

SAFETY. MATTERS. EVERYWHERE.

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS WHS COMPLIANCE PACK

Meeting Safety Standards across
Australia and New Zealand

Your guide to safer, smarter workplaces.

A WHS Compliance Pack is your guide to:

- Identifying and managing workplace hazards
- Meeting legal health and safety obligations
- Developing clear safety procedures
- Training and protecting your team
- Reducing risks and liability

Stay compliant. Stay protected.



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ENV012025 – WHS POLICY STATEMENT (2025)

Our organisation is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all employees, contractors, volunteers, and visitors engaged in environmental projects. This includes land rehabilitation, revegetation, waterway protection, waste management, and conservation activities.

We recognise that environmental works often involve unique risks such as remote area hazards, exposure to wildlife, extreme weather conditions, use of chemicals, and heavy equipment operation. To manage these risks, we will:

- Comply with all relevant WHS legislation and environmental regulations.
- Provide safe systems of work, risk assessments, and training for all staff.
- Supply appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure it is properly used.
- Consult with workers to continually improve safety practices.
- Respond promptly to incidents, hazards, or near misses.
- Ensure emergency response procedures are developed, tested, and communicated.

This policy applies to all levels of staff and is reviewed annually or after a significant incident.

Activity:

Draft a Team Safety Pledge.

1. In groups, ask workers to write down one commitment they can make to improve safety during environmental work (e.g., "I will always wear gloves when handling chemicals").
2. Collect and display these commitments on the site noticeboard.
3. At the next toolbox meeting, review the pledges and highlight positive examples of safe behaviour.

ENV022025 – ENVIRONMENTAL SITE RISK ASSESSMENT (2025)

PTask/Area Assessed: _____

Location: _____

Assessor Name: _____

Date: _____

Hazard Identification

Hazard Likelihood (Low/Med/High) Consequence (Minor/Major/Critical) Risk Rating
(L/M/H) Control Measures

Uneven terrain / slips, trips, falls

Wildlife hazards (snakes, insects, crocodiles)

Heat exposure / dehydration

Extreme weather (storms, floods, bushfires)

Chemical use (herbicides, pesticides, fuels)

Remote or isolated work

Plant & equipment use (chainsaws, vehicles, boats)

Residual Risk Assessment

After controls are applied:

- Likelihood: _____
- Consequence: _____
- Risk Rating: _____

Review Date: _____

Activity – Hazard Walkthrough

1. Before starting work, conduct a Hazard Walkthrough of the site in teams.
2. Each team identifies at least 3 potential hazards (e.g., loose ground, snake habitat, chemical storage area).
3. Record hazards on this form, assign risk ratings, and suggest practical controls.
4. Discuss findings at a toolbox talk and update the site risk register.

This activity helps workers recognise risks in the field and strengthens proactive hazard management.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Part 3.1 – Managing Risks to Health and Safety
- Safe Work Australia – How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2021

ENV032025 – SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT (SWMS) – ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS (2025)

Project/Task: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/Assessor: _____

Date: _____

High-Risk Environmental Activities

Tick applicable:

- ☐ Tree felling or pruning
- ☐ Chainsaw operation ☐ Chemical spraying (herbicides, pesticides)
- ☐ Boat operation / waterway works ☐ Excavation / trenching
- ☐ Remote area work ☐ SWMS template Page 13

PPE Required

- ☐ Safety boots ☐ Gloves (chemical / cut-resistant)
- ☐ Eye protection ☐ Hi-vis clothing
- ☐ Respiratory protection ☐ Hearing protection
- ☐ Other: _____

Emergency Controls

- Nearest first aid kit: _____
- Emergency assembly point: _____
- Emergency contacts: _____

Activity – Group SWMS Drafting

1. Split workers into small teams.
2. Provide each team with a different environmental task (e.g., spraying weeds, felling trees, boat work).
3. Ask them to complete the SWMS table with hazards and controls.
4. Teams present their SWMS, and the supervisor highlights best practice approaches.

ENV042025 – CHEMICAL HANDLING & STORAGE PROCEDURES (2025)

Chemicals such as herbicides, pesticides, fuels, and cleaning agents are often required in environmental works. Improper handling or storage of these substances can cause serious harm to workers, the community, and the environment. Employers must ensure safe systems for chemical use, including correct labelling, secure storage, PPE requirements, and training in emergency response. Workers must follow procedures when mixing, transporting, and applying chemicals, and report any spills or leaks immediately.

