SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT (SWMS)

Business name

Document: SWMS-001 Rev 1
Prepared: 9 Nov 2026
Review by: 9 Dec 2026
Highest risk after controls: Medium

1. BUSINESS AND JOB DETAILS

Job	Trenching for services	**Start date**	9 Nov 2026
Working hours	7:00 am to 3:30 pm	**Trade**	Excavation and earthworks

2. HIGH RISK CONSTRUCTION WORK COVERED BY THIS SWMS

	Risk of a person falling more than 2 metres		Work on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines
	Work on a telecommunication tower		Work on or near energised electrical installations or services
	Demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing or related to its physical integrity		Work in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
	Likely to involve disturbing asbestos		Work involving tilt-up or precast concrete elements
	Structural alterations or repairs that require temporary support to prevent collapse		Work on, in or next to a road, railway, shipping lane or other traffic corridor in use by traffic other than pedestrians
	Work in or near a confined space	**YES**	Work in an area with movement of powered mobile plant
	Work in or near a shaft or trench with an excavated depth greater than 1.5 metres		Work in an area with artificial extremes of temperature
	Work in or near a tunnel		Work in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning
	Use of explosives		Diving work
	Work on or near pressurised gas distribution mains or piping		

3. JOB STEPS, HAZARDS AND CONTROLS

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
1	Get BYDA plans, then locate and mark services on the ground	Hitting underground services Gas and fuel lines	**Extreme** **Possible / Catastrophic**	1.1 Keep machine buckets well clear of marked services and use a spotter. [Isolate] 1.2 Scan the area with a cable locator before digging and mark services on the ground. [Engineering] 1.3 Hand dig or vacuum excavate to expose services before using a machine near them. [Engineering] 1.4 Lodge a free BYDA (Before You Dig Australia) request and get the plans before any digging. [Administrative] 1.5 Keep plans or locate tickets on site and check them again if the work	**Medium** **Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				area grows. [Administrative] 1.6 If you hit a service, stop, get everyone clear, and call the owner and emergency services. [Administrative] 1.7 Wear safety boots, gloves and hi-vis when digging. [PPE] 1.8 Isolate and purge the line before work, with the owner's approval. [Eliminate] 1.9 Lock off and tag the isolation valve. [Isolate] 1.10 Check for leaks with a gas detector before and during work, and ventilate the area. [Engineering] 1.11 Only licensed gasfitters work on gas lines. [Administrative] 1.12 Remove ignition sources: no smoking, no hot work and no sparking tools near the line. [Administrative] 1.13 Know where the shut-off valve is and what to do if a leak happens. [Administrative] 1.14 Wear safety glasses and gloves, and keep a fire extinguisher close by. [PPE]		
2	Check for overhead power lines and plan where the machine and spoil will go	Contact with overhead power lines Being hit by mobile plant Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	2.1 Ask the network operator to turn off, move or insulate the lines before work starts. [Eliminate] 2.2 Use non-conductive (fibreglass) ladders near any power lines. [Substitute] 2.3 Mark the safe distance with flags, tape or goal posts and keep all plant and people outside it. [Isolate] 2.4 Keep out of the No Go Zone set by your state and the network operator, or get written approval and a safety observer. In NSW and Qld, untrained people and plant stay at least 3 m from lines on poles up to 132 kV, 6 m up to 330 kV and 8 m above 330 kV. In Victoria the limits differ, and work within 8 m of tower lines needs a spotter and the network operator's permission. [Administrative] 2.5 Use a dedicated spotter whenever plant moves or raises anything near lines. [Administrative] 2.6 Treat all lines as live. If plant touches a line, stay in the cab and keep everyone well away. [Administrative] 2.7 Separate people and plant with barriers, exclusion zones and marked walkways. [Isolate] 2.8 Use plant with working reversing alarms, cameras and lights. [Engineering] 2.9 Have a traffic management plan showing plant routes, loading areas and pedestrian paths. [Administrative] 2.10 Use a spotter when reversing or working near people. [Administrative] 2.11 Make eye contact with the operator before going near. Stay out of the swing radius. [Administrative] 2.12 Operators hold a High Risk Work Licence where needed (for example forklift) and are trained and assessed on other plant. [Administrative] 2.13 Do a pre-start check on each machine every day and record it. [Administrative] 2.14 Wear hi-vis clothing and a hard hat. [PPE]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
3	Pothole by hand or vacuum to expose marked services	Hitting underground services Lifting and carrying heavy loads Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.2 Hazardous manual tasks	**Extreme** **Possible / Catastrophic**	3.1 Hitting underground services: see step 1 for the full controls [Administrative] 3.2 Plan to avoid carrying: have materials delivered, and old items picked up, as close as possible to where they are used. [Eliminate] 3.3 Use lighter or smaller loads: order smaller bags and shorter lengths, and drain or break down old items before moving them. [Substitute] 3.4 Use trolleys, pallet jacks, hoists, vacuum lifters or plant instead of carrying by hand. [Engineering] 3.5 Use a two-person lift for anything heavy, long or awkward. Plan the route first and clear it. [Administrative] 3.6 Keep the load close, back straight and no twisting. Turn with your feet. [Administrative] 3.7 Rotate tasks and take breaks on long lifting jobs. [Administrative] 3.8 Wear gloves for grip and safety boots to protect your feet. [PPE]	**Medium** **Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor
