

## Earthwork Operations | SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT (SWMS)

### TASK OR ACTIVITY: Earthwork Operations

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

### THIS SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT 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 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 and 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

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.

### NAME OF ALL RELEVANT PERSONNEL WHO HAVE BEEN CONSULTED AND COMMUNICATED TO IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THIS SWMS

## 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

## RISK MATRIX

| LIKELIHOOD  | INSIGNIFICANT | MINOR         | MODERATE      | MAJOR      | CATASTROPHIC | SCORE          | ACTION                            | HEIRARCHY OF CONTROLS                              |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| ALMOST CERTAIN  | 3<br>HIGH     | 3<br>HIGH     | 4<br>ACUTE    | 4<br>ACUTE | 4<br>ACUTE   |                |                                   | <b>Elimination</b><br>Remove the hazard.           |
| LIKELY  | 2<br>MODERATE | 3<br>HIGH     | 3<br>HIGH     | 4<br>ACUTE | 4<br>ACUTE   | 4A<br>ACUTE    | DO NOT PROCEED                    | <b>Substitution</b><br>Replace the hazard.         |
| POSSIBLE  | 1<br>LOW      | 2<br>MODERATE | 3<br>HIGH     | 4<br>ACUTE | 4<br>ACUTE   | 3H<br>HIGH     | Review before work starts.        | <b>Isolation</b><br>Isolate People from the hazard |
| UNLIKELY  | 1<br>LOW      | 1<br>LOW      | 2<br>MODERATE | 3<br>HIGH  | 4<br>ACUTE   | 2M<br>MODERATE | Ensure control measures in place. | <b>Engineering</b><br>Isolate the hazard.          |
| RARE  | 1<br>LOW      | 1<br>LOW      | 2<br>MODERATE | 3<br>HIGH  | 3<br>HIGH    | 1L<br>LOW      | Monitor and keep records          | <b>Administrative</b><br>Change the work.          |
| <b>Notes on Hierarchy of Controls:</b> 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. |               |               |               |            |              |                |                                   | <b>PPE</b>   |

## 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      | Trip and fall hazards, improper use of tools, lack of safety equipment | 3H           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a site inspection to identify and mark any trip and fall hazards, such as uneven surfaces or debris.</li> <li>- Ensure all workers receive training on the correct use of tools and equipment prior to commencing work.</li> <li>- Provide all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) including hard hats, safety boots, gloves, and high-visibility clothing.</li> <li>- Set up clear signage and barriers around hazardous areas to alert workers and prevent accidental access.</li> <li>- Maintain a clean and organised work site by regularly removing waste materials and storing tools properly.</li> <li>- Inspect all tools and equipment daily for defects and ensure they are in good working condition before use.</li> <li>- Implement a buddy system where employees can watch out for one another and identify unsafe practices or conditions.</li> <li>- Develop and communicate emergency procedures in the event of an accident, ensuring all workers know the steps to take.</li> <li>- Ensure adequate lighting is provided in the work area, especially in low visibility conditions, to prevent trip and falls.</li> <li>- Appoint a competent supervisor to oversee the preparation work and enforce compliance with safety measures.</li> </ul> | 2M            |
| 2. Site Survey      | Inadequate safety knowledge, trip and fall hazards                     | 3H           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct a toolbox talk prior to beginning work to ensure all workers understand the potential hazards and safety precautions associated with site surveying.</li> <li>- Provide comprehensive training for all workers on identifying and mitigating trip and fall hazards specific to earthwork operations.</li> <li>- Clearly mark uneven ground, holes, and other tripping hazards with high-visibility tape or signs to alert workers during site surveys.</li> <li>- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as hard hats, safety boots, and high-visibility vests, to safeguard against injuries from potential trips or falls.</li> <li>- Maintain clear communication among team members using radios or designated signals to warn others of identified hazards on the site.</li> <li>- Carry out regular site inspections to identify new and existing trip hazards and update the site plan accordingly.</li> <li>- Ensure that pathways and access routes are kept clear of obstructions, debris, and equipment to minimise tripping risks.</li> </ul>  | 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 |
|                     |  |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employ the use of survey stakes, flags, or paint to delineate surveyed areas and routes clearly.</li> <li>- Assign an experienced supervisor to oversee the site survey and monitor adherence to safety procedures.</li> <li>- Utilise technology, such as drone surveys or laser scanning, where possible to reduce the need for personnel to traverse potentially hazardous terrain.</li> <li>- Implement a buddy system, pairing up workers so that they can assist each other in navigating uneven or challenging terrain.</li> <li>- Ensure that emergency response plans are in place and that workers are aware of evacuation routes and procedures in case of an incident.</li> <li>- Regularly review and revise the Site-Specific Safety Plan to incorporate lessons learned and new hazard controls post-survey activities.</li> </ul>   |               |
| 3. Equipment Setup  | Risk of injury from heavy machinery, noise pollution | 3H           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure all operators are certified and trained to handle specific machinery.</li> <li>- Conduct regular maintenance checks on equipment to ensure safe operating conditions.</li> <li>- Implement a pre-start checklist for all machinery before commencing work.</li> <li>- Use noise barriers or soundproofing measures where feasible to minimise noise pollution.</li> <li>- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as earmuffs or earplugs for workers in high-noise areas.</li> <li>- Establish clear communication protocols, including the use of hand signals or two-way radios, to prevent miscommunication around machinery.</li> <li>- Set up exclusion zones and clearly mark them with signs and barriers to keep unauthorised personnel at a safe distance from operating equipment.</li> <li>- Utilise spotters to guide machinery operators when working in confined or blind spots.</li> <li>- Conduct site-specific risk assessments to identify any additional hazards related to equipment setup.</li> <li>- Rotate tasks among workers to reduce prolonged exposure to noise.</li> <li>- Institute a lockout/tagout system to ensure equipment is not mistakenly activated during setup or maintenance.</li> <li>- Limit machinery operation to daylight hours or ensure adequate lighting if working in low-light conditions.</li> <li>- Regularly review and update safety procedures as new equipment or technologies are introduced.</li> </ul> | 2M            |
| 4. Excavation       | Cave-ins, falling loads, hazardous atmospheres       | 4A           | <div></div> <div></div> <div></div>  | 3H            |



