabeled container, Incorrectly secured lid	2M	[REDACTED]	1L

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
9. Storage and Transport	Improper storage conditions, Rough transport risking escape of snake		[REDACTED]	2M
10. Release of Snake	Risk of bite during release, Risk of snake returning	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
11. Clean and Decontaminate Equipment	Chemical burns from cleaning solvents, Inhalation of harmful substances	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

SAMPLE

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			[REDACTED]	
12. Waste Management	Unsuitable waste disposal, risking environmental hazards, Incorrect separation of medical waste	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
13. Documenting Incident and Close Out Report	Miscommunication risks due to inaccurate reports, Missed recording important information	2M	[REDACTED]	1L

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
14. Training and Inductions	Inadequate training causing mishandling, Untrained personnel participating in activity	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
15. Emergency Procedures readiness	Delays in emergency response, Lack of first aid equipment	3H	[REDACTED]	2M
16. Equipment Maintenance and Checking	Risks associated with malfunctioning equipment, Failure to notice wear and tear on tools	2M	[REDACTED]	1L

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
17. Rest and Hydration Breaks	Risk of fatigue and loss of concentration, Dehydration in hot environments	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

SAMPLE

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SPECIFIC WORK STEPS	HAZARDS THAT MAY ARISE	INITIAL RISK	SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO ELIMINATE OR CONTROL THE RISKS	RESIDUAL RISK
			[REDACTED]	
18. Post-task Evaluation and Reporting	Failure to identify persistent risks, Inadequate feedback mechanisms	3H	[REDACTED]	2M

SAMPLE

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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/factsheets-and-resources/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.

**SIGNATORIES OF THE SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT**

The signed and dated personnel listed below have cooperated in the consultation and development of this Safe Work Method Statement which has been approved by the Person/s Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU). In signing this Safe Work Method Statement each individual acknowledges and confirms that they have read this SWMS in full, having raised any questions for items on this Safe Work Method Statement that require clarification, and confirms that they are competent, skilled and knowledgeable for the task assigned to them. Every person acknowledges that they have received the relevant training and qualifications where required, before carrying out any work contained in this Safe Work Method Statement. By signing this Safe Work Method Statement each individual agrees to work safely, to follow any safe work instructions which are provided, and agrees to use all Personal Protective Equipment where appropriate.

Worker Name	Signature	Date

**SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT MONITORING AND REVIEW**

**The SWMS must be reviewed regularly** to make sure it remains effective and must be reviewed (and revised if necessary) if relevant control measures are revised. The review must be carried out in consultation with workers (including contractors and sub-contractors) who may be affected by the operation of the SWMS and their health and safety representatives who represent that work group at the workplace.

When the SWMS has been revised the PCBU must ensure that all persons involved with the work are advised that a revision has been made and how they can access the revised SWMS, including all persons who will need to change a work procedure or system as a result of the review are advised of the changes in a way that will enable them to implement their duties consistently with the revised SWMS. All workers that will be involved in the work must be provided with the relevant information and instruction that will assist them to understand and implement the revised SWMS.

**The SWMS must be monitored regularly** for the effectiveness of ensuring hazard controls are effective in reducing the risk of incidents, keeping the workplace safe for all personnel. The person responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the Safe Work Method Statement should employ a multi-faceted approach which includes but is not limited to:

1. Spot Checks.
2. Consultation with workers, contractors and sub-contractors.
3. Internal audits on a continual basis.

An approach of continuous improvement, promptly recording inconsistencies or deficiencies, followed up by immediate corrective action and consultation with all relevant personnel ensures that the PCBU is consistently developing ever-improving systems of safe work principles.

REVIEW NUMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NAME							
INITIALS							
DATE							

**SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT REVIEW CHECKLIST**

This Safe Work Method Statement Review Checklist is to be followed and used upon initial development of the SWMS to help ensure that all steps have been adequately taken before work commences. Think of this document as an internal audit review checklist before commencing work, and may form part of a Toolbox Talk (safety meeting) and may be used as an opportunity for education and training.

ITEMS WHICH MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE SWMS	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
The company details have been entered, including the project name and address.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
All relevant personnel consulted during the development of the SWMS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Name, signature, position and date signed of the person approving the SWMS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Specific personnel and qualifications, experience is noted in the SWMS.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provides a step-by-step process of tasks required to carry out the activity or task.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Adequate risk assessment of any identified hazards has been completed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Foreseeable hazards are identified and documented for each step.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Any hazards listed in any site risk assessments have been added to the SWMS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SWMS initial risk (IR) column as well as residual risk (RR) column completed.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Check control measures added to the SWMS are the most effective selected.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Responsible person is assigned and listed on the SWMS for the implementation of control measures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Permit or licenses requirements specified, such as Hot Work, Electrical Work, Work at Heights etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SWMS identifies plant and equipment to be used.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Details of inspection checks required for any equipment listed are noted on the SWMS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Describes any mandatory qualifications, experience, training or skills required to perform the work.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Applicable personal protective equipment is selected on the SWMS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Reflects and documents any legislative references and/or Australian Standards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Identifies any hazardous substances used with specific control measures in line with any SDS.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>REVIEWED BY</b>		<b>DATE REVIEWED</b>
<b>SIGNATURE</b>		<b>DATE COMPLETED</b>