COMPLYFLOW



CONTRACTOR COMPLIANCE GUIDES

Local Government: the contractor compliance guide.

What Australian law asks of councils when contractors work on council sites, and how to prove you met it.

Current to November 2026
Model WHS laws as at 5 December 2025; state Local Government Acts read 9 November 2026

Includes
A two-page checklist and a council site map

Covers
Depots, parks, pools, libraries, halls, and civil works, with NSW, Victoria, Queensland, WA, and SA named

START HERE

The short version.

A council runs more sites than almost any other employer: depots, parks, pools, libraries, halls, transfer stations, and kilometres of road, most with nobody at the gate. The arborist, the traffic controller, the pool plant technician, the cleaner, and the Landcare volunteer all work there for the council.

1 **The council is the business. Under the model laws, councillors are not.** A business need not run for profit, so a council has the main WHS duties. Under the model WHS Act, an elected member acting as one neither conducts a business nor is an officer. Victoria's Act has no such exclusion (page 7). [1, 4]

2 **Contractors and volunteers are workers.** Under the model WHS Act, a contractor, a contractor's employee, and a volunteer who carry out work for the council are its workers. Victoria reaches contractors through its own Act (page 9). [1, 4]

3 **Meeting the tender rules does not meet the WHS duty.** The local government laws we read set, or have each council set, the thresholds for quotes and tenders, and principles such as probity and value for money. None of the procurement provisions we read requires a WHS check; that comes from the council's WHS duty, carried into its procurement policy, the tender, and the contract (page 11). [12, 13, 14, 16, 17]

4 **Many civil works are high risk construction work.** Construction work beside a road in use by traffic, near energised electrical services, in or near water with a risk of drowning, or where powered mobile plant moves needs a safe work method statement before it starts (page 14). [2]

5 **Being let in is not being authorised to work.** A depot sign-in does not authorise a tree removal over a footpath or a dive into a pool's balance tank; an assessed, authorised task and a handback do (page 17).

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01 THE PRACTICAL TEST

The practical test is what you can show.

A council's contractors are approved once, by procurement, and then work at dozens of sites procurement never sees: the pump station at 2am, the reserve on a Saturday, the pool plant room before opening. The question an auditor, a regulator, or a councillor asks is simple: who was there, and what did they hold on the day?

An approved panel is not a cleared worker.

Most council checks stop at the company, on the panel or at tender. The law reaches further. A contractor's employees who carry out work for the council are its workers too, for WHS purposes (section 7(1)),[1] and before anyone does high risk work that needs a licence, the business directing or allowing it must see written evidence of that licence (r 85).[2] A tree company approved at last year's tender says little about the chainsaw operator or the elevating work platform operator it sends to tomorrow's storm job.

ASSESSED BEFORE ENGAGEMENT; REVIEWED ON ANY CHANGE

The company

- ✓ Assessed at tender or for the panel, its safety record included; again on a change of scope, an incident, or a lapse
- ✓ Insurance and workers compensation, with expiry dates (page 22)
- ✓ The contract: who checks, who authorises the work, and who reports what

→

CHECKED AT EVERY GATE, ON THE DAY

Each worker, at each site

Depot | Park | Aquatic centre

- ✓ Any high risk work licence, of the right class and current, sighted before the work[2]
- ✓ The tickets the job needs, such as traffic control or chemical handling, where the state or your policy requires them
- ✓ Inducted to this site, signed in, authorised for the task, and supervised to match the work

Where it usually breaks.

Four common gaps, each one leaving a council unable to show who was on site and what they held.

A panel per department.

Parks, roads, facilities, and waste each keep their own contractor list, with its own version of the same tree company's insurance certificate.

Checked by hand.

Someone opens each certificate and types its expiry date into a spreadsheet. It holds until that person is on leave, or a storm brings 30 new crews in a week.

Sites with nobody there.

The reserve, the pump station, and the boat ramp have no front desk. A paper sign-in book left in a depot office answers nothing about them.

No view across the council.

Nobody can say which contractors and volunteers are current across every site, or who was at the pool last Tuesday.

One standard, every site. One requirement set for every contractor, each site's own requirements on top. Each gap above makes the verification step of an officer's due diligence harder to show: the model Act says due diligence includes taking reasonable steps to verify the provision and use of the business's health and safety resources and processes (section 27(5)(f)).[1]



02 THE DUTY HOLDERS

The council is the business. Under the model laws, councillors are not.

Work health and safety law puts its main duty on a "person conducting a business or undertaking", a PCBU, whether or not it is conducted for profit or gain.[1] A council is one. That business "must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of" the workers it engages or directs while they are at work in the business, and must ensure that other persons are not put at risk from its work.[1] In a park or a library, those other persons are the public.

> **"An elected member of a local authority does not in that capacity conduct a business or undertaking."**
>
> Model Work Health and Safety Act, section 5(5). Victoria's Act is built differently: page 7[1, 4]

02 THE DUTY HOLDERS

Who the council owes the duty to.

Three sections of the model Act decide it. Read together, they reach well past the people on the council's payroll.

Contractors and volunteers are workers.

A person is a worker if they carry out work in any capacity for a PCBU, including as "a contractor or subcontractor", "an employee of a contractor or subcontractor", or "a volunteer" (section 7(1)).[1]

Engaged or directed is enough.

The business must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of workers "engaged, or caused to be engaged" by it, and of workers whose activities in carrying out work are "influenced or directed" by it (section 19(1)). That can reach a subcontracted traffic crew the council never contracted with.[1]

Each site carries its own duty.

Whoever manages or controls a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the workplace, the ways in and out, and anything arising from it are without risks to the health and safety of any person (section 20(2)).[1]

Who is at a council site.

The council sits at the top. Every directorate, tenant, contractor, and volunteer group below it brings people onto council land, and each one needs a place in your checks.

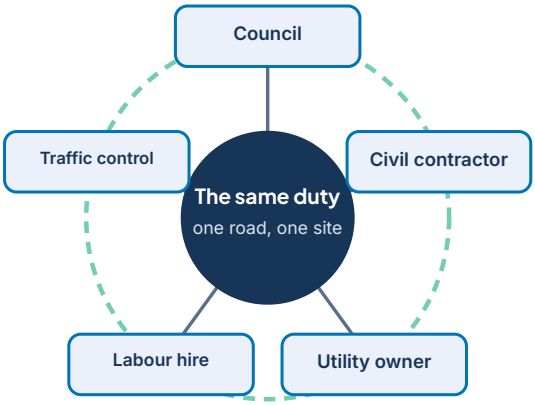


Our view: write down, for each site, who has management or control of what: the council, a lessee, or an operator under contract. A contracted pool and a leased hall are where it is most often unwritten.

