WHS DOCUMENTS & TEMPLATES

DOC-CRM-PLAN · Critical Risk Management Plan

Product Overview

For: Australian businesses with work that could kill or seriously injure someone: owners, officers and senior managers, operations managers and supervisors, and the WHS and risk advisers who run critical risk management

Version 1.0 · 15 November 2026

SAMPLE

A complete critical risk management system for Australian businesses: a plain-English plan and policy, with the tools to find the risks that could kill, map them with bowties, choose and define the critical controls, verify them in the field and act when one fails, aligned to the model WHS laws, ISO 31000:2018 and AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018.

Most fatal incidents happen when one of a small number of controls was missing or did not work on the day. Critical risk management puts the effort where the consequences are worst: find the risks that could kill or seriously injure, choose the few controls that prevent them or limit the harm, write down what working means for each, and prove in the field that they are working.

This plan sets up that system across the whole business, in eleven elements: identifying credible catastrophic events and material unwanted events, a critical risk register that tiers and ranks each one on the same risk matrix as the WHS risk register, bowtie analysis, selecting critical controls, performance standards and failure modes, control owners, a critical control verification program scored Pass, Non-conformance or Fail, reporting to leaders and officers, responding to control failures as high potential incidents, change and contractors, and review.

It is written once for the whole of Australia, to the model WHS laws, with notes on how Victoria, Western Australia and the Commonwealth (Comcare) differ. It is aligned to ISO 31000:2018 and AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018, and follows the broad approach of ICMM's critical control management guidance, with a cross-reference to each. It is not certification.

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Critical Risk Management Plan

How the business finds its critical risks, chooses and defines the critical controls, proves they work, and acts when they do not

Document number		**Version**	
Plan owner (critical risk coordinator)		**Approved by**	
Date approved		**Next review date**	

How to use this plan

- This is **[Company name]**'s operating plan for critical risk management. Each part says what the arrangement is for, what we do step by step, who does it, the tools and records we use, how we check it is working, and when we review it.
- It is about a few risks: the ones that could kill or seriously injure someone, or cause a catastrophic event. Every other risk stays in our WHS risk register.
- The tools named in each part are in folders 03 to 06. Fill in every placeholder in square brackets, delete what does not apply, and add your own arrangements.

1 Purpose, scope and objectives

Most fatal incidents happen when one of a small number of controls was missing, or did not work, on the day. This plan sets out how **[Company name]** finds the risks that could kill or seriously injure someone, chooses the few controls that matter most for each, writes down what working means, names who keeps each one working, proves in the field that they are working, and acts every time one is not. Critical risk management identifies the critical risks and maps them with bowties. Critical control management makes sure the controls on those bowties hold.

This plan covers: **[Scope of the plan]**. It applies at **[Sites covered]**, to our workers, contractors, labour hire workers and visitors, and to work done for us by others. It sits under our WHS management system and uses its risk register, consultation arrangements, incident reporting and management review. It does not replace them, and it never lowers what they require.

Our objectives	How we measure it (part 13)
No one killed or seriously injured, and no catastrophic event, from a critical risk	Fatalities, serious injuries and high potential incidents on a critical risk
Every critical risk identified, ranked and owned	Critical risks in the register with an owner and a confirmed tier: 100%
Every critical risk mapped with a bowtie built with the people who do the work	Bowties walked in the field, by the deadline the tier sets
Every critical control defined, owned and verified on schedule	Critical controls with an approved performance standard and an owner; verifications done on time
Every failure acted on the same way, and learned from	Fails escalated within 24 hours; investigations started within 7 days; actions closed with a Pass

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Bowtie Analysis Template

Element 3: one critical risk on one page: threats, preventing controls, the unwanted event, mitigating controls and consequences

Critical risk reference (register)		**Critical risk owner**	
Facilitator		**Workshop date**	
Participants (names and roles)		**Walked in the field (date, by whom)**	

How to read it

- Read it left to right: how the event can happen, and if it does, how bad it could get.
- A visual risk tool. It shows you how an unwanted event can happen and, if it does happen, how it can escalate to its maximum potential consequence.
- Mitigating controls can be critical too, especially when they are the last line of defence. They are just as critical as prevention, and must be resourced, practised and verified.

