

Working with Asbestos, Lead and Silica

WHS-PR-018

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1 About the Document

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to ensure that the ARTC working with asbestos, lead or silica fatal and severe risk standard is implemented in a consistent manner and that the associated risks are minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

1.2 Scope

In scope	Out of scope
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All work activities that involve the potential exposure to asbestos, lead or silica during ARTC operations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All other work activities that involve the potential exposure to asbestos, lead or silica not related to the ARTC business operations.

1.3 Intended user

The intended users of this document are:

- Facility Managers
 - Project Managers.
 - Authorised rail industry workers.
 - Licensed asbestos removalists.
 - ARTC Area Managers.
 - ARTC Safety and Environment Team.
-

2 Planning works

2.1 Identify known asbestos or lead materials

Before starting work, known asbestos or lead locations must be checked via Geographic Information Systems (GIS), surveys and asbestos registers.

This can be done using the tools listed in the table below:

Document	Location
Asbestos Register	Asbestos in buildings and structures
	Asbestos structures or assets on track
ARTC Contaminated Land Database ARTCMap	Asbestos, lead and other contaminants in soil

Where conducting work on a site not controlled or owned by ARTC, the client or owner must be asked to provide the location of known asbestos or lead.

2.2 On-site identification of materials

Asbestos or lead containing materials can also be identified on-site through warning labels and signs. Examples seen below:



3 Identifying Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM)

3.1 Asbestos registers requirements

All known Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM) for ARTC owned facilities, assets or structures must be documented in asbestos registers.

The exception to this is if the workplace was constructed after 31st December 2003 and no asbestos has been identified.

As a minimum, an asbestos register must contain:

- The date it was found.
- It's location.
- The type of asbestos containing material (ACM).
- The condition of the asbestos containing material (ACM).
- Priority risk rating.
- Decisions on the management of the material.

Asbestos registers must be made accessible to any person who conducts work at the workplace, or asset.

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3.2 Apply asbestos priority risk rating

Once identified as asbestos, ARTC apply a priority risk rating to make informed decisions on the best action to take. This can be seen in the table below:

Priority risk rating	Description
P1	<p>Products or materials pose immediate or elevated risk to workers, or public in its current state.</p> <p>The material is either damaged, potentially exposed to damage, or is in poor condition.</p> <p>Access must be restricted to the area. Material should be removed using a licensed asbestos removalist as soon as possible. If removal is not practical, other strategies must be implemented as soon as possible.</p>
P2	<p>Material has the potential for deterioration or disturbance.</p> <p>Asbestos is presumed by the assessor but has not been tested by a laboratory.</p> <p>Removal should be undertaken as soon as practical, but the risk of exposure is low. If removal is not practical, other strategies must be implemented.</p>
P3	<p>Products or materials pose a low risk to workers, or the public if left undisturbed.</p> <p>The material is confirmed as asbestos but in good condition. Changes in condition may require a change of rating.</p> <p>Material is unlikely to change, unless disturbed during maintenance, refurbishment or demolition.</p>
P4	<p>Material is in a non-friable form and in good condition.</p> <p>Materials pose a negligible risk to workers or the public if undisturbed.</p> <p>Materials are not easily accessible for inspection purposes with low risk of damage. Materials has not been tested, but presumed asbestos by a competent person. Has been visually inspected as being in good condition.</p> <p>Treat as Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) and implement controls to monitor and protect from damage.</p>
P5	<p>No asbestos detected or present. No action required.</p> <p>Asbestos that has been removed will be recorded as this category.</p>

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3.3 Review and maintain asbestos registers

An asbestos register must be reviewed if:

- New asbestos containing material (ACM) is found.
- Any physical changes occur to the asbestos containing material (ACM) (i.e., damage, removal, sealed, etc.).

Asbestos records and locations must not be deleted from the register. The asbestos register will be updated to include:

- The volume of what type of asbestos has been removed.
- The asbestos removalist who conducted the removal.
- A link to the relevant clearance certificate.

Each different database or register will be maintained by the roles seen in the table below:

Document	Location	Responsible for register
Asbestos Register	Asbestos in buildings and structures	Property Teams
	Asbestos structures or assets on track	Local Area Managers
ARTC Contaminated Land Database	Asbestos in soil	Business Unit Safety and Environment Team
	Naturally occurring asbestos	Business Unit Safety and Environment Team

3.4 Unexpected asbestos material is found

If an employee discovers unexpected asbestos materials, steps must be taken to make sure the area safe and further assessment by a competent person is conducted.