03 SHARED DUTIES

Shared, but never handed over.

A road reseal puts the council, the civil contractor, the traffic control company, and the utility owner on the same strip of road, with the public driving through it. The model WHS Act sets four rules for that.



1. **Held at once, each to its own control.** "More than 1 person can concurrently have the same duty" (section 16(1)). Each keeps responsibility for its own duty and must discharge it to the extent of its capacity to influence and control the matter, or the capacity it would have had but for an agreement or arrangement that tries to limit or remove it (section 16(3)).[1]
2. **Worked together.** Each "must, so far as is reasonably practicable, consult, co-operate and co-ordinate activities with all other persons who have a duty in relation to the same matter" (section 46).[1]
3. **Workers consulted too.** So far as is reasonably practicable, each consults the workers who carry out work for it, contractors' workers included, who are, or are likely to be, directly affected by a health and safety matter, and involves their health and safety representative where they have one (sections 47 and 48(2)).[1] A meeting between businesses does not meet it.
4. **Never transferred.** "A duty cannot be transferred to another person" (section 14). A contract term that tries to exclude, limit, or modify a duty, or transfer it, is void (section 272).[1]

> **"WHS duties cannot be contracted out to another party, such as a subcontractor."**
> Safe Work Australia, WHS duties in a contractual chain, March 2022[8]

When the council commissions a construction project.

Has the council engaged another business as principal contractor, and authorised it to manage or control the workplace?
And to discharge the principal contractor's duties (r 293).[2]

Yes → **That business is the principal contractor.**
There is only one at a time.[2]

No ↓

The council is the principal contractor, by default, under the model laws.
Under the model Regulations, a construction project is construction work costing AU$250,000 or more, and the business that commissions it is the principal contractor (r 292, r 293(1)).[2] South Australia's figure is AU$450,000. Victoria sets no cost for a construction project; its principal contractor rules apply from AU$350,000, and there the owner is the principal contractor unless it appoints one and authorises it to manage or control the workplace (OHS Regulations 2017 (Vic) rr 332(1), 333(1); page 9).[5, 6]

So → **Our view: put it in writing.**
For every capital works contract at or above the threshold, put the appointment in the contract, in writing.

What the principal contractor then does, whoever holds the role.

R 308
Signs showing its name and telephone numbers, including an after hours number, visible from outside the site.

R 309, R 310
A written WHS management plan before work starts, and, so far as is reasonably practicable, everyone who is to carry out construction work on the project made aware of it before they start.

R 312
All reasonable steps to get a copy of each safe work method statement before the high risk construction work starts.[2]

04 OFFICERS AND COUNCILLORS

Due diligence is personal.

Under the model WHS Act, an officer of a PCBU "must exercise due diligence to ensure that the person conducting the business or undertaking complies with that duty or obligation" (section 27(1)), and can be convicted whether or not the council itself is (section 27(4)).[1] Who is an officer at a council, under the model Act:

Is the person an elected member, acting as one?
The model Act's definition of officer excludes "an elected member of a local authority acting in that capacity" (section 4).[1]

Yes → **Not an officer, under the model Act.**
Our view: that removes the officer's duty from the council chamber, not the council's duty from its sites; councillors still set the budgets and policies the executive verifies against.

No ↓

Do they make, or participate in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part, of the council?
For a public authority, an officer is a person "who makes, or participates in making, decisions that affect the whole, or a substantial part" of its business or undertaking (section 252). Each jurisdiction defines "public authority" in its own Act; Queensland's includes a local government.[1]

Yes → **An officer.**
At a council, that can include the CEO or general manager and the executive team: it is decided by the role, not the title.

In Victoria The OHS Act 2004 (Vic) takes "officer" from section 9 of the Corporations Act (s 5(1)); the model Act's section 252 test and its elected member exclusion are not in it. An officer commits an offence where the council's contravention is attributable to the officer's failure to take reasonable care (s 144), and the workplace manslaughter offence also reaches officers who are not volunteers (s 39G(2)).[4]

What the executive can ask for.

Four regular reports that show the checks happen: evidence for the verify step on the next page.

- Contractors engaged this quarter, by directorate, and how many were checked before their first visit.
- Licences and tickets due to lapse in the next 30 days, by site.
- High risk work authorised, and how much of it was checked on site.
- Incidents involving contractors, volunteers, or the public, and what changed.



04 OFFICERS AND COUNCILLORS

Due diligence includes taking reasonable steps to:

Each card gives one of the six steps the model Act lists, then what it can look like at a council. The last, verify, checks that what (c) to (e) put in place is provided and used.

a

Know.

Acquire and keep up to date knowledge of WHS matters.

At a council: a briefing when the state changes its incident notification rules or its procurement thresholds.

b

Understand.

The operations, and their hazards and risks.

At a council: knowing which sites have nobody at the gate, which buildings hold asbestos, and where the road works run.

c

Resource.

Make sure the business has, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks.

At a council: one funded contractor process, used by every directorate, not only the large ones.

d

Hear and respond.

Make sure it has appropriate processes to receive and consider information on incidents, hazards, and risks, and to respond in a timely way.

At a council: contractor and volunteer incidents reported to the same place as staff ones.

e

Comply.

Make sure it has, and implements, processes for complying with its duties, such as reporting notifiable incidents.

At a council: a written route for who notifies the regulator, and who tells the site.

f

Verify.

Verify that the resources and processes in (c) to (e) are provided and used.

At a council: a regular report that shows the checks happened, not only that the policy exists.

The model WHS Act, section 27(5)(a) to (f);[1] the examples are ours.

05 STATE BY STATE

One set of model laws, real differences.

Safe Work Australia says: "Victoria is the only jurisdiction who has not implemented the model WHS laws." It adds that, in some instances, states and territories have also made more substantial variations.[3] A council meets its own state's WHS law, and its own state's Local Government Act on top (page 11).

What	The law	What it means for a council
Victoria	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic). An employer's duties extend to independent contractors it engages, and their employees, "in relation to matters over which the employer has control or would have control if not for any agreement purporting to limit or remove that control" (s 21(3)(b)), and it must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that people other than its employees are not exposed to risks from its undertaking (s 23). Whoever has, to any extent, the management or control of a workplace must ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that it and the means of entering and leaving it are safe and without risks to health, but only for matters it manages or controls (s 26).[4]	The section 23 duty reaches the public in a park or a pool. Victoria's Act is framed around employers, employees, and independent contractors, not the model Act's "worker" (its own "worker" is a labour hire term, s 5(1) and s 5A), so check how it treats your volunteers before relying on page 12 for a Victorian council.
Every other state and territory	Each jurisdiction's own version of the model WHS Act and Regulations.[3] In NSW, SafeWork NSW says the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 commenced on 22 August 2025, and that its provisions are now called sections.[21]	The duties are broadly alike, but some states have made substantial changes: check your own jurisdiction's text and numbering before relying on it.
Asbestos register	The model Regulations, Queensland, and Victoria draw the line in different places: by build date in the first two, wherever asbestos is present in Victoria. Drawn on page 16.	Older halls, libraries, depots, and amenities blocks should expect a register.
Incident notification	The model Act as at 5 December 2025 adds new categories, but Safe Work Australia says the changes "only apply if adopted under local WHS laws".[9] In Victoria, a written record follows within 48 hours of every notification (s 38(3)).[4]	Use your own state's current rule. Page 19.

