

SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENT

Residential & Light Commercial Fencing — Supply and Install

Victorian template. Fill in every highlighted [field], tick the high risk construction work that applies, and review every step against the actual site before work starts. Add, change or remove steps so this SWMS matches how the work will really be done.

Legal basis (Victoria)

Prepared under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) and Part 5.1 (Construction) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic). The employer or self-employed person must prepare this SWMS before the high risk construction work starts, give a copy to the principal contractor, make sure the work is done in line with it, keep it available on site for the duration of the work, and review it whenever the work changes or the controls are not working. If the work is not being done in line with this SWMS it must stop immediately (or as soon as it is safe to stop) and resume only when it is.

1. Business and job details

Business (employer / self-employed person)	[Your Business Name]	ABN	[00 000 000 000]
Contact person	[Name]	Phone / email	[0400 000 000] / [email]
Principal contractor	[Builder / head contractor name]	Site address	[Street, Suburb, VIC, Postcode]
Work activity	Removal of existing fencing, set-out, post hole excavation, concreting posts, and installing steel (e.g. Colorbond®), timber paling, post-and-rail and pool fencing, and gates.	Start date / duration	[dd/mm/yyyy] / [x days]
SWMS number / version	[VIC-FEN-01] / Version 1.0	Date prepared	[dd/mm/yyyy]
Prepared by	[Name, position]	Consulted with (workers / HSR)	[Names]
Reviewed by principal contractor	[Name, signature, date]	Approved by (business)	[Name, signature, date]

2. High risk construction work covered by this SWMS

Tick every category that applies to this job. The right-hand column shows categories that commonly apply to this trade — they must still be checked against the actual site.

Tick	High risk construction work category (OHS Regulations 2017 (Vic))	Common for this trade
☐	Work where there is a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres	
☐	Work on or adjacent to a road, railway or other traffic corridor in use by traffic other than pedestrians	

Tick	High risk construction work category (OHS Regulations 2017 (Vic))	Common for this trade
☐	Work in or near water or other liquid that involves a risk of drowning	
☐	Work in an area where there is movement of powered mobile plant	✓ Likely
☐	Structural alterations or repairs that require temporary support to prevent collapse	
☐	Work in an area with artificial extremes of temperature	
☐	Work on or near energised electrical installations or services	✓ Likely
☐	Work in or near a shaft or trench with an excavated depth greater than 1.5 metres	
☐	Work on or near pressurised gas distribution mains or piping	✓ Likely
☐	Demolition of an element of a structure that is load-bearing or otherwise related to its physical integrity	
☐	Work in or near a confined space	
☐	Work on or near chemical, fuel or refrigerant lines	
☐	Work on tilt-up or precast concrete elements	
☐	Work on a telecommunications tower	
☐	Diving work	
☐	Work that involves disturbing or removing asbestos	✓ Likely
☐	Work in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere	
☐	Work that involves the use of explosives	
☐	Work in or near a tunnel	

3. PPE, plant and qualifications

PPE required	Plant, tools and equipment	Licences, training and permits
- Safety boots - High-visibility clothing - Safety glasses (AS/NZS 1337) - Hard hat where there is overhead work or a site rule - Broad-brim hat / sun protection, SPF 50+ sunscreen - Cut-resistant gloves; nitrile-coated gloves for concrete - Face shield for grinding - Hearing protection - P2 respirator (cement, timber and cutting dust)	- Hand auger / petrol post-hole auger [make/model] - Mini loader or excavator with auger (if used) [make/model] - Angle grinder with guard, nibblers / shears, drop saw - Drill / impact driver, rivet gun, nail gun - Concrete mixer or wheelbarrow, levels, string lines - Generator with RCD protection [if used] - Post puller / post jack, trolley, trailer	- Construction induction card (white card) — all workers - Site-specific induction by the principal contractor - High risk work licence (issued by WorkSafe Victoria) for any licensed plant or activity - First aid certificate — at least one person on site - Operator competency for any mobile plant used - BYDA plans obtained and on site - Asbestos awareness training - Test and tag records for electrical equipment

4. Risk rating matrix

Likelihood ↓ / Consequence →	Minor (first aid)	Moderate (medical treatment)	Major (lost time / serious injury)	Catastrophic (death / permanent disability)
Almost certain	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Low	Medium	High	Extreme
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High
Rare	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

Risk is rated before controls (initial) and after controls (residual). Controls follow the hierarchy of control: eliminate, substitute, isolate, engineering, administrative, then PPE. Work must not proceed if the residual risk is High or Extreme.