4	Set an exclusion zone and a spotter around the excavator	Being hit by mobile plant Road traffic Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme** **Possible / Catastrophic**	4.1 Being hit by mobile plant: see step 2 for the full controls [Administrative] 4.2 Do the work at low-traffic times, or close the road or lane with approval. [Eliminate] 4.3 Put solid barriers between the work and traffic where speeds are high, not just cones. [Isolate] 4.4 Use a truck-mounted attenuator or buffer vehicle on high speed roads. [Engineering] 4.5 Have a Traffic Management Plan. Signs and cones are set out by accredited traffic controllers to your state's rules. [Administrative] 4.6 Get a road occupancy or street works permit from the road authority before you start. [Administrative] 4.7 Park work vehicles to shield the work zone, with beacons on. [Administrative] 4.8 Wear day and night hi-vis clothing (AS/NZS 4602.1). [PPE]	**Medium** **Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
5	Dig the trench, keeping spoil back from the edge	Trench or excavation collapse Being hit by mobile plant Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306); WHS Regulation 2011, Part 5.1 Plant	**Extreme** **Possible / Catastrophic**	5.1 Use methods that keep people out of the trench, such as directional boring or working from the surface. [Eliminate] 5.2 Barricade or cover the excavation so people and plant cannot fall in. [Isolate] 5.3 Trench or excavation collapse: see step 6 for the full controls [Administrative] 5.4 Being hit by mobile plant: see step 2 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium** **Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
6	Shore, bench or batter any trench 1.5 m deep or more before anyone goes in, unless a geotechnical engineer advises in writing that it is safe	Trench or excavation collapse Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306)	**Extreme** **Possible / Catastrophic**	6.1 Use methods that keep people out of the trench, such as directional boring or working from the surface. [Eliminate] 6.2 Barricade or cover the excavation so people and plant cannot fall in. [Isolate] 6.3 Shore, bench or batter the walls of any trench 1.5 metres deep or more before anyone goes in, unless a geotechnical engineer advises in writing that the sides are safe. [Engineering] 6.4 Keep spoil, materials and plant at least 1 metre back from the edge.	**Medium** **Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
				[Engineering] 6.5 Provide a safe way in and out, such as a ladder near where people work. [Engineering] 6.6 Inspect the excavation at the start of each shift and after rain or anything that could weaken it. Record it. [Administrative] 6.7 Never work alone in a trench. Watch for water, cracks and bulging walls, and get out if you see them. [Administrative] 6.8 Wear a hard hat, hi-vis and safety boots. [PPE]		
7	Barricade the trench and provide safe ladder access, pump out any water, and keep engine and pump exhaust away from the trench	Public entering the work area Falling from a ladder Rules: WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.4 Falls	**High Possible / Major**	7.1 Fence off the site with secure temporary fencing and lock the gates when you leave. [Isolate] 7.2 Give pedestrians a safe, marked path around the work, with ramps for prams and wheelchairs. [Isolate] 7.3 Use hoarding, covered walkways or catch fans where work is above public areas. [Engineering] 7.4 Put signs at each entry: site name, contact number and "No unauthorised entry". [Administrative] 7.5 Make the site safe at the end of each day: cover holes, lower plant, remove ladders and lock tools away. [Administrative] 7.6 Use a spotter when moving plant or materials across public paths. [Administrative] 7.7 Use a platform ladder, mobile scaffold or EWP for longer jobs instead of a straight ladder. [Substitute] 7.8 Use industrial-rated ladders (AS/NZS 1892, 120 kg or more) in good condition. Remove any damaged ladder from site. [Engineering] 7.9 Set extension ladders at a 4 to 1 angle on firm, level ground, tied or footed, and reaching 1 metre above the landing. [Engineering] 7.10 Use ladders only for short, light work. Do not carry heavy or awkward loads up a ladder. [Administrative] 7.11 Keep three points of contact and your belt buckle between the stiles. Do not overreach. [Administrative] 7.12 Do not stand on the top three rungs of an extension ladder or the top step of a stepladder. [Administrative] 7.13 Check the ladder before each use: feet, rungs, stiles and locks. [Administrative] 7.14 Wear non-slip safety boots with clean soles. [PPE]	**Medium Unlikely / Major**	Site supervisor
8	Inspect the trench at the start of each shift and after rain	Trench or excavation collapse Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306)	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	8.1 Trench or excavation collapse: see step 6 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor
9	Lay services, then backfill and compact in layers	Trench or excavation collapse Hand-arm and whole-body vibration Loud noise Lifting and carrying heavy loads	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	9.1 Trench or excavation collapse: see step 6 for the full controls [Administrative] 9.2 Use low-vibration tools and methods, such as a breaker on an excavator instead of a hand jackhammer. [Substitute] 9.3 Keep tools sharp and well maintained, and use anti-vibration handles	**Medium Unlikely / Moderate**	Site supervisor