Where the principal contractor rules start

AU$250,000
Model laws, and NSW[2, 7]

AU$350,000
Victoria[5]

AU$450,000
South Australia[6]

AU$0

Each figure is "or more". One footpath contract can make the council its principal contractor in one state and not another.

Model Regulations r 292 and, says SafeWork NSW, NSW: a construction project is construction work costing AU$250,000 or more. Victoria: the principal contractor rules apply from AU$350,000 (r 332(1)). South Australia: AU$450,000.

Two thresholds, two laws. The principal contractor thresholds above are WHS rules. The tender thresholds on page 11 are Local Government Act rules. They are different numbers for different purposes, and one contract can cross either, both, or neither.



06 PROCUREMENT AND PROBITY

The tender is not the safety check.

The local government laws we read set, or have each council set, when to ask for quotes and when to tender, and principles such as probity and value for money. None of the procurement provisions we read asks the council to check a supplier's WHS. That check comes from the council's own duty, and meeting the tender rules does not meet it; any safety terms in your procurement policy or the contract apply too.

> **"Probity refers to complete honesty and integrity in a particular process or action, that can be confirmed and evidenced to observers."**
>
> Office of Local Government NSW, Procurement Guidelines for NSW Local Government, July 2026 [12]

06 PROCUREMENT AND PROBITY

	What the Local Government law says	What it means for contractor checks
NSW	Section 55 of the Local Government Act 1993 sets the requirements for tendering and, in the Office of Local Government's words, "prescribes a value 'threshold'" of AU$250,000 for contracts, GST included, on the total estimated contract value, with the tendering steps in Part 7 of the Regulation, unless the contract is exempt under section 55(3). Splitting orders to avoid tendering "would be contrary to the Act". The Guidelines (July 2026) list probity and transparency among five principles. [12]	The Guidelines' value-for-money factors include supplier capability and capacity, and risks, controls, and insurance: the natural place for the WHS evaluation criteria. [12]
Vic	Each council adopts a Procurement Policy that must seek to promote open and fair competition and provide value for money, and must set the contract value above which it invites a tender or an expression of interest, up to a value set by regulation. It must comply with the policy before entering a contract for goods, services, or works (Local Government Act 2020 (Vic) ss 108 and 109). [13]	The threshold is in your own policy, reviewed at least once each 4-year council term (s 108(5)). Read it, not a figure from another council. [13]
Qld	A council's financial management system must ensure regard is had to the sound contracting principles when it enters a contract: value for money; open and effective competition; the development of competitive local business and industry; environmental protection; and ethical behaviour and fair dealing (Local Government Act 2009 (Qld) s 104(1), (3)). Written quotes invited from at least 3 persons for a medium-sized contractual arrangement, and written tenders invited for a large-sized one, unless an exception applies (Regulation ss 225 and 226). [14, 15]	The thresholds are adjusted by Brisbane CPI each 1 July from 1 July 2026, and the department publishes the current figures (s 223E). For an arrangement entered into before 1 July 2026, s 223C set the large-sized threshold at an expected cost of AU$280,000, excluding GST, over the term. [15] Check the current figure before relying on it.
WA	Tenders are publicly invited before a contract for goods or services worth, or expected to be worth, more than AU$250,000, unless an exception applies, such as expenditure authorised in an emergency (Local Government (Functions and General) Regulations 1996 (WA) r 11). Panels of pre-qualified suppliers are provided for in the same Regulations. [16]	An emergency exception changes how the council buys. It does not change what the WHS law asks of the work (page 21).
SA	Procurement policies, practices, and procedures directed towards value in spending public money, ethical and fair treatment of participants, and "probity, accountability and transparency"; the policies identify when the council will tender, and provide for "the recording of reasons" for a contract not let by tender (Local Government Act 1999 (SA) s 49). [17]	A recorded reason for a direct engagement is a natural place to record the WHS check that went with it.

Build the check into the buy.

Five points where a council buys work, and the WHS check that belongs at each.

1 Specify.
The tickets, licences, and site rules the work needs, in the request.

2 Evaluate.
The safety record and capability, weighted with price.

3 Contract.
Who checks each worker, who authorises the work, who reports.

4 Onboard.
Check the company and its workers before the first site visit.

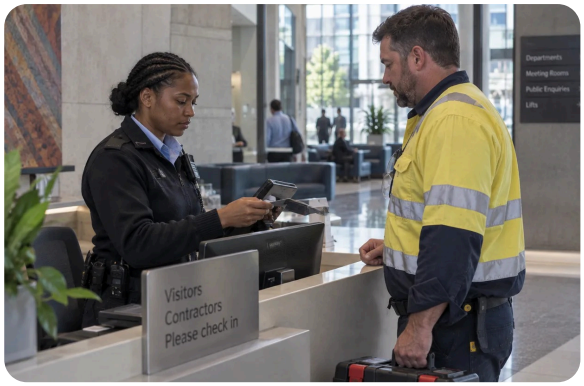
5 Every visit.
Checked at the gate, authorised, handed back.

Our recommendation Keep the procurement and safety records as one: the audit office and the regulator ask about the same contractors.

07 PUBLIC PLACES AND VOLUNTEERS

The public is always on site.

A council's sites stay open while the work happens: the library during a fit-out, the pool during a pump replacement, the park during a tree removal. The contractor's risk becomes the public's risk.



Keep the works and the public apart.

A person with management or control of a workplace where construction work is carried out must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that it is secured from unauthorised access, having regard to the risks, the likelihood of access, and how to isolate hazards where access cannot be prevented. The model Regulations' own example of a relevant matter: "The proximity of the workplace to places frequented by children, including schools, parks and shopping precincts" (r 298).[2] Construction work in or near water with a risk of drowning, at a pool or a creek, is high risk construction work (r 291(q)).[2]

Volunteers are workers, and their groups may not be businesses.

Two questions decide how the model Act treats a volunteer, and the group they come with.