5. Job steps, hazards and control measures

Job step	Hazards	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk	Responsible
1. Site arrival, induction and set-up	- Unfamiliar site hazards and other trades - Members of the public, residents, children and pets - Overhead powerlines - Vehicle and trailer movements, reversing - Poor access / egress	High	- Complete the principal contractor's site induction; hold a toolbox talk and have every worker sign on to this SWMS - Check the site for hazards not covered by this SWMS (other trades, services, unstable ground, the asbestos register for buildings built before 2003); stop and review the SWMS if found - Overhead powerlines (Victorian No Go Zones): keep plant, ladders, scaffold and long materials outside the No Go Zone — 3.0 m from distribution lines (up to 66 kV) and 8.0 m from transmission lines. A registered spotter is required in the Spotter Zone (3.0–6.4 m for distribution lines; 8.0–10.0 m for transmission lines). Written permission from the network operator is required before any work inside the No Go Zone - Barricade or sign the work area to keep the public, residents and other trades out - Use a spotter when reversing vehicles and trailers; park clear of site access ways - Confirm amenities are available (toilet, drinking water, hand washing) and the first aid kit and fire extinguisher location	Low	Supervisor / all workers
2. Locate underground services	- Striking electrical cables — electrocution, burns - Striking gas mains — fire, explosion - Damage to water, sewer, stormwater and telecommunications assets	Extreme	- Lodge a Before You Dig Australia (BYDA) enquiry before work and keep current plans on site - Ask the client about private services not shown on BYDA (garden lighting, pool and spa lines, gas to BBQs and heaters, irrigation, outbuildings); use a qualified service locator if unsure - Mark services on the ground with paint or pegs - Hand dig or vacuum excavate (pothole) to expose services inside the clearance zone set by the asset owner — no mechanical digging there - If a service is struck: STOP, move everyone clear, do not touch damaged cables or pipes, call 000 if there is danger and notify the asset owner	Medium	Supervisor

Job step	Hazards	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk	Responsible
3. Removal of existing fence	- Asbestos in old fibro (AC sheet) fencing - CCA-treated pine dust and splinters - Collapsing panels / posts - Rusty nails, sharp sheet edges - Manual handling of heavy old posts	Extreme	- Treat flat or corrugated fibro fencing as asbestos. Do not cut, break, drill or water-blast it. Assume materials in buildings built before 2003 may contain asbestos until confirmed otherwise (asbestos register, or sample tested by a NATA-accredited lab). If found or suspected: STOP, isolate the area and inform the principal contractor. Unlicensed removal is only allowed for up to 10 m² of non-friable asbestos (and no more than 1 hour in any 7 days); anything more, or any friable asbestos, must be removed by a WorkSafe-licensed removalist. Dispose of asbestos waste only at an EPA Victoria authorised site - Brace or prop sections before cutting fixings; work from the free end; keep others clear of the fall zone - Cut-resistant gloves; de-nail timber as it is removed - Use a post jack / fence post puller rather than rocking posts by hand; two-person lift for heavy items - P2 respirator when cutting treated timber; never burn CCA timber	Medium	All workers
4. Material handling	- Steel sheets acting as sails in wind - Sprains and back strain (posts, sheets, 20 kg bags) - Sharp sheet edges - Materials falling from trailer	High	- Stop handling sheets in strong winds (site limit: gusts above [40] km/h); stack flat and weighted - Team lift long sheets and rails; trolley for concrete bags; loads close to the body - Unload on level ground clear of access paths; check load restraint - Cut-resistant gloves	Low	All workers
5. Post hole excavation	- Auger kick-back / torque reaction — wrist, arm and back injury - Entanglement in rotating auger - Mobile plant striking people or structures - Open holes — falls, trips, risk to children and pets - Noise, exhaust fumes, fuel	High	- Torque-arm or two-person auger for larger holes; operator trained; follow manufacturer's instructions - No loose clothing, jewellery or long hair near auger; stop engine before clearing spoil - Plant operated only by competent operators; pre-start check recorded; exclusion zone of at least [3] m; spotter near people - Cover or barricade open holes at the end of each day and whenever unattended - Hearing protection; refuel with engine off and cool; extinguisher on site	Low	Operator / supervisor
6. Concreting posts	- Cement burns and dermatitis - Cement dust - Posts falling while concrete sets	High	- Nitrile-coated gloves, long sleeves, safety glasses; wash skin promptly; eyewash available - Open and pour bags low and downwind; P2 respirator if dusty - Brace posts until concrete has cured	Low	All workers