NOTE: For more details, refer to [COR-WI-004 Unexpected Finds](#).

3.5 Confirming whether materials contain asbestos

To confirm whether materials contain asbestos, a competent assessor must be used to:

- Undertake a site survey; and/or
- Sample the material and send to an accredited laboratory for testing.

The assessor will be arranged by the person responsible for the register.

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3.6 Who is a competent asbestos assessor

A competent asbestos assessor is a person with one or more of the following qualifications:

- Occupational hygienist.
- Licensed asbestos assessors.
- Asbestos removal supervisors.
- Individuals who have a statement of attainment in the unit competency for asbestos assessors - CPCCE5001 - Conduct air monitoring and clearance inspections for asbestos removal work.

3.7 Engaging asbestos assessor to conduct surveys

To ensure consistency in site asbestos surveys, all consultant asbestos assessors must be provided with a detailed scope of work, including the asbestos register specification.



NOTE: Provide asbestos assessors with [WHS-FM-019 Asbestos Register Document Specification](#).

4 Managing Asbestos Containing Materials

4.1 Management of known asbestos containing material

Once Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) has been identified, decisions need to be made regarding how that material will be managed.

Based on the priority risk rating, management controls must be implemented in the order of preference as seen in the table below:

Action	Description
1. Leave Undisturbed	<p>Asbestos in a stable condition and not likely to be damaged.</p> <p>The material must be clearly labelled with an appropriate warning sign according to AS 1319 <i>Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment</i>. Examples are seen below:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">   </div>
2. Remove	<p>Removal of asbestos must be performed under controlled conditions and performed by a licensed asbestos removalist.</p> <p>The removal of asbestos is considered appropriate when the asbestos product is deteriorated or is at risk of being disturbed.</p>
3. Enclose	<p>Enclosure involves installing a barrier between the asbestos material and adjacent areas. This attempts to prevent damage to the asbestos.</p> <p>If this control is selected, a documented safe work practice is required, or a competent asbestos removalist engaged to conduct the works.</p>
4. Encapsulate or seal	<p>Encapsulation refers to the coating of the outer surface of the asbestos material by the application of some form of sealant compound.</p> <p>Encapsulation or sealing helps protect the asbestos from mechanical damage and is designed to reduce the risk of exposure by preventing the release of airborne asbestos fibres.</p> <p>The use of encapsulation or sealing has limited application and is not considered to be an acceptable alternative to removing damaged asbestos materials.</p>

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4.2 Asbestos management plan requirements

Business units or projects with known asbestos must have an asbestos management plan.

The asbestos management plan must include:

- Identification of the Asbestos Containing Material (ACM), with linkages to the relevant asbestos registers.
- Decisions about the management of asbestos at the workplace.
- Details on managing events or emergencies related to asbestos.
- Instructions for asbestos related work.
- Specific responsibilities and actions for managing the asbestos, including arranging inspections, engaging approved asbestos assessor, engaging approved asbestos removal contractors.



NOTE: Use [WHS-FM-028 Asbestos Management Plan Template](#).

4.3 Approving and maintaining asbestos management plan

The following roles are responsible for maintaining and approving the asbestos management plan:

Situation	Responsible party
ARTC owned, or leased property e.g., buildings and structures	Property Managers
Asbestos structures or assets on track	Local Area Managers
Project or client related	Project Manager

4.4 Review of the asbestos management plan

The asbestos management plan must be reviewed as a minimum, every 5 years.

It must also be reviewed if:

- The plan is no longer adequate for managing asbestos e.g., an exposure event occurred.
- A Health & Safety Representatives (HSR) requests a review.
- Roles or organisational structure changes.

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4.5 Regular inspection requirements

Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) must be inspected regularly, according to the table below:

Priority	Inspection requirements
P1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual inspection Conducted by competent asbestos assessor. Refer to 3.6 Who is a competent asbestos assessor
P2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 2 years Conducted by competent asbestos assessor. Refer to 3.6 Who is a competent asbestos assessor
P3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 3 years Conducted by competent asbestos assessor. Refer to 3.6 Who is a competent asbestos assessor
P4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every 3 years Conducted by competent asbestos assessor. Refer to 3.6 Who is a competent asbestos assessor
P5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not required

4.6 Asbestos in soil

The [ARTC Contaminated Land Database](#) contains known areas where asbestos exist in soil.