Safe Handling Rules

- Always read and follow Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- Wear required PPE (gloves, goggles, respirators).
- Mix and apply chemicals in ventilated outdoor areas only.
- Never eat, drink, or smoke while handling chemicals.
- Wash hands and contaminated clothing after use.

Storage Checklist

- ☐ All chemicals stored in original labelled containers
- ☐ Secure, lockable storage with spill containment trays
- ☐ Incompatible chemicals (e.g., fuels and oxidisers) stored separately
- ☐ Safety Data Sheets available for each substance
- ☐ Fire extinguisher and spill kit accessible nearby
- ☐ Secondary containment for bulk containers (e.g., drums)

Activity – Chemical Spill Simulation

1. Set up a controlled training exercise with water (as a stand-in for a chemical).
2. Workers must identify the “spill,” use spill kits to contain it, and safely dispose of waste materials.
3. Discuss what steps were effective and what could be improved.
4. Reinforce the importance of immediate reporting and containment.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Part 7.1 – Hazardous Chemicals
- Safe Work Australia – Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace Code of Practice 2021
- State/Territory environmental regulations (e.g., Environmental Protection Act 1994 (Qld) for spill reporting).

ENV052025 – PPE COMPLIANCE CHECKLIST – ENVIRONMENTAL SITES (2025)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is vital in environmental works where workers are exposed to chemicals, wildlife, rough terrain, sharp tools, and extreme weather. Employers are responsible for supplying appropriate PPE, ensuring it is maintained in good condition, and providing training on its correct use. Workers must wear PPE at all times as required, inspect their gear before each use, and report any damage or faults.

PPE Checklist for Environmental Sites

- ☐ Safety boots with slip-resistant soles
- ☐ Cut-resistant or chemical-resistant gloves (depending on task)
- ☐ Safety glasses or goggles
- ☐ Respiratory protection (when spraying or handling chemicals)
- ☐ Hearing protection (for chainsaws, machinery, boats)
- ☐ Hi-visibility clothing suitable for outdoor use
- ☐ Wide-brimmed hat or helmet (for sun and falling object protection)
- ☐ Insect repellent and protective netting (mosquitoes, flies)
- ☐ Cold weather gear (jackets, gloves) OR hot weather gear (lightweight UV clothing) depending on conditions
- ☐ Sunscreen (SPF 30+) available and applied regularly

Activity – PPE Inspection & Buddy Check

1. Workers pair up and inspect each other's PPE using this checklist.
2. Each person must identify at least one improvement (e.g., replacing cracked goggles, re-tagging a hard hat, reapplying insect repellent).
3. After the check, hold a short group discussion on which items are most commonly missed and how to improve compliance.

This reinforces shared responsibility for safety and builds a culture of mutual care in the field.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Part 3.2 – General Workplace Management
- Safe Work Australia – Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace Code of Practice 2021 (for chemical PPE)
- Safe Work Australia – First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice 2020 (ensures PPE is integrated with first aid response)
- State/Territory PPE requirements (e.g., WorkSafe Victoria, SafeWork NSW).

ENV062025 – REMOTE AREA & LONE WORKER SAFETY PLAN (2025)

Environmental work often requires staff to operate in remote or isolated areas, where immediate assistance may not be available. Risks include medical emergencies, vehicle breakdowns, wildlife encounters, extreme weather, and communication difficulties. Employers must implement safe systems of work that ensure workers can be contacted, monitored, and supported while working alone or in remote conditions.

Remote & Lone Worker Checklist

- ☐ Pre-start risk assessment completed before travel
- ☐ Work location, expected start and finish times logged with supervisor
- ☐ Two-way communication device issued (satellite phone, UHF radio, or mobile with coverage)
- ☐ Personal locator beacon (PLB) or GPS tracker carried
- ☐ First aid kit and training confirmed
- ☐ Vehicle inspected, with adequate fuel, water, and emergency supplies
- ☐ Weather forecast checked and conditions monitored
- ☐ Lone worker buddy system in place (regular check-in calls scheduled)
- ☐ Emergency contact list carried by worker
- ☐ Post-work check-in completed before leaving site

Activity – Lone Worker Scenario Drill

1. Present workers with a mock scenario:
2. Example: “You are working alone spraying weeds in a remote field when your vehicle won’t start, and your mobile has no coverage.”
3. Ask workers to outline step-by-step how they would respond using the safety plan (e.g., activate PLB, contact supervisor by radio, remain near the vehicle, use emergency supplies).
4. Review responses as a group and update procedures if any gaps are identified.