Does the volunteer carry out work for the council?
Safe Work Australia: "Everyone has the right to be safe at work, including volunteers."[18]

Yes →

A worker, under the model Act (section 7(1)(h)).
A volunteer does not commit an offence for failing a health and safety duty, except the duties of workers and other persons (section 34(1)).[1]

↓ And

Is their group a volunteer association?
A group of volunteers working for community purposes in which none employs anyone to work for it.

Yes →

Not a business or undertaking (section 5(7) and (8)).
Our reading: for a Bushcare group with no employees working on a council reserve, the council may then be the only PCBU on site, unless a contractor is working there too.[1]

Who do they work for?

Record it per group: the council, an association running its own activity, or another operator. Owning the land does not settle it; either way, the council keeps its duty for a workplace it manages or controls (section 20) and its duty to the public for its own work (section 19(2)).[1] Induct and supervise in proportion to the task.

Children nearby.

In NSW, the Office of the Children's Guardian says councils must comply with the Child Safe Scheme and the Reportable Conduct Scheme if they provide services to children, or if adults have contact with children in their organisation; child-related work needs a working with children check.[24] Outside NSW, check your own state's child safety and screening law. At pools, libraries, and youth programs, check which contractor roles count, and brief them on conduct and on raising a concern.

Good practice, not a single rule. No one provision says "fence every job in a park". The duty to other persons (section 19(2)), the duty to provide supervision (section 19(3)(f)), and the emergency plan every workplace needs (r 43) point the same way; how you meet them is your call, written down.[1, 2]



08 ROADS, TREES, AND CIVIL WORKS

Many council works are high risk construction work.

Construction work is wider than building. The model Regulations count "any work carried out in connection with the construction, alteration, conversion, fitting-out, commissioning, renovation, repair, maintenance, refurbishment, demolition, decommissioning or dismantling of a structure" (r 289(1)), and the Regulations' own examples of a structure include "A roadway or pathway" and "A sewer or sewerage or drainage works" (r 290(1)). Testing, maintenance, or repair work of a minor nature is not construction work (r 289(3)(d)).[2]

> **High risk construction work includes construction work that "is 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".**
>
> Model Work Health and Safety Regulations, regulation 291(n)[2]

08 ROADS, TREES, AND CIVIL WORKS

High risk construction work: 6 of the 18 kinds, as they show up at a council.

The model Regulations list 18 kinds. These six turn up at council sites again and again.

Roads

Beside live traffic

Work on, in, or adjacent to a road in use by traffic other than pedestrians (r 291(n)).

Depots and civil sites

Mobile plant

Work in an area with any movement of powered mobile plant (r 291(o)).

Pools, creeks, and drains

Water

Work in or near water or other liquid with a risk of drowning (r 291(q)).

Streetlights and pump stations

Energised services

Work on or near energised electrical installations or services (r 291(k)).

Halls and amenities

Asbestos

Work that involves, or is likely to involve, disturbing asbestos (r 291(d)).

Roofs and structures

Falls

Work with a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres (r 291(a)).

Three rules that then apply.

If construction work matches one of the six, all three apply. The first two are about the safe work method statement (SWMS); the third, induction training, covers all construction work, high risk or not.

1

SWMS first.

Before high risk construction work starts, the business carrying it out must ensure a safe work method statement is prepared, and it is needed at any project value.

r 299(1) [2]

2

Follow it, or stop.

Once there is one, the work follows it, or stops.

r 300 [2]

3

Induction training.

A business must not direct or allow a worker to carry out construction work unless the worker has completed general construction induction training and, if that was more than 2 years ago, has carried out construction work in the last 2 years.

r 317(1) [2]

Traffic, trees, and digging: the extra checks.

Each puts others at risk as well as the crew. Agree who manages that before the crew arrives.

Traffic.

Safe Work Australia's Traffic management guide for construction work (April 2021) covers traffic at construction workplaces. [20] The model WHS laws do not license traffic controllers or planners; check your state's rules. The road may need its own permission: in NSW, a road occupancy licence for work affecting an arterial road. [23] Our recommendation: name who sets up and checks the signs and an accessible detour, rechecks them as conditions change, and hands the road back before dark.

Trees.

Safe Work Australia's guide to managing the risks of tree trimming and removal work (updated April 2023) covers pruning, removal, wood chipping, stump grinding, and work near overhead electric lines. [19] A tree over a footpath is a public risk too, so the drop zone is part of the job.

Digging.

Under the model Regulations, before excavation starts, whoever manages or controls the workplace takes all reasonable steps to get current underground essential services information and gives it to the excavator (r 304). Falls into, and collapse of, any excavation are managed (r 305). For a trench at least 1.5 metres deep, the work area is secured from unauthorised access, so far as is reasonably practicable, and the sides are supported unless a geotechnical engineer advises in writing that they are safe (r 306); work in or near a trench deeper than 1.5 metres is high risk construction work (r 291(g)). [2] Our recommendation: locate the services on the ground before breaking it.

09 DEPOTS, WASTE, AND OLDER BUILDINGS

Depots and transfer stations run on other businesses.



Waste collection contractors, plant hire operators, mechanics, and haulage drivers come through a council depot or transfer station every day, among loaders, trucks, and the public dropping off their rubbish.

Keep mobile plant and people apart.

The business with management or control of powered mobile plant, a loader or a forklift included, must manage the risk of it colliding with any person or thing (r 214), and ensure it does not collide with pedestrians or other powered mobile plant (r 215(4)).[2] At a transfer station, the pedestrians include the public.

Licensed work, sighted first.

1

The right class.

Operating a forklift truck (not a pedestrian-operated truck or a pallet truck) is high risk work that needs a licence for its class.

r 81, Schedule 3[2]

2

Sighted first.

The business directing or allowing the work must see written evidence of the licence before the work starts.

r 85(1)[2]

3

Kept at least a year.

The business must keep a record of that evidence for at least 1 year after the high risk work is carried out.

r 85(4)(a)[2]

Likewise, for example: Vehicle loading crane, 10 metre tonnes or more | Boom-type elevating work platform, boom 11 metres or more

Four more things to agree before the work starts.

The flow above covers high risk work licences. These four come up at depots, pump stations, and pool plant rooms, and each needs an answer in the contract or the site rules before the crew arrives.

Waste contractors.

Who checks the drivers and the vehicles: the council or the contractor? Write it in the contract, with the plan for unknown loads, sharps and biological exposure, manual handling, fires, and the public near plant.

Labour hire.

A labour-hire worker works for both businesses, and both hold duties. Agree who checks, inducts, and supervises.

After hours.

An on-call plumber working alone at a pump station at 2am is doing remote or isolated work, so the system of work must include effective communication with them (model Regulations, r 48).[2] Name who watches the check-ins, what a missed one triggers, and what happens with no phone coverage.

Pools and grounds.