Where known ground disturbance works a planned, a site management plan must be developed to outline the controls required.



NOTE: Where asbestos is found in soils, refer to [COR-PR-019 Contaminated Land Management Procedure](#).

4.7 Natural occurring asbestos

Workers may come across natural occurring asbestos within the NSW rail corridor.

Work in these areas must have controls put in place. Controls may include:

- Preventing, or reducing excavation in the area.
- Using sealed cabin excavation equipment, (air-conditioned cabins with filtered air).
- Using wetting methods on the ground surface.



NOTE: Known sites with natural occurring asbestos are documented [ARTC Contaminated Land Database](#) and in displayed in [ARTCMap](#).

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4.8 Managing ARTC building and facilities

Due to the varied ownership and leasing arrangements of buildings and facilities, asbestos containing material (ACM) will be managed according to the table below:

Situation	Requirements
ARTC owned buildings and structures	ARTC must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an asbestos register. • Take management action to minimise risk of exposure. • Regularly inspect, using competent person.
ARTC buildings leased to a tenant	ARTC to provide the tenant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the asbestos register. • Notice for asbestos inspections to be undertaken to allow access to the building. ARTC to undertake inspections according to the asbestos register using an asbestos assessor.
Buildings leased by ARTC	ARTC must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a copy of the asbestos register from the landlord. • Conduct an inspection prior to occupation to confirm the asbestos register matches the condition of the building.
Land owned by ARTC, land leased to tenant, tenant owns building	ARTC must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request a copy of the asbestos register from the building owner.

5 Manage the removal of asbestos containing material

5.1 Manage Asbestos removal contractor

All asbestos removal must be completed by licenced contractor.

Prior to work, the Contractor must:

- Provide a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) for review and acceptance by ARTC.
- Provide evidence they hold the relevant licence.
- Be provided or obtain the relevant asbestos register.
- Provide a documented asbestos removal control plan.
- Notify Comcare and the State/Territory regulator at least 5 days. [Licensed Asbestos Removal Work Notification form \(comcare.gov.au\)](https://www.comcare.gov.au) to be used for Comcare.
- Have a health surveillance program in place.

During the work, the Contractor must:

- Provide a competent Supervisor who is readily available or present when the work is being carried out.
- Follow their asbestos removal control plan.
- Notify potentially affected stakeholders that the work is taking place.
- Display signs and labels in the asbestos work area.
- Limit access to the asbestos work area.
- Ensure appropriate decontamination facilities are in place.
- Conduct air monitoring using an independent licensed asbestos assessor.

At the completion of work, the Contractor must:

- Provide a clearance certificate, verified by an independent licensed asbestos assessor.
- Ensure waste containment and disposal is in accordance with relevant State or Territory Environment Protection Authority (EPA) requirements.



NOTE: For more assistance managing contractors, use [WHS-FM-025 Asbestos Removal Contractor Management Checklist](#).

5.2 What is an independent licensed asbestos assessor

An independent licensed asbestos assessor must not be involved in the:

- Removal of asbestos for that specific job, and
- Business who removed the asbestos.

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5.3 Asbestos removal licensing and competency requirements

Asbestos removal must be completed by licensed and competent workers. The licenses and competencies required for asbestos removal can be seen in the table below:

License	Required for	Competency
Class A	Remove any amount of friable asbestos and non-friable asbestos	CPCPCDE3015 - Remove friable asbestos or equivalent
Class B	remove over 10m ² of non-friable asbestos	CPCPCDE3014 - Remove non-friable asbestos or equivalent
Class A or Class B, depending on work	Supervising asbestos removal	CPCPCDE4008 - Supervise asbestos removal or equivalent

5.4 What is friable asbestos

Friable asbestos is material that is in a powder form or that can be crumbled, pulverised or reduced to a powder by hand pressure when dry.

5.5 What is non-friable asbestos

Non-friable asbestos is material that contains asbestos fibres reinforced with a bonