

High risk construction work

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There are only 18 types of high risk construction work activities (19 in the ACT and Victoria).

Many hazards, risks and controls can only be determined at the worksite. You should always use the most effective and reliable controls first and as many controls as are needed to eliminate the risk or minimise it so far as is reasonably practicable.

Note: Only one example is provided for each type of high risk construction work listed below. In a real workplace, high risk construction work will likely involve multiple hazards, risks and controls.

Only high risk construction work needs to be included in a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)

1. Risk of person falling from height

Type of work	Risk of a person falling more than 2 metres (note: in some jurisdictions this is 3 metres)
Work task	Working on a roof
Hazard	Roof edge
Risk	Worker falls off the roof resulting in serious injury or death
Control measure	Ensure edge protection is installed by a competent person



2. Telecommunications tower

Type of work	Work on a telecommunications tower
Work task	Telecommunications equipment maintenance
Hazard	Electrical equipment
Risk	Electric shock causing injury or death
Control measure	Isolate electricity before commencing work



3. Load-bearing structure demolition

Type of work	Work involving demolition of an element of a structure that is load bearing or otherwise related to the physical integrity of the structure
Work task	Removing bracing from a wall using an excavator
Hazard	Unsupported building materials
Risk	Wall collapses on worker or others
Control measure	Fit an open cab excavator with a protective structure to minimise the risk of being struck by a falling object



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4. Disturbing asbestos

Type of work	Work involving, or is likely to involve, the disturbance of asbestos
Work task	Installing electrical wiring in an asbestos sheet wall
Hazard	Asbestos
Risk	Asbestos exposure with potential to cause asbestosis or mesothelioma
Control measure	Route wiring over the wall rather than drilling through the asbestos to avoid disturbing it



5. Temporary load-bearing support

Type of work	Work involving structural alterations or repairs requiring temporary support to prevent collapse
Work task	Using props to support a ceiling where a load-bearing wall will be removed
Hazard	Unsupported roofing material
Risk	Ceiling collapses onto worker causing injury or death
Control measure	Use props designed by a competent person and fitted as detailed in the design.



6. Confined space

Type of work	Work carried out in or near a confined space
Work task	Welding in confined space
Hazard	Welding fumes
Risk	Fumes cause asphyxiation
Control measure	Use portable ventilation equipment to extract fumes and air monitoring to ensure fumes do not reach harmful level



7. Work near shaft, trench or tunnel

Type of work	Work carried out in or near a shaft or trench with an excavated depth greater than 1.5 metres or is carried out in or near a tunnel
Work task	Operating earthmoving equipment near underground trench
Hazard	Underground trench
Risk	Trench collapse due to weight of earthmover causing injury or death
Control measure	Provide exclusion zones to prevent access by earthmover to areas with trenches



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8. Use of explosives

Type of work	Work involving the use of explosives. Note: Using explosive power tools is not considered 'work involving the use of explosives'
Work task	Blasting to prepare for construction of a road
Hazard	Explosives
Risk	Explosion causing injury or death
Control measure	Establish, identify and enforce exclusion zones and approach distances from the site of the explosion



9. Pressurised gas pipes or mains

Type of work	Work on or near pressurised gas pipes or mains. Note: 'Near' means close enough that there is a risk of hitting or puncturing the mains, piping, electrical installation or service
Work task	Excavation above gas lines
Hazard	Pressurised gas line
Risk	Release of gas from punctured gas line causing injury or death
Control measure	Contact Before you Dig Australia before work commences and ensure location of gas lines are known by all workers and avoided



10. Chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines

Type of work	Work on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines. Note: 'Near' means close enough that there is a risk of hitting or puncturing the mains, piping, electrical installation or service
Work task	Working near fuel or refrigerant lines
Hazard	Leaking fuel or refrigerant due to damaged line
Risk	Worker inhales leaking fuel or refrigerant causing injury or death
Control measure	Check the lines before any work is undertaken near them



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11. Energised electrical installations

Type of work	Work on or near energised electrical installations or services. Note: 'Near' means close enough that there is a risk of hitting or puncturing the mains, conduit, electrical installation or service. Electrical installations/services do not include appliances such as power leads and electrically powered tools
Work task	Operating a crane near overhead power lines
Hazard	Overhead power line
Risk	Crane makes contact with overhead power line resulting in electric shock causing injury or death
Control measure	De-energise the overhead power line and/or use a spotter to ensure the crane operator adheres to the appropriate exclusion zones for the power lines voltage



12. Contaminated or flammable atmospheres

Type of work	Work carried out in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
Work task	Using an oxy torch to remove pipework that may contain the residue of hazardous chemicals
Hazard	Flammable chemicals ignite
Risk	Worker suffers serious burns causing injury or death
Control measure	Purge delivery lines and vent pipes before work commences



13. Tilt-up or precast concrete

Type of work	Work involving tilt-up or precast concrete
Work task	Erecting tilt-up or precast concrete panels on-site
Hazard	Panel becomes unstable during erection and collapses
Risk	Workers in the fall shadow are struck by the collapsing panel and are seriously injured or killed
Control measure	Install panel braces in accordance with the engineer approved bracing design



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14. Area with traffic

Type of work	Work carried out on, in or adjacent to a road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor that is in use by traffic other than pedestrians
Work task	Building a road adjacent to an existing roadway
Hazard	Public vehicles
Risk	Worker struck by vehicle causing injury or death
Control measure	Use portable traffic signals and temporary safety barriers to direct/control traffic flow as required



15. Movement of a powered mobile plant

Type of work	Work carried out in an area at a workplace in which there is any movement of powered mobile plant
Work task	Working in an area of a construction site not isolated from the movement of skid steer loaders, backhoes, mobile cranes and trucks
Hazard	Mobile plant
Risk	Workers struck by powered mobile plant causing injury or death
Control measure	Establish, identify and enforce exclusion zones (with signage and barricades as per site plan)



16. Artificial extremes of temperature

Type of work	Work carried out in an area in which there are artificial extremes of temperature
Work task	Working inside enclosed roof cavity in hot weather
Hazard	Extreme hot temperatures
Risk	Worker experiences heat stress or stroke causing injury or death
Control measure	Schedule work for cooler parts of the day



17. Work that involves risks of drowning

Type of work	Work carried out in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning
Work task	Installing shade sails over a swimming pool
Hazard	Water in swimming pool
Risk	Worker falls, is knocked unconscious and drowns
Control measure	Use fall prevention devices such as temporary work platforms or scaffolds



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18. Diving work

Type of work	Work involving diving work
Work task	Diver undertaking structural repairs to the jetty of a waterfront home
Hazard	Vessels moving in nearby area
Risk	Worker is hit by a vessel while underwater causing injury or death
Control measure	Use buoys, markers or flags to separate diving activity from vessel activity before the work