Pool chemicals that react are kept apart and never mixed; dosing isolated and the plant room ventilated before work, with the safety data sheets and emergency plan to hand. Under the model Regulations, the risks of hazardous chemicals are managed, and their safety data sheets obtained and kept accessible (r 351, r 344). Spraying by people qualified or licensed as your state requires, the public kept off until it is safe.

09 DEPOTS, WASTE, AND OLDER BUILDINGS

The asbestos register belongs in the trade's hands.

Halls, libraries, amenities blocks, and depot sheds were often built long before asbestos was banned. The person with management or control of a workplace must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all asbestos at the workplace is identified by a competent person, or assume it is present, and must ensure that a register is prepared and kept there (r 422, r 425).[2]

Four moments when the register matters to the person doing the work. Each card gives the rule, then the check to make.

Every day.

The register is readily accessible to workers who have carried out, carry out, or intend to carry out work at the workplace, their health and safety representatives, and businesses that have carried out, carry out, or intend to carry out work there, or have required, require, or intend to require it.

r 427(1)[2]

Check: the trade can see it before the job, at a site with nobody there.

When the work risks exposure.

A business whose work involves a risk of exposure to airborne asbestos must be given a copy of the register.

r 427(2)[2]

Check: the copy given, with its version and date.

Before refurbishment.

For a structure built before 31 December 2003, the register is reviewed, and revised if it is inadequate for the proposed work; the business carrying out the work is given a copy before it starts.

r 447, r 448, r 449[2]

Check: does it cover the exact area the job will open?

If suspect material turns up.

Material a competent person reasonably believes is asbestos is assumed to be asbestos; the register is reviewed when further asbestos is identified or asbestos is disturbed.

r 422(2)(a), r 426(b), (c)[2]

Check: stop, keep people out, and call the council's asbestos contact.

Which buildings need a register, by build date.

	Built on or before 31 December 1989	Built 1990 to 2003	Built after 31 December 2003
Model laws r 425(5), (6)[2]	Register needed	Register needed	No register if no asbestos is identified and none is likely
Queensland Queensland Government[22]	Register needed	No register if no asbestos is identified and none is likely	No register if no asbestos is identified and none is likely
Victoria rr 225, 228(2)[5]	Victoria's rules apply wherever asbestos is present, with the register reviewed at least every 5 years		

The ringed pair is the trap: a policy written to Queensland's date leaves buildings from 1990 to 2003 elsewhere under the model laws without the register the model date requires.

A register is not a guarantee. Our view: treat the register as the start of the conversation. Confirm it covers the exact ceiling, wall, or floor the job will open, record which version the trade saw, and agree before work starts who they call if they find something the register does not show.

10 AUTHORISING AND CONTROLLING THE WORK

Let in is not the same as authorised.

Signing in at the depot lets a contractor onto council land. It does not authorise them to drop a limb over a footpath, enter a pool's balance tank, or open a pump station switchboard: that takes a second step, and a handback.

Control	What it means at a council site	Status and source
Task risk assessment	The job, the area, and the public, staff, volunteers, and traffic nearby assessed before work starts, and the controls agreed, not left to the crew on arrival.	LAW eliminate or minimise risks so far as is reasonably practicable (model Act ss 17 and 19; Regulations Part 3.1 where a regulation applies it) [1, 2] GOOD PRACTICE the written assessment
Confined spaces	An enclosed or partially enclosed space not designed or intended primarily for people to occupy, at normal atmospheric pressure while anyone is in it, with a risk from its atmosphere, contaminants, or engulfment (r 5). A pit, a tank, or a sewer can be one; classify the space and the task, not the name. Before entry: a competent person's written risk assessment (r 66); the risk from connected plant and services eliminated or minimised so far as is reasonably practicable, for example by isolation (r 70); the space purged or ventilated, and kept at a safe oxygen level or air-supplied breathing equipment provided (r 71); continuous communication from outside, and a standby person monitoring (r 69); and first aid and rescue procedures set and practised (r 74). The written entry permit records them (r 67); it does not replace them.	LAW r 5, rr 66, 67, 69 to 71, 74 [2] GOOD PRACTICE the permit's layout
Permits and isolations	Hot work, heights, tree work, chemical use, and isolating power, water, or a fire system run as the council's own permits, each with a named person who issues and closes it. The electrical isolation is not optional: electrical work is not carried out on energised electrical equipment except as the Regulations allow, and that duty sits with the business doing the work (r 153, r 154, r 157).	LAW health and safety ensured so far as is reasonably practicable, s 19; no electrical work on energised equipment, r 154 [1, 2] GOOD PRACTICE the council's permit forms
Read the SWMS against the job	For high risk construction work, a safe work method statement before work starts (r 299), with a principal contractor, where there is one, taking all reasonable steps to get a copy first (r 312). Once there is one, the work must follow it: if it does not, it stops immediately, or as soon as it is safe to stop (r 300).	LAW r 299, r 300, r 312 [2]
Excavation	All reasonable steps taken to get underground services information, and it given to the excavator; the services located on the ground; and the sides of a trench 1.5 metres or deeper supported (page 14).	LAW r 304, r 306, page 14 [2] GOOD PRACTICE locating on the ground
Traffic, the public, and supervision	The traffic management plan for the job, and any road occupancy licence (page 14); the work zone fenced or marked so the public is kept clear; and supervision matched to the work and who is nearby.	LAW s 19(2) and s 19(3)(f); a construction workplace secured from unauthorised access, r 298; each so far as is reasonably practicable [1, 2] GOOD PRACTICE the plan
Heights	Roof, tree, and structure access controlled, and any fall that is reasonably likely to cause injury managed, whatever the height.	LAW r 78 [2] GOOD PRACTICE the access permit

10 AUTHORISING AND CONTROLLING THE WORK

Control, continued	What it means at a council site	Status and source
Fire system isolation	Approved in advance, kept short, logged, and confirmed back in service by the fire contractor before the library, hall, or centre reopens.	LAW an emergency plan for the workplace, r 43; and your state's building fire safety rules for the system itself [2] GOOD PRACTICE the isolation steps
Handback	The area inspected and cleared, services reinstated and tested, barriers removed, and the permit closed, before the public returns.	LAW the workplace without risks so far as is reasonably practicable, s 20(2) [1] GOOD PRACTICE the signed handback

What one authorisation records.

	Field	Filled in by
☐	The job, the site and area, the date and hours, and the contractor and each worker	Requester
☐	Licences, tickets, and induction checked for each worker, for this site (page 22)	Contract supervisor
☐	The risk assessment, and any SWMS, traffic management plan, permit, or isolation, by number	Contractor and permit issuer
☐	The asbestos register checked for this exact area, and a copy given if the work risks exposure	Facilities or building officer
☐	The public, volunteers, and other contractors affected: who was told, and what they agreed	Site or facility manager
☐	Handback: area checked, services reinstated, barriers removed, signed off, permit closed	Site or facility manager

One job, four stages, controlled throughout.

