



**IC Property Maintenance
Occupational Health and Safety
Manual**

DISCLAIMER

This OHS Manual has been prepared for IC Property Maintenance as part of a strategy for IC Property Maintenance to adopt in developing and implementing occupational health and safety. This OHS manual is a work in progress and is subject to ongoing review and improvement. This OHS Manual is being developed with input from IC Property Maintenance.

The author of this OHS Manual will not take responsibility for loss, damage, or injury to any person/persons incurred or suffered by a hazard or risk or by a person acting or omitting to act on the basis of information contained in this report. While this report refers to Statutes, Regulations and Codes of Practice, it should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional legal advice.

The responsibility for ongoing effective health and safety systems rests with the management of IC Property Maintenance.

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INTRODUCTION

The management of IC Property Maintenance is committed to developing a safety culture amongst its staff, contractors and clients. Therefore, no job or task is considered so important that anyone's health and safety should be jeopardised.

This means that IC Property Maintenance will endeavour to identify hazards and risks that are part of their operations, and control them as far as practicable. Therefore, this occupational health and safety (OHS) Manual is a reflection of IC Property Maintenance's commitment to OHS.

The OHS Manual is being developed because IC Property Maintenance recognises that OHS should be integral to business operations. Put simply, good OHS practices means that staff remain safe and healthy and this means business can continue uninterrupted.

This occupational health and safety (OHS) Manual is a work in progress and this means that over time, the OHS Manual will be developed further and enhanced to reflect the adoption of OHS. The OHS Manual will be developed based on the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2001 and supporting Codes of Practice, guidance material, Australian Standards, etc.

The following issues have been included in the OHS Manual as they represent both compliance requirements and areas the IC Property Maintenance consider a high risk. As a commitment to OHS improvement, the OHS Manual is improved, considers main compliance issues – these are outlined below. They demonstrate commitment by IC Property Maintenance.

ABOUT IC PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

IC Property Maintenance provides maintenance services for residential, commercial and industrial properties. Services include:

- Renovations
- Brickwork
- Cleaning
- Demolition
- Cleaning Gutters
- Painting
- Pressure Cleaning
- Roof Repairs
- Rubbish Removal
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Emergency Repairs (24 hours/day).

DEFINITIONS OF A 'WORKPLACE'

A workplace or 'place of work' means premises where persons work. Therefore, any site that a contractor or employee from IC Property Maintenance is engaged to work on becomes a place of work.

RISK MANAGEMENT

According to the NSW Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001, employers are required to adopt a risk management approach to managing hazard and risks in the workplace. Managing risks is all about identifying the hazards and risks in your work, assessing them and controlling them.

A hazard is what can cause harm or injury to a person, or damage to property, or both. The risk is the likelihood of that harm or injury occurring. An assessment of risk usually involves determining the likelihood of an incident occurring and the consequences of the incident if it is realised.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the risk, and these can include:

- Physical layout of a building or room.
- Lack of planning for workflow.
- The health and well being of staff (for example, a staff member with a lower back condition will have an increased likelihood of getting a back injury lifting a heavy item).

The NSW WorkCover Code of Practice for Risk Assessment (2001) suggests a risk assessment include the following:

- Identify factors that may be contributing to the risk, such as:
 - The work premises and the working environment, including their layout and condition,
 - The capability, skill, experience and age of people ordinarily undertaking work, and
 - The range of reasonably foreseeable conditions.

Evaluate the likelihood of an injury occurring and the likely severity of an injury or illness that may occur. This evaluation needs to take into account the factors that contribute to the risk (such as those mentioned above), as well as the review of relevant safety information available.

The Code of Practice for Risk Assessment states that employers have an obligation to identify any expected hazards that may arise in the workplace and to assess the risk of harm arising from these hazards. Employers also have an obligation to eliminate the hazards. If this is not "reasonably practicable" the employer must control the risks by implementing measures to lessen the risk of harm to the lowest possible level.

Once this has been carried out, management and staff will need to determine the controls necessary that will ensure the safety and well being of staff.

By identifying and assessing the risks, a number of controls can be put in place to reduce the risk by eliminating or controlling the hazard. Putting these controls in place will often depend on a number of factors such as cost, practicality of use and function, and whether one particular control will create other hazards and risks.