4A  
 substances,  
 of harm

| 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 |
| 7. Removal of Topsoil/Subsoil       | Dust generated is a respiratory hazard, noise pollution | 2M           | <div>SAMPLE</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> | 1L            |
| 8. Installation of Safety Equipment | Incorrect installation, inadequate safety knowledge     | 3H           | <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div> <div>[REDACTED]</div>   | 1L            |





chemicals, physical  
e 3H



loads, noise pollution

4A

| 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 |
|                      |   |              |   |               |
| 14. Compacting       | Vibrations causing damage to nearby structures, noise pollution | 3H           | 1. Use low vibration compactors.<br>2. Maintain safe distance from structures.<br>3. Limit compaction time.<br>4. Use noise barriers.<br>5. Schedule work during off-peak hours.<br>6. Monitor vibration levels.<br>7. Use alternative methods where possible.<br>8. Communicate with nearby residents.<br>9. Implement strict safety protocols.<br>10. Use experienced operators.<br>11. Regular maintenance of equipment.<br>12. Establish exclusion zones.<br>13. Use weather-appropriate equipment.<br>14. Monitor weather conditions.<br>15. Have emergency procedures in place. | 2M            |
| 15. Final Inspection | Overlooked safety defects, trip and fall hazards                | 2M           | 1. Conduct thorough visual inspection.<br>2. Check for loose debris.<br>3. Verify safety equipment.<br>4. Test safety systems.<br>5. Document findings.   | 1L            |

g of health development, 3H

egregation, exposure  
ces

3H





Feedback provided,  
community knowledge

2M

**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 REFERENCE IN 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 2017

Legislation NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/legal-obligations/legislation>

Codes of Practice NSW: <https://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/resource-library/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) Regulations 2012

Legislation NT: <https://www.worksafe.nt.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/workplace-safety-laws>

Codes of Practice NT: <https://www.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>

### 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

### 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>

### 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://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/acts-and-regulations>

Codes of Practice for TAS: <https://www.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 represented 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 checked="" 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 solutions.                           | <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"/> |          |
|  |                                     |          |
| REVIEWED BY  |                                     |          |
| SIGNATURE  |                                     |          |
| DATE REVIEWED  |                                     |          |
| DATE COMPLETED   |                                     |          |