#	Job step	Hazards	Risk before	Controls	Risk after	Responsible
		Rules: WHS Regulations, Part 6.3 Division 3 (Excavation work, r.304 to 306); WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.1 Noise; WHS Regulation 2011, Part 4.2 Hazardous manual tasks		and seats. [Engineering] 9.4 Limit trigger time on high-vibration tools and rotate workers. [Administrative] 9.5 Keep hands warm and dry, and take regular breaks. [Administrative] 9.6 Use quieter tools and methods, such as cut-to-size materials, low-noise machines and battery tools. [Substitute] 9.7 Keep noisy plant away from work areas, and use screens or distance between the noise and people. [Isolate] 9.8 Keep tools maintained and use mufflers on compressors and generators. [Engineering] 9.9 Limit time on noisy tools and rotate workers. [Administrative] 9.10 Keep exposure below 85 dB(A) over 8 hours. Give hearing tests to workers who often need hearing protection. [Administrative] 9.11 Lifting and carrying heavy loads: see step 3 for the full controls [Administrative]		
10	Reinstate the surface and clean up the road and footpath	Poor housekeeping and waste Road traffic	**Extreme Possible / Catastrophic**	10.1 Order materials to size and send packaging back where you can. [Eliminate] 10.2 Put skip bins and waste chutes close to the work. [Engineering] 10.3 Clean as you go, and do a full clean up at the end of each day. [Administrative] 10.4 Keep exits, stairs and walkways clear at all times. [Administrative] 10.5 Stack materials neatly on level ground, away from edges. [Administrative] 10.6 Wear gloves when handling waste. [PPE] 10.7 Road traffic: see step 4 for the full controls [Administrative]	**Medium Rare / Catastrophic**	Site supervisor

Risk key: risk = likelihood x consequence on a 5 x 5 matrix. Low, Medium, High, Extreme. Work must not start while the risk after controls is high or above. Controls are listed in order of the hierarchy of control: Eliminate, Substitute, Isolate, Engineering, Administrative, PPE.

4. PPE AND PERMITS

Required PPE	Permits and plans
Steel cap boots Hi-vis shirt or vest Hard hat Safety glasses Hearing protection (earmuffs or plugs) Work gloves	Excavation / dig permit

5. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Plant / equipment	Licence or training needed	Inspection needed	Rego / ID	Last inspected	Certificate / report
Excavator	Verification of competency (VOC) for the machine	Operator pre-start check each shift; servicing and inspection to the			

Plant / equipment	Licence or training needed	Inspection needed	Rego / ID	Last inspected	Certificate / report
		manufacturer			
Wacker plate					
Hand tools					
Tipper or site dumper	Driver licence for the vehicle class, VOC for site dumpers				

6. CREW COMPETENCY, TICKETS AND LICENCES

Crew listed at sign-on below, with ticket and licence numbers.

7. EMERGENCY ARRANGEMENTS

Emergency number	000	**First aid kit**	In the work vehicle
Fire extinguisher	In the work vehicle	**Alarm and evacuation**	Shout for help and stop work. Make the area safe and go to the assembly point. Call the emergency number and send someone to meet the ambulance.
Reporting incidents	Notify the regulator immediately of any notifiable incident and preserve the site.		

8. IMPLEMENTING, MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE CONTROLS

How they are put in place	Controls are set up before the work starts. The person responsible explains this SWMS to every worker before they start, and workers sign to confirm they understand it.	**How they are monitored**	The person responsible checks the controls are in place before work starts each day and during the work, and talks to the workers about any problems. Stop work and review this SWMS if the work changes, the controls are not working, after any incident, or if a worker raises a concern.
When it is reviewed	Reviewed when the work or site changes, after any incident, if a control is not working, or if a worker or health and safety representative asks.		

Legal basis: Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011, Part 6.3 (Victoria: OHS Regulations 2017). A SWMS must be prepared before any high risk construction work starts. It must list the high risk work, the hazards and risks, the control measures, and how those controls will be put in place, monitored and reviewed. It must be easy for the workers to read and understand.

Keep this SWMS, and every revised version, until the high risk construction work is finished, where workers and inspectors can see it on site. If a notifiable incident happens during the work, keep it for at least 2 years after the incident.

9. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT RECORD

Rev	Date	By	What changed
1	9 Nov 2026		First issue

Rev	Date	By	What changed

10. SIGN-OFF

	Name	Signature	Date	
Prepared by				
Person responsible (supervisor)				
Principal contractor review				Accepted for use: Yes / No

By signing below, each worker confirms they were consulted on and have read and understood this SWMS, and will follow it. If the work cannot be done as this SWMS says, stop as soon as it is safe and do not restart until the SWMS is reviewed.

Name	Role / company	Tickets / licences	Inducted	Signature	Date

Name	Role / company	Tickets / licences	Inducted	Signature	Date