There are a number of tools that can be used in conducting a risk assessment. These tools evaluate risks by combining the likelihood of an incident occurring and the consequences of an injury or illness if the incident does occur. The tool below is one such tool that provides a basic appreciation of the risks involved and allows IC Property Maintenance to focus its resource on the highest risks.

The Risk Assessment Matrix

Consequences: How severely could the health and safety of someone be affected?	Likelihood: How likely could the health and safety of someone be affected?			
	Very likely - Could happen frequently or at any time.	Likely - Could happen occasionally or at some time.	Unlikely - Could happen, but rarely / very rarely.	Very unlikely - could happen, but probably never will.
Extreme: Death or permanent disability or permanent ill health	1	1	2	3
Major: Serious bodily injury or long term illness	1	2	3	4
Moderate: Requiring medical attention or casualty and several days off work	2	3	4	5
Minor: First aid needed, no lost time.	3	4	5	6
The number indicate how important it is to do something: the risk scores are useful for comparisons only. 1 = top priority: do something immediately / 6 = low priority: do something when possible				

One example of using the risk assessment matrix: let's say that a staff member who is asthmatic is involved in the cleaning and/or removal of water damaged carpets. Chances are that if the water has been on the carpet for a few days, there may be mould, so this could trigger an asthma attack. As the job would involve cutting up, rolling, picking up and moving carpet around, the mould could be easily dispersed and the person could inhale it, triggering an asthma attack. Because the person is asthmatic and because the likelihood of mould being present is high, the risk rating could be 3 or 4. However, if the person is provided with an appropriate dust mask (to prevent inhalation of mould), as well as first aid such as medication; or is replaced with someone who is not asthmatic; or if the carpets are steam cleaned first (to remove the mould) and the rooms are well ventilated during the work, then the likelihood of exposure to mould is severely reduced to a risk rating of 5 or 6.

So how does IC Property Maintenance identify hazards? Through planned inspections; consultation between staff and clients; observation; and experience. IC Property Maintenance is in the process of developing a documented risk management process – a hazard /inspection checklist that includes risk assessment and risk control components. This documentation will demonstrate IC Property Maintenance’s commitment to OHS risk management.

So how does IC Property Maintenance control hazards and risks? It does this by a combination of the following:

- Elimination - most effective control measure, involves the removal of the risk (by removing it or changing work processes)
- Substitution - replacing the plant or substance with another with a lower risk.
- Engineering control - changing the physical characteristics of plant or workplace to remove or reduce the risk
- Isolation - removing or separating people from the source of the hazard.
- Administrative control - using policies, procedures, signs, training etc. to control risk.
- Personal protective equipment - equipment or clothing designed to provide protection.

ASBESTOS

It is more than likely that where asbestos is found, it will be in fibre cement sheets in eaves; other asbestos cement products such as roof tiles; some office partitions; and places like electrical meter boards. Asbestos may also be in insulation on pipes and boilers (called asbestos lagging). If these materials are in relatively good condition and they are left undisturbed, then it’s unlikely they will be a risk to health because there is very little likelihood of exposure. However, due to the nature of the potential work involved (demolition; renovations; roof repairs), if asbestos material is present and it is cut, broken up or drilled, then the likelihood of exposure increase and it becomes a health hazard. Because it can be difficult to ascertain if material is or isn’t asbestos, always treat the material as if it were.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000 and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 impose a duty of care on controllers of premises to ensure that have knowledge of asbestos or asbestos containing material on their sites. Where there is asbestos (or perceived asbestos) they need to maintain a register that includes details on location, condition of material, etc. IC Property Maintenance expects those clients who are controllers of premises to maintain an asbestos register, especially for building where demolition or renovations will be carried out). This ensures that IC Property Maintenance staff are not exposed to asbestos.

With respect to the removal and disposal of asbestos, a licensed asbestos removalist should be contracted. The NSW WorkCover Guide to Working with Asbestos (March 2003) provides guidance on the selection of appropriate contractors.

