

DRILLING, CORING & CUTTING - SAFETY PRACTICE



OVERVIEW

This Safety Practice describes the requirements for safely managing drilling, coring, cutting, chasing, grinding, and similar construction activities on Perkins Builders projects.

The purpose of this Safety Practice is to ensure these activities are planned, risk assessed, and controlled to prevent injury, structural damage, exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) and other hazardous substances, contact with existing services, and other risks associated with mechanical processing of construction materials.

Hazardous Area is an area where flammable gas, vapour, mist or combustible dust may be present in quantities that could create an explosive atmosphere. Where work is undertaken in a hazardous area, it must be identified, risk assessed and managed in accordance with the applicable AS/NZS 60079 series, client requirements and legislative obligations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Project Manager	Ensure drilling, coring, and cutting activities are adequately planned, risk assessed, and resourced. Ensure engineering approvals are obtained where required and project requirements are communicated.
Site Manager / Supervisor	Ensure permits, risk assessments, and service location checks are completed before work commences. Verify appropriate control measures are implemented and monitor compliance throughout the works.
HSEQ Team	Provide advice on legislative requirements, permits, respirable crystalline silica (RCS) controls, hazardous atmospheres, and safe work practices. Support inspections, audits, and incident investigations.
Workers, Subcontractors and Plant Operators	Comply with permit, risk assessment, and site requirements. Use approved equipment and required PPE, follow safe work methods, and report hazards, defects, incidents, or uncontrolled dust immediately.

1. RISK ASSESSMENT

Guidance:

The Site Manager must identify the hazards associated with all drilling, coring, and cutting activities.

Suitable control measures must be identified before any drilling, coring, and cutting work can commence on site.

Control measures must consider:

- Identification of services in area
- Plant and equipment isolation.
- Residues of flammable materials and testing for flammable gasses
- Suppression and containment or protection from silica and dusts, including concrete dust.
- Tools, equipment and materials to be used for the work, including power tools with vacuum systems for dust collection that utilise a disposable bag.
- Access and escape routes refer to [Emergency Management Procedure 90.01.12](#)
- Assessment of structural integrity of area to be cut.
- Operator Competency for all Quick Cut saw operations. (such as RIISAM204E - Operate Small Plant and Equipment provided by a registered RTO)
- Any other hazard which may apply to a particular task or location; or
- Personal Protective Equipment to be used. Minimum P2 respiratory protection to be used.

Where work is undertaken in or near a hazardous area, verify the area is safe by identifying hazardous atmospheres, isolating ignition sources where practicable, and completing atmospheric testing where required by the risk assessment or client requirements.

The Worker will be required to provide a JHA/SWMS via Hammertech which outlines methods to conduct drilling, coring, and cutting safely.

The Site Manager will ensure that workers are complying with control measures specified in the JHA/SWMS.

A Drilling / Coring / Cutting Permit (Form 981/Hammertech) is required for all drilling, coring, and cutting activities.

The Permit must be completed by the worker intending to conduct the drilling, coring, or cutting works using Hammertech and approved by the Site Manager before commencing any works.

When drilling, coring, and cutting works are completed the area is to be tidied up and all rubbish, dusts, slurry and all open penetrations, etc are barricaded and/or made safe. When cleaning up dust, it must be done in a manner to not become airborne. A vacuum system with a disposable bag should be used.

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2. STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY

Guidance:

The Site Manager must ensure that structural integrity of a structure is not impacted adversely by any drilling / coring / cutting works.

Drilling, coring, and cutting of all reinforced slabs must be authorised by a structural engineer prior to commencing. Where drilling, coring, and cutting works have been identified on structural drawings this shall serve as authorisation.

Where drilling, coring, and cutting works have not been identified on drawings, written authorisation must be obtained from a structural engineer.

3. EXISTING SERVICES

Guidance:

Any potential services in the area must be identified via the use of as-con drawings or scanning reports available. Where services have been identified these must be marked with spray paint or other suitable methods. Services should be isolated where they cross any proposed route or within very close proximity to the route.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Guidance:

Appropriate personnel protective equipment (PPE) will be used when completing drilling / coring / cutting works. PPE shall include safety helmet, safety glasses, gloves to improve grip and reduce force and vibration, steel capped boots, and hearing protection. Where hazardous dusts or fumes cannot be eliminated, a minimum P2 dust mask and or other respiratory protection must be worn. Where fumes are generated, the correct filter must be selected for the fume / vapour.

(Remember, dust can drift and impact other workers in your vicinity and controls MUST be implemented to ensure other workers do not become exposed to any airborne dust.)

5. EMPLOYEE HEALTH

Guidance:

Works that create vibration will be adequately controlled via job rotation, reduced exposures times and use of best available equipment to complete the task. Vibration gloves maybe utilised depending on the risk assessment outcome.

Hearing damage will be controlled via use of adequate hearing protection, job rotation, reduced exposure times and use of best available equipment to complete the task.

Respiratory damage will be controlled using appropriate ventilation equipment and or wearing of P2 dust masks to prevent inhaling of all dusts or fumes. If using a wet cut system, all slurry is to be collected and removed safely.

Drilling equipment, cutting saws and grinders can be fitted with a vacuum bag catchment type system, however as the bag fills, efficiency may reduce. Ensure the bag is disposed of regularly. The operator is responsible for cleaning up any dust (including slurry) using a safe method after the work activity/task is completed.

It is important to ensure that when emptying any dust collection device, that you do not expose yourself or any other person to the dust.

6. TRAINING

Guidance:

Perkins Builders will provide Site Managers with training on drilling / coring / cutting processes where required.

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- [Emergency Management Procedure 90.01.12](#)

REFERENCES

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- Work Health and Safety Act 2020
- Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (*Part 8 – Hazardous Chemicals and Crystalline Silica Substances*)
- Code of Practice (WA) – Concrete and Masonry Cutting and Drilling 2019
- Guide – Working with crystalline silica substances.
- AS/NZS 60079.10.1 – Explosive Atmospheres – Classification of Areas – Explosive Gas Atmospheres (*where applicable*)
- AS/NZS 60079.10.2 – Explosive Atmospheres – Classification of Areas – Explosive Dust Atmospheres (*where applicable*)

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