Every job runs through the same four stages, whoever the contractor is. The record above is filled in as it goes.

1 **Requested.** The job, the site, the contractor, and who is nearby.

2 **Assessed.** Risks, permits, any SWMS, traffic, and the asbestos register.

3 **Authorised.** By whoever controls the site; the site told.

4 **Handed back.** Checked, reinstated, signed off, record closed.

Controlled throughout From authorisation to handback, a named person is responsible for the work while it runs, and checks it against what was authorised.

Anyone can stop the work.

Make it a contract term and a line in the induction: a site supervisor, a pool duty manager, a librarian, or the contractor's own worker who sees work running outside what was authorised can stop it, and the person who authorised it decides what happens next. For high risk construction work not done to its SWMS, stopping is the law. [2]

When the job changes.

A bigger job than the one authorised is a new job: assess it again and re-authorise it. A tree prune that becomes a removal over a footpath, or a pump service that becomes a pit entry, changes the permits as well as the job.

11 WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG

One event, several reports.

A falling limb strikes a passer-by, or a contractor disturbs suspect material in a hall ceiling.

A WHS notifiable incident is a death, a serious injury or illness, or a dangerous incident arising from the conduct of the business or undertaking (section 35), whether the person hurt is a worker or a member of the public.[1]

	Immediately	Within 48 hours	At least 5 years
Model WHS Act The business; sections 38 and 39[1]	**Notify the regulator.** Immediately after becoming aware of it, by the fastest possible means. The person with management or control, so far as is reasonably practicable, preserves the site until an inspector releases it, and the evidence (2025 changes, where adopted; elsewhere, until an inspector arrives or directs otherwise).	**Written notice.** If the regulator requires one.	**Keep a record.** For at least 5 years.
Victoria OHS Act 2004 (Vic) ss 38 and 39[4]	**Notify WorkSafe.** The employer or self-employed person with management and control of the workplace where the incident happened, immediately after becoming aware of it. The site is not disturbed until an inspector arrives or directs otherwise.	**Written record.** Given within 48 hours.	**Keep a copy.** For at least 5 years.

Model Act exceptions
To assist an injured person, remove a deceased person, take action that is essential to make the site safe or to minimise the risk of a further occurrence, for a police investigation, or with an inspector's or the regulator's permission (section 39(3)).

Victoria's exceptions
To protect health or safety, aid an injured person, or take essential action to make the site safe or prevent a further incident (s 39(2)).

Who The contractor and the council can both hold these duties. Agree who notifies and who protects the site; one agreed notice is fine, but each business with the duty stays responsible for it. In Victoria, for a contractor hurt at a council depot, usually the council.



11 WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG, CONTINUED

The other reports, and what the 2025 changes add.

A WHS notice is often not the only report. The first card adds to the notice itself, where adopted; the other three run alongside it, each on its own clock and with its own owner. Check which apply in your state.

The 2025 additions, where adopted

A violent incident (such as a physical or sexual assault that exposes a person to a serious risk of psychological harm); a serious fall of a person, and a mobile plant incident (such as mobile plant that collides with a person or thing), each a dangerous incident where it immediately or imminently exposes a person to a serious risk; and notifiable extended absences and suicides. Safe Work Australia says these "only apply if adopted under local WHS laws". The ACT adopted the mobile plant, serious fall, and site preservation changes from 19 November 2025.

Law model Act ss 35A, 35B, 37(1)(h), (m), (3), 37A[1] **Regulator** SWA; WorkSafe ACT[9, 10]

Where adopted Check your own regulator's current list.

Between the businesses

The contractor's employer, the council, and any lessee or operator. Where the 2025 change is adopted, the business that must notify the regulator and the person with management or control of the workplace must each ensure the other is told (s 39A).

Law where adopted, s 39A[1] **Good practice** elsewhere

Immediately So far as is reasonably practicable, where adopted; elsewhere, our view: at once for a serious event.

Suspect asbestos disturbed

Where a competent person reasonably believes it is asbestos, it is assumed to be (r 422(2)(a)), and the register is reviewed (r 426(b), (c)); work that disturbs asbestos is prohibited except as the Regulations allow (r 419), and construction work likely to disturb it is high risk construction work (r 291(d)).

Law r 291, r 419, r 422, r 426[2]

Straight away Stop, keep people out, call the asbestos contact. Reopen on a clearance, not a closed work order; after licensed removal, an independent clearance inspection and certificate (r 473, r 474).

Pollution, in NSW: immediately

A spill or sewage overflow causing or threatening material harm to the environment: whoever carries on the activity, and the occupier of the premises, tells each relevant authority, including the EPA, SafeWork NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW, and the local council where it is not the regulator, apart from any WHS notice.

Law POEO Act 1997 (NSW) s 148 **Regulator** NSW EPA[25]

Our recommendation Put each route, its clock, and its owner in the contract and on the council site map, so the person on call at 2am does not have to work it out.

12 A WORKED EXAMPLE

Storm week.

A Tuesday night storm drops trees across a regional NSW council's parks and two roads, strips a 1970s hall roof, and floods a pump station. By Wednesday the council has its panel arborists, two new tree companies, traffic control, a roofer, an electrician, and 15 Bushcare volunteers.

The numbers below are the model laws'. In NSW, the WHS Act 2011 (NSW) and WHS Regulation 2025 (NSW) apply; SafeWork NSW says the Regulation's provisions are now called sections.[21]

What is live	Why	What gets checked and kept
The new tree crews	A council may engage quickly in an emergency, where its state's procurement law allows it,[12, 16] but the crews are still its workers for WHS purposes, and any high risk work licence, such as for a boom-type elevating work platform with a boom of 11 metres or more, is sighted before the work (page 15).[1, 2]	Each worker's licences and tickets on file before the first cut, not after the week. Good practice: a competent person assesses storm-damaged trees first; wind limits, crew hours, and a named incident controller set
The roads	Where clearing a fallen tree is construction work (work in connection with repairing or maintaining a structure, such as the road, r 289(1)), doing it on or beside a road in use by traffic, or on or near energised electrical installations or services, makes it high risk construction work (r 291(k), (n)): a safe work method statement first (r 299). Where it is not construction work, the council's general duty still applies (section 19).[1, 2] Good practice: treat downed lines as live and call the network operator.	The traffic management plan, the SWMS, the controllers' accreditation, and any road occupancy licence
The hall roof	Built in the 1970s, so the asbestos register is checked for the roof and ceiling before the roofer starts, and a copy given if the work risks exposure (r 427(2)); a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres makes it high risk construction work (r 291(a)).[2]	Register version given; roof access and edge protection checked
The pump station	A flooded pit can be a confined space. First ask whether entry can be avoided; if not, a competent person's written risk assessment of inflow, power, and air (r 66), connected plant and services isolated so far as is reasonably practicable (r 70), a standby person and continuous communication from outside (r 69), and rescue from outside (r 74), then the written permit (r 67).[2]	Assessment, permit, isolations, gas readings, standby
The volunteers	Volunteers who carry out work for the council are its workers (page 12); the reserve with fallen limbs is a workplace the council controls.[1]	Kept out of drop zones, checked through the day; inducted, signed in, lighter tasks, a named supervisor

The same week, on paper and joined up.