While an owner of a house may not be expected to maintain a register, any work in a private dwelling should still be carried out safely, and staff should still be familiar with asbestos regulations and local council regulations. A license is not required to remove fibro from houses and the NSW WorkCover Guide Living with Fibro (June 1998) provides a comprehensive safety checklist to use before you begin working with asbestos fibro (or apparent asbestos fibro).

CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT

There will be instances when IC Property Maintenance uses chemicals (possibly hazardous substances). For example: toner for photocopier; paints, thinners, cleaning products, etc. According to chapter 6 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001, an employer must determine if the chemicals used are hazardous substances – if the employer is uncertain that a chemical being used is classed as a hazardous substance, all chemicals should be treated as hazardous substances as a precaution.

As a start, IC Property Maintenance will develop an inventory of all the chemicals used in their operations. The labels of these chemicals should contain information to assist IC Property Maintenance to determine if they are hazardous substances or not. Information required includes: a clear statement on whether the chemicals or substance is hazardous or not; the chemical name; and other health and safety information. If for some reason the label does not indicate this, then the manufacturer should be contacted for this information.

All hazardous substances will be entered in a Register of Hazardous Substances and this register will be maintained and managed in accordance with Clause 167 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

In cases where the chemical is classed as hazardous, a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) should be available. If this is not the case, then a MSDS should be requested from the manufacturer or supplier for each chemical specified as hazardous. Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, manufacturers are obliged to provide a MSDS upon request.

IC Property Maintenance will ensure that containers holding hazardous substances used in their operations, including chemicals supplied to IC Property Maintenance's operations, are appropriately labelled and that the labels are not removed, defaced or altered. IC Property Maintenance will ensure that labels on containers are managed in accordance with Clause 163 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

Risk assessment will be conducted for those chemicals that are hazardous substances. The information on the labels and the MSDS will be used as one key means conducting the risk assessments. These risk assessments will be maintained in accordance with Clause 168 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

WORKING AT HEIGHTS

The nature of the work that IC Property Maintenance undertakes includes working from heights, for example, cleaning gutters and roof repairs.

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 necessitates that where there are risks associated with working at heights control measures must be implemented to prevent falls. IC Property Maintenance will adhere to the following clauses to ensure the health and safety of its staff and contractors when they engage in activities that require working at heights:

Clause 56 (controls relating to the prevention of falls from heights); Clause 57 (controls relating to falling objects); Clause 58 (controls relating to scaffolding); Clause 59 (controls relating to lifts); Clause 60 (controls relating to brittle or fragile roofs); Clause 61 (controls relating to building control maintenance); and Clause 64 (controls relating to electricity including work in close proximity to overhead electrical powerlines).

As per the risk management approach that IC Property Maintenance will undertake, consultation will be part of the risk assessment that will be conducted with staff or contractors intending to work at a height of 2 metres or more, and, the work will be conducted in accordance with the control outcomes in the risk assessment

MANUAL HANDLING

According to Clause 79 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001, Manual handling means “any activity requiring the use of force exerted by a person to lift, lower, push, pull, carry or otherwise move, hold or restrain any animate or inanimate object.” Clearly, then, manual handling encompasses more than just carrying or lifting

IC Property Maintenance is committed to ensuring that manual handling is conducted in such a way that all tasks are conducted in a safe manner. This means that manual handling will be approached in accordance with Clauses 80 – 81 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001. That is: risk assessments will be conducted that take into account the following: actions and movements (including repetitive actions and movements); workplace and workstation layout; duration and frequency of manual handling; location of loads and distances moved; age; clothing; etc. where manual handling are identified, IC Property Maintenance will endeavour to implement suitable and effective strategies to eliminate or control these risk.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (INCLUDING FIRST AID).

IC Property Maintenance will provide for emergencies in accordance with Clause 17 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001. This includes emergency communications, and appropriate medical treatment of injured persons (IC Property Maintenance will arrange for suitable first aid to be available for all employees, especially those on client worksites).

ELECTRICAL TESTING AND TAGGING

IC Property Maintenance understands that electricity has the potential to cause serious injury or death. Due to the nature of the work undertaken, there are a number of areas or situations that could expose staff from IC Property Maintenance – using electrical plant and equipment that could be defective or working on building sites where the electrical installations are faulty.