This activity ensures workers understand how to apply the safety plan under real conditions.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Part 3.2 – General Workplace Management
- Safe Work Australia – Managing the Risk of Remote or Isolated Work Code of Practice 2015
- State/Territory-specific guidance on remote work (e.g., NT WorkSafe – Remote and Isolated Work Safety Guide).

ENV072025 – EMERGENCY RESPONSE & FIRST AID GUIDE (2025)

Environmental worksites often face unpredictable risks such as bushfires, floods, wildlife encounters, chemical spills, and medical emergencies. A clear emergency response plan ensures workers know what to do in critical situations, reducing harm and improving survival outcomes. Employers must provide adequate first aid resources, emergency equipment, and training tailored to remote and outdoor environments.

Emergency Response Checklist

- ☐ First aid kit available, fully stocked, and checked regularly
- ☐ Workers trained in remote and environmental first aid
- ☐ Emergency contact numbers displayed and accessible
- ☐ Fire extinguishers, spill kits, and emergency blankets on site
- ☐ Evacuation routes and muster points marked and known to all workers
- ☐ Bushfire and flood response plans developed for the work area
- ☐ Wildlife encounter procedures communicated (snake, crocodile, insect stings)
- ☐ Worker medical conditions and allergies recorded and confidentially managed
- ☐ At least one worker trained in CPR and trauma response present at all times

Emergency Scenarios – Key Procedures

- Bushfire: Cease work immediately, follow evacuation plan, move to cleared area or muster point.
- Flooding: Relocate to high ground, avoid water crossings, secure equipment.
- Chemical Spill: Evacuate area, use spill kit, wear PPE, notify supervisor.
- Wildlife Encounter: Do not provoke animal, slowly retreat, seek medical help if bitten/stung.
- Medical Emergency: Call emergency services, provide first aid, record incident details.

Activity – Emergency Drill Rotation

1. Each week, run a short emergency drill (bushfire, flood, chemical spill, or first aid).
2. Assign workers specific roles (first aid responder, communicator, evacuation leader).
3. Practice the scenario under site conditions.
4. Debrief as a group to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

This regular activity builds worker confidence and ensures everyone knows their role in an emergency.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Part 3.2 – First Aid & Emergency Plans
- Safe Work Australia – First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice 2020
- Safe Work Australia – Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice 2021
- State/Territory environmental emergency guides (e.g., Bushfire Survival Plans by CFA/RFS).

ENV082025 – INCIDENT REPORT FORM – ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS (2025)

Purpose:

All incidents — including injuries, near misses, environmental hazards, or unsafe conditions — must be reported promptly. Accurate reporting ensures investigations are completed, corrective actions are taken, and compliance with WHS obligations is maintained.

Incident Report Template

Date/Time of Incident: _____

Location: _____

Reported By: _____

Person(s) Involved: _____

Type of Incident (tick all that apply):

- ☐ Injury to worker
- ☐ Near miss
- ☐ Environmental hazard (e.g., spill, erosion, wildlife)
- ☐ Property damage
- ☐ Other: _____

Incident Details

Description of Incident:

Immediate Action Taken:

- ☐ First aid given
- ☐ Emergency services called
- ☐ Area isolated
- ☐ Equipment shut down
- ☐ Other: _____

Investigation & Corrective Actions

Root Cause (what led to the incident?):

Corrective Action(s) Implemented:

- ☐ Training provided
- ☐ Equipment repaired/replaced
- ☐ Procedure updated
- ☐ PPE issued/replaced
- ☐ Other: _____

Person Responsible: _____

Completion Date: _____

Sign-Off

Supervisor Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Activity – Incident Role Play

1. Provide workers with a short scenario (e.g., “Worker slips on wet ground and sprains ankle” or “Chemical container leaks during transport”).
2. In small groups, complete the incident report form as if it were real.
3. Groups present their reports and discuss what corrective actions would prevent

ENV092025 – WILDLIFE & ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD MANAGEMENT GUIDE (2025)

Environmental projects often bring workers into close contact with wildlife and natural hazards. These include snakes, crocodiles, spiders, wasps, ticks, mosquitoes, and aggressive animals. Hazards can also arise from unstable ground, thick vegetation, or water bodies. Workers must be trained to identify risks, avoid unnecessary contact, and respond calmly to encounters. Proper PPE, awareness, and emergency planning significantly reduce the risk of serious incidents.