Job step	Hazards	Initial risk	Control measures	Residual risk	Responsible
7. Cutting steel, timber and rails	- Grinder / saw kick-back and lacerations - Flying swarf, sparks, hot metal — eye injury, burns, fire - Noise - Timber dust - Electrical faults in tools and leads	High	- Use nibblers or shears on steel sheet where possible; grinders only with guards fitted - Safety glasses and face shield when grinding; hearing protection; P2 for timber - Cut away from dry grass and combustibles; extinguisher on hand; check Total Fire Ban days (CFA) - Test and tag tools and leads; RCD on generators and outlets - Brush swarf off Colorbond® sheets straight away to prevent rust staining	Low	All workers
8. Installing rails, panels, palings and gates	- Power tool injuries (drivers, rivet guns, nail guns) - Crush injuries hanging heavy gates - Pinch points - Sloping or uneven ground	Medium	- Hands clear of nail gun firing line; disconnect air / remove battery to clear jams - Two people to hang gates; support gates on blocks while fixing hinges - Gloves when handling sheets and rails - Step fences on slopes as planned; keep footing clear of spoil	Low	All workers
9. Pool barriers (if applicable)	- Non-compliant pool barrier — child drowning risk - Removing an existing pool barrier leaves the pool unprotected	High	- Build pool barriers to AS 1926.1 and the Victorian building regulations; confirm gate self-closing and latching before handover - Never leave a pool without a barrier: install temporary pool fencing before removing the old barrier and keep it in place until the new one is complete - Remind the owner the barrier must be registered with council and inspected	Low	Supervisor
10. Clean-up and handover	- Offcuts, swarf, screws — cuts and punctures to residents and pets - Wrong disposal of CCA timber or asbestos - Unsecured panels or gates	Medium	- Sweep and use a magnetic sweeper along the fence line - Dispose of treated timber and asbestos only at an EPA-authorised facility; never burn - Check that every panel and gate is secure; walk the fence line with the client	Low	Supervisor
11. Weather and working environment	- Heat stress, sunburn and UV exposure - Strong wind - Storms and lightning - Wet or slippery surfaces - Cold and fatigue	High	- Plan heavy or exposed work for cooler parts of the day; shade, cool drinking water and rest breaks provided; workers watch each other for signs of heat illness - Broad-brim hat or hard hat brim, long sleeves, SPF 50+ sunscreen, UV-rated safety glasses - Stop work at height, with sheet materials or with cranes / plant in strong wind; stop all outdoor work in lightning or heavy rain - Footwear with good grip; clear water and mud from access paths and work platforms	Low	Supervisor / all workers

6. Emergency information

Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance)	000
Nearest hospital with emergency department	[Name and address]
First aider on site	[Name, phone]
First aid kit / fire extinguisher location	[e.g. ute tray, site office]
Electricity faults and damage (network for this area)	[CitiPower 13 12 80 / Powercor 13 24 12 / Jemena 131 626 / United Energy 132 099 / AusNet 13 17 99]
Gas leaks and damage	[Gas distributor for this area — see site gas meter or bill]
Victorian Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26
WorkSafe Victoria — notify incidents	13 23 60 (notifiable incidents must be reported immediately)
Principal contractor site contact	[Name, phone]

In an emergency: make the area safe, give first aid, call 000 if needed and notify the supervisor and principal contractor. Notifiable incidents must be reported to WorkSafe Victoria immediately by phone (13 23 60), followed by written notice within 48 hours, and the site must not be disturbed until WorkSafe says so (except to help an injured person or make the site safe).

7. Consultation and worker sign-on

By signing below I confirm this SWMS has been explained to me, I understand it and I will follow it. If the work or site conditions change I will stop and the SWMS will be reviewed before work continues.

Name	Company	Signature	Date	White card no.

8. Review record

Date	Reason for review / changes made	Reviewed by	Signature

SAMPLE