As part of its commitment to electrical safety, IC Property Maintenance will ensure that the electrical plant and equipment it uses is safe as a result from regular inspections, testing and tagging and maintenance. In addition to this, IC Property Maintenance will ensure that all electrical installations and repair work are carried out by a qualified electrician.

IC Property Maintenance will use the NSW WorkCover publication: Electrical Equipment Inspection Checklist (Cat No. 4409) as a guide and will comply with Clause 64 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001, including:

all electrical equipment is tested and tagged according to Australian Standard 3760 – 2001;
any electrical cord extension sets, flexible cables or fittings are located where they are not likely to be damaged (including damage by liquids) or are protected against any damage, and are not laid across passageways or access ways unless they are suitably protected; provision of adequate signs to warn of the hazards, and (if necessary) restrict access, at or near any area in which there is a risk of exposure of persons to hazards arising from electricity.

Records of all inspections, testing and maintenance of electrical equipment are maintained in accordance with Clause 65 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The control of some risks requires personal protective equipment (PPE). For instance pressure cleaning requires the use of safety glasses and gutter cleaning may require gardening gloves. IC Property Maintenance is committed to providing appropriate PPE to its staff, as this ensures their health and safety is protected during the undertaking of tasks that may be considered high risk.

Therefore IC Property Maintenance undertakes to conform to Clause 15 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 to ensure that appropriate PPE is not only provided, but maintained effectively, as well as the following: the users are informed of any limitations of the equipment; the users are provided with the instruction and training necessary to ensure that the equipment controls the risk for them; the PPE is properly maintained and is repaired or replaced as frequently as is necessary to control the risk for the user; the PPE is provided in a clean and hygienic condition to the user; the equipment is stored in a place provided by the employer for the purpose; areas in places of work where PPE must be used are clearly identified.

CONSULTATION

OHS consultation involves sharing relevant information about OHS with all staff and giving them the opportunity to express their views and to contribute to the resolution of OHS issues. It allows employers and employees to work together to seek solutions that lead to safer workplaces. IC Property Maintenance is committed to having open consultation with its staff. The consultation arrangement that IC Property Maintenance have chosen it to via an agenda item in their weekly staff meetings.

INCIDENT REPORTING

IC Property Maintenance will follow the protocol of incidents as outlined by NSW WorkCover:

<p>Incidents involving injury or illness to workers</p>	<p>If it is a serious incident involving a fatality or a serious injury or illness:</p> <p>Phone WorkCover IMMEDIATELY on 13 10 50 as an urgent investigation may be needed and notify your workers compensation insurer within 48 hours.</p> <hr/> <p>Other incidents involving an injury or illness to workers, where workers compensation is payable or may be payable, eg. time lost, medical expenses:</p> <p>Notify your workers compensation insurer within 48 hours (there is no need to notify WorkCover as the insurer advises WorkCover of these incidents).</p>
<p>Incidents involving injury or illness to non-workers at your workplace (ie. those not covered by your workers compensation eg. a visitor, customer, volunteer, student, contractor).</p>	<p>Serious incidents involving a fatality or serious injury or illness:</p> <p>Phone WorkCover IMMEDIATELY on 13 10 50 as an urgent investigation may be needed and notify WorkCover within 7 days with full notification details using the online form (www.workcover.nsw.gov.au) or phone 13 10 50.</p> <hr/> <p>Other incidents involving a non-worker where the injury or illness results in the person being unable to perform their normal activities for 7 or more days.</p> <p>Notify WorkCover within 7 days using the online form or phone 13 10 50.</p>
<p>Incidents that present a risk to health and safety at your workplace (ie. incidents where there is no injury or illness to workers or non-workers).</p>	<p>Serious incidents that are immediately life threatening but result in no injury or illness, eg: the collapse of an excavation with no injury.</p> <p>Phone WorkCover IMMEDIATELY on 13 10 50 as an urgent investigation may be needed and notify WorkCover within 7 days with full notification details using the online form or phone 13 10 50.</p> <hr/> <p>Other incidents are certain incidents that are not immediately life threatening but result in no injury or illness, eg: exposure to specific substances.</p> <p>Notify WorkCover within 7 days using the online form or phone 13 10 50.</p>