Four moments from the table, on paper and joined up. Joined up, the pit permit also follows the assessment, isolation, and rescue plan; on Friday the executive sees who worked where, what each held, the controls checked on site, and what is still open.

	The new crews	The platform licence	The hall roof	The volunteers
On paper	The works coordinator phones round. A new tree crew turns up at the reserve with no one there, and cuts all day.	Nobody knows whether the new crew's operator holds a licence for the platform.	The roofer never sees the hall's register.	The volunteers start clearing branches under a crew still working above them.
Joined up	The new crews register on Wednesday morning and upload their tickets.	The coordinator reviews each worker's tickets before they head to the reserve.	The roofer sees the hall's register at sign-in.	The volunteers sign in to a zone the crew supervisor keeps clear, and checks.

13 THE RECORD

What to hold for every contractor.

Unless another law is named, rule numbers are the model laws'; your state's may differ. In Victoria, read its own OHS Act and Regulations (page 9).

LAW Act or Regulations POLICY council or contract REGULATOR guidance GOOD PRACTICE not legally required

Level	What to hold	Status and source
The company	Selection criteria and the evidence asked for: safety records, incidents, notices, and prosecutions	REGULATOR WorkSafe Tasmania [11]
	The procurement record: quotes or tender, the evaluation, and the reasons for a direct engagement	LAW in part, your state's local government law, page 11 (SA, for example, requires the reasons for a contract not let by tender to be recorded, s 49(2)(c)) [17] GOOD PRACTICE the full record
	Workers compensation that fits who the workers are (WHS worker status does not by itself decide it). Public liability insurance. Expiry dates	POLICY the contract's insurance terms REGULATOR OLG NSW, insurance as a value-for-money factor [12] GOOD PRACTICE the certificates and expiry dates
	The contract: WHS roles, who checks each worker, who authorises the work, incident reporting, and telling you when they are on site	REGULATOR WorkSafe Tasmania (WHS roles, incident reporting, telling you when they are on site) [11] GOOD PRACTICE who checks each worker, who authorises the work
The worker	Written evidence of any high risk work licence, sighted before the work, and a record kept for at least 1 year after the high risk work is carried out; its class, scope, conditions, and current status checked; reviewed again on a suspension, an incident, or a change of scope, and a renewal reviewed, not approved on arrival	LAW r 85(1) and (4) [2] GOOD PRACTICE the status check
	General construction induction training for construction work	LAW r 317 [2]
	Licences your state requires for the trade itself, such as an electrical licence for electrical work	LAW your state's licensing law
	Qualifications the council or the contract asks for, such as arboriculture; traffic control rules vary by state (page 14)	POLICY your competency rules or the contract REGULATOR WorkSafe Tasmania [11]

Reading the tags Law names the duty. The record, form, or contract clause that shows you met it is usually your choice, so it is tagged Policy or Good practice.

13 THE RECORD, CONTINUED

The volunteer, the site, and the visit.

Unless another law is named, rule numbers are the model laws'; your state's may differ. In Victoria, read its own OHS Act and Regulations (page 9).

LAW Act or Regulations POLICY council or contract REGULATOR guidance GOOD PRACTICE not legally required

Level	What to hold	Status and source
The volunteer	Induction suited to their tasks, the tasks they may do, who supervises them, and the council's own volunteer cover	LAW information, training, and instruction suited to the work, r 39[2] GOOD PRACTICE the task list and the cover
	Workers and volunteers in child-related roles: a current working with children check where the state requires it (page 12)	LAW your state's screening law, page 12 POLICY the role list
The site	A site induction, including emergency procedures and hazards, before they start	LAW training suited to the work and its risks, r 39[2] GOOD PRACTICE the induction form
	The asbestos register accessible; a copy given where the work risks airborne exposure, and before refurbishment	LAW r 427; refurbishment, page 16[2]
	A safe work method statement for high risk construction work, and permits: confined space entry in writing; the rest by the council's own	LAW page 17 GOOD PRACTICE other permits
The visit	Sign in and out, by site, including sites with nobody there	GOOD PRACTICE
	Consultation with the other duty holders, and with affected workers and their representatives	LAW s 46, s 47, s 48(2)[1]
	The handback: isolations reinstated, area cleared and inspected, signed off	LAW page 18 GOOD PRACTICE the signed record

Hold it carefully. Keep each record for the longest of: the legal minimum (1 year for licence evidence, r 85(4); 5 years for a notifiable incident record, s 38(7)), your state's public records rules for councils, and any hold for an incident or claim.[1, 2] Licences, tickets, and incident records hold personal information about identifiable people; handle them under the privacy law or rules that apply to your council. Our recommendation: let the gate see a status, not the document, and keep screening and health details behind tighter access.



13 CHECKLIST

Before a contractor starts.

Unless another law is named, rule numbers are the model laws'; your state's may differ. In Victoria, read its own OHS Act and Regulations (page 9).

	Check	Owner	Date checked
	Know who holds the duty		
☐	We know which directorate controls each site, and which sites are run by a lessee or an operator under contract. Good practice the council site map, page 26		
☐	For each capital works contract at or above the construction project threshold, we know who the principal contractor is, in writing. Law, r 293 (who it is) Good practice (in writing); thresholds page 9 the appointment		
	At tender, quote, or panel		
☐	The request names the tickets, licences, and site rules the work needs. Good practice the specification		
☐	The company was assessed against clear selection criteria, including its safety record. Regulator, WorkSafe Tasmania the evaluation, dated		
☐	Insurance and workers compensation are on file, with expiry dates, and the cover fits who the workers are. Policy the contract's insurance terms Good practice certificates and expiry dates		
☐	The contract says who checks each worker, who authorises the work, and who notifies after an incident. Good practice the clause		
	Before the first site visit		
☐	Each worker's licences and tickets for the work are on file, with class, scope, conditions, and current status, and reviewed again on a suspension, an incident, or a change of scope: any high risk work licence, and any the state or our policy requires. Law, page 22 Policy documents against each worker		
☐	Each worker and volunteer has completed this site's induction, including emergency procedures and hazards. Law, r 39 (training suited to the work) Good practice induction completion, per person		
☐	Workers and volunteers in child-related roles hold a current working with children check where the state requires it. Law, your state's screening law, page 12 Policy the role list		
☐	The asbestos register has been seen, covers the area of the job, and a copy was given where the work risks exposure or is refurbishment. Law, r 427; refurbishment, page 16 register version and date given		

13 CHECKLIST, CONTINUED

On the day, and after.