Wildlife Hazard Controls

- Snakes: Wear boots and long pants; never handle; back away slowly if encountered.
- Crocodiles: Keep at least 5m from water edges in known crocodile habitats; never enter waterways unless cleared.
- Insects (wasps, mosquitoes, ticks, spiders): Use insect repellent; wear long sleeves; check for bites/ticks daily; carry antihistamines if allergic.
- Aggressive Animals (feral dogs, livestock): Avoid approaching; report to supervisor; use exclusion zones.

Environmental Hazard Controls

- Unstable Terrain: Mark hazard areas with signage; avoid working alone; use fall prevention when on slopes.
- Dense Vegetation: Use machetes/chainsaws with PPE; maintain clear paths.
- Waterways: Wear lifejackets when near or on boats; never work near water without a buddy system.

Activity – Wildlife Safety Toolbox Talk

1. Supervisor presents photos of common local hazards (snakes, spiders, crocodiles, insects).
2. Workers must identify the correct control measure for each scenario.
3. Role-play a wildlife encounter: e.g., “Worker finds a snake under debris.” Practice calm retreat and reporting steps.
4. Discuss regional differences (e.g., crocodiles in QLD/NT vs alpine snakes in VIC/TAS).

This activity builds awareness of local hazards and reinforces correct responses.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Part 3.1 – Managing Risks to Health and Safety
- Safe Work Australia – How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2021
- State/Territory wildlife safety guidelines (e.g., NT WorkSafe – Crocodile Safety for Workers, QLD Health – Tick Bite Management).

ENV102025 – VEHICLE, PLANT & EQUIPMENT SAFETY PROCEDURES (2025)

Vehicles, plant, and machinery are critical for environmental works but present significant risks if not properly managed. Common hazards include rollovers, collisions, entanglement, noise exposure, and fuel or oil leaks contaminating the environment. Employers must ensure all vehicles and equipment are fit for purpose, inspected regularly, and operated by trained and competent workers.

Workers are responsible for completing pre-start checks, wearing seatbelts and PPE, and reporting faults immediately. No worker should operate plant or machinery without appropriate training, licensing, or authorisation.

Safety Checklist – Vehicle, Plant & Equipment

- ☐ Pre-start inspection completed (tyres, lights, brakes, fluid levels, safety devices)
- ☐ Fuel, oil, and chemical containers secured and stored safely
- ☐ Seatbelts worn by all occupants
- ☐ Rollover protection systems fitted and inspected where required
- ☐ Machinery guards in place and not removed during use
- ☐ Noise levels assessed; hearing protection issued where necessary
- ☐ Keys removed and equipment immobilised when not in use
- ☐ Operator holds current licence or competency certification
- ☐ Environmental spill kits available in vehicles and plant

Activity – Pre-Start Inspection Drill

1. Select a work vehicle (e.g., ute, 4WD, boat, or tractor).
2. Workers use the checklist to complete a pre-start inspection.
3. Supervisor asks workers to identify at least two hazards (e.g., low tyre pressure, missing guard, unsecured fuel can).
4. Group discusses how those hazards would be corrected before operation.

This activity encourages consistent pre-start checks and reinforces accountability for safe operation.

Relevant Legislation:

- Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Cth)
- Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011 (Cth), Chapter 5 – Plant and Structures
- Safe Work Australia – Managing Risks of Plant in the Workplace Code of Practice 2015
- State/Territory vehicle and plant operation regulations (e.g., WorkSafe QLD – Mobile Plant Safety, NSW RMS – Heavy Vehicle Regulations).

SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT (SWMS)

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS (2025) STEP BY STEP

PROCEDURE TEMPLATE

| Step | Task | Hazard | Control Measure | Person Responsible |
|------|---|---|--|--------------------|
| 1 | Site preparation (marking, access setup) | Slips, trips, wildlife, traffic | Inspect terrain, signage, exclusion zones | Site Supervisor |
| 2 | Equipment setup (chainsaws, sprayers, boats) | Equipment failure, fuel hazards | Pre-start checks, PPE, spill kits | Operator |
| 3 | Task execution (cutting, spraying, excavating) | Cuts, chemical exposure, falls, drowning | Use SWMS controls, PPE, buddy system | Team Leader |
| 4 | Clean-up and waste disposal | Hazardous waste, sharps, environmental harm | Safe disposal, sealed containers, EPA compliance | Workers |
| 5 | Site handover / exit | Missed hazards, unsecured gear | Final inspection, sign-off | Supervisor |