Part	Where it sits	What it is
Hazard	Above the centre	The thing with the potential to cause harm
Causes	Left	What could lead directly to the unwanted event
Preventive controls	Left, between causes and event	Stop the unwanted event from happening
Unwanted event	Centre	The point where control is lost
Mitigating controls	Right, between event and consequences	Limit the harm once the event has happened
Consequences	Right	What could result, up to the worst credible outcome

Rules

- Name a specific event, not a vague one: 'fire in chemical storage area', not 'fire'.
- Match each control to the cause or consequence it acts on.
- Call out the actual control, not the document that manages it.
- Build it at the same level of detail your investigations reach.
- Focus on the causes (threats) and consequences (impacts) rather than attempting to control the overarching hazard.
- Up to two controls are drawn on each line. If a line needs more, add a row, and ask whether each one is really a control (Critical Control Selection Checklist).

Tick Critical for each control the Critical Control Selection Checklist selects. Page 2 is the blank bowtie; page 3 is a composite worked example to show the level of detail; page 4 lists every control, critical or not, and the gaps.

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Generic CCV Form Template

Element 7: proof, not assumption, that one critical control is working, scored Pass, Fail or Non-conformance

CCV number		**Critical control (register reference and title)**	
Critical risk and unwanted event		**Preventing or mitigating; threat or consequence (T1, C1)**	
Location		**Work being done at the time**	
Verifier		**Date and time**	

Before you start

- Verify in the field, at the time and place the work happens, against the control's performance standard. Reading the standard, the procedure or a training record is not verification.
- Build the checklist from the performance standard: what working looks like, under each of the five checks. Keep the checks the control needs; delete rows that do not apply.
- Non-conformance is offered only on administrative items: records, training currency, plan and review dates, things that would not on their own cause the unwanted event straight away. Every item that checks the control is physically there and working is Pass or Fail only.

A What the control must achieve

Its purpose, and the performance requirements, from the performance standard

B The checklist

How to score	Meaning
Pass	You saw it in place and working, today. A Pass is something you saw, not something you remembered or were told.
Fail	It is not in place, it does not work, or it is bypassed. On an administrative item, use Fail only when what you found means the control itself is not there.
Non-conformance (NC)	Administrative items only. The control is in place and working, but a supporting element is missing, late or incomplete: a record, a training date, a review date. Fix it as an action.

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Critical Risk Management Plan

END OF THE FREE SAMPLE

This sample shows a few pages, so you can judge the layout and the quality. A complete critical risk management system for Australian businesses: a plain-English plan and policy, with the tools to find the risks that could kill, map them with bowties, choose and define the critical controls, verify them in the field and act when one fails, aligned to the model WHS laws, ISO 31000:2018 and AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018.

What the full product contains

- **Critical Risk Management Plan, in plain English, with eleven elements from identification to review, a policy to sign and a roles and accountabilities guide**
  02_PLAN/ (.docx and .pdf)
- **Australian law cross-reference (model WHS laws, Victoria, WA, Comcare), and a standards cross-reference (ISO 31000, AS/NZS ISO 45001, ICMM guidance)**
  02_PLAN/ (.docx and .pdf)
- **Broad-brush risk assessment workshop guide and record, Excel critical risk register on the owner's risk matrix (tier and rank), bowtie analysis template with a drawn bowtie and a worked example, and bowtie workshop guide**
  03_IDENTIFY/ (.xlsx, .docx and .pdf)
- **Critical control selection checklist, performance standard template, control owner accountability statement, and Excel critical controls register**
  04_CONTROLS/ (.xlsx, .docx and .pdf)
- **Excel CCV program and schedule, generic CCV form (Pass, Fail, Non-conformance) and field leadership observation guide**
  05_VERIFY/ (.xlsx, .docx and .pdf)
- **Excel critical risk dashboard and lessons learned register, officers' critical risk report, and control failure response and investigation trigger procedure**
  06_REPORT/ (.xlsx, .docx and .pdf)
- **Setup guide and 90-day implementation plan; Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information**
  01_START_HERE/ (.docx and .pdf)

Formats

- Word (.docx), editable, with your logo and business name in the header
- Excel (.xlsx), editable, with dropdowns and formulas (no macros)
- PDF copies of the Word documents, for printing blank
- Delivered as a single ZIP download

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