Unless another law is named, rule numbers are the model laws'; your state's may differ. In Victoria, read its own OHS Act and Regulations (page 9).

	Check	Owner	Date checked
	On the day, at any site		
☐	The visit was expected, and the site could see it, including sites with nobody there. **Good practice** the booking		
☐	Every worker and volunteer signed in and out. **Good practice** sign-in by site		
☐	Any high risk work licence was sighted before the work, not after. **Law, page 22** licence number, class, scope, conditions, current status		
☐	A worker on remote or isolated work has a way to call for help that works at that site, someone watches the check-ins, and a missed one is escalated. **Law, r 48 (a system of work with effective communication) and r 43 (an emergency plan)** **Good practice** the check-in plan		
	Before the work starts		
☐	The task was assessed for this site today, including the public and traffic nearby. **Law, page 17** **Good practice** the written assessment		
☐	A safe work method statement for high risk construction work was read against the job, and the traffic management plan against the road. **Law, page 17** **Good practice** the traffic management plan; the statement and the plan, version and date		
☐	Before digging, underground services information was given to the excavator, and the services located on the ground. **Law, r 304, page 14** **Good practice** locating on the ground		
☐	Pool chemicals, dosing, and spraying controls were set for the job. **Law, r 351 (hazardous chemical risks managed)** **Good practice, page 15** the controls agreed		
☐	Permits were issued: confined space entry in writing, after the assessment, isolation, standby, and rescue plan; hot work, heights, tree work, and isolations by our own permit. **Law, page 17** **Good practice, other permits** permit numbers		
	Handback, and if something goes wrong		
☐	Isolations reinstated, the area cleared and inspected, barriers removed, and the handback signed before the public returns. **Law, page 18** **Good practice** the handback, signed		
☐	The contractor knows who to call at any hour, who notifies the regulator, and who preserves the site. **Law, page 19** the incident route		
☐	The contractor knows who notifies a pollution incident, and to which authorities. **Law, in NSW, POEO Act 1997 s 148, page 20** **Regulator, NSW EPA** the pollution route		
	Across the council		
☐	Officers receive a regular report that verifies the checks happen, not only that the policy exists. **Good practice; taking reasonable steps to verify is part of an officer's due diligence, s 27(5)(f)** the report, dated		

13 TEMPLATE

The council site map.

One row per site; the first row is an example. It settles, before the job starts, who may work where, what they must hold to work there, and who has to know.

Site	Who controls it	Who authorises work	Asbestos register	Permits needed	Public and volunteers	Nobody there?
Example aquatic centre, plant room and pool hall	*Council; operator under management contract*	*Operator's duty manager; council facilities for capital works*	*Built 1978; register in the plant room and online*	*Confined space (balance tank), chemicals, isolations*	*Open to the public; no volunteers*	*Staffed 5am to 9pm; callout after hours. Reviewed 01/11/2026; no plant room work in opening hours*



How to keep the map true.

A map nobody keeps current is worse than none, because the gate trusts it. Three habits keep it right: agree each row, review it before the busy season, and keep it where the gate can see it.

Fill it in with the directorates.

Works, parks, facilities, waste, and the WHS lead should agree each row. Where they disagree, there is a gap in who does what, and the duty does not wait for it to close.

Review it before the season.

Summer brings pool, storm, and event season at once. Decide who updates the map and how contractors and volunteers hear, and give each row a review date and any current work restrictions.

Keep it with the record.

The map is only useful if the depot, the facility, and the on-call manager can see it when a contractor turns up.

14 ONE STANDARD ACROSS EVERY SITE

The same standard at every gate.

Everything in this guide needs to work at every depot, park, pool, and hall, staffed or not, in a quiet month and in storm week.



Questions to ask about how you manage it today.

1. If the audit office asked which contractors worked at one site last quarter, and what each held on the day, how long would the answer take?
2. How many contractor lists does the council keep, one per directorate or one for all?
3. When an insurance certificate or a ticket is renewed, who checks it, and how do they know it is due?
4. At a site with nobody there, how would you know a worker's licence had lapsed before they started?
5. Does the roofer see the hall's asbestos register for the exact area before work starts?
6. Who authorises a tree removal over a footpath, and who confirms the area is handed back?
7. Are volunteers inducted and supervised in proportion to their tasks, or not at all?
8. How many hours a month go on chasing certificates and typing them into spreadsheets?

What to look for in a system.

Seven capabilities that keep the checks in this guide working at every site, staffed or not.

- **One standard, each site's rules on top.** One requirement set across the council, with each depot, park, or facility adding its own.
- **Contractors, and the volunteers who work for the council, in one record.** They register once and upload what each role needs, such as insurance, licences, and working with children checks, and every site measures them against its own list.
- **Expiry tracked for you.** Reminders before a ticket or certificate lapses, and re-approval requests sent on their own.
- **A gate that checks, staffed or not.** Sign-in by QR code or tablet at the depot, the park gate, or the pool office, read against the record.
- **Permits on the same record.** Traffic control, tree work, chemical use, and confined-space entry raised on a phone and routed to a named authoriser.
- **Plans read before approval.** The traffic management plan or method statement behind a permit read against your standard, with your officer making the final call.
- **A report for the executive and the audit office.** One searchable record per site, with scheduled reports.

START SMALL

Start with the sites nobody staffs.

Take your busiest depot and three sites with nobody at the gate, and run the checklist on pages 24 and 25 against their contractors and volunteers. Close the gaps it shows first, and ask anyone offering a system to show each point above on your own sites.

SOURCES

Every source, with the date it was read.

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This guide is general information, not legal advice. It summarises the model Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations published by Safe Work Australia (as at 5 December 2025), Victoria's Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 and Regulations 2017, the procurement provisions of the NSW, Victorian, Queensland, Western Australian, and South Australian local government laws and the NSW Office of Local Government's guidelines, and regulator guidance, as read on the dates above. Each jurisdiction enacts its own WHS law, and its text and numbering can differ; procurement thresholds change, and Queensland's are indexed each year. For a decision about your own council, sites, and contractors, read the law in your jurisdiction and take legal advice. It is a contractor management guide, not a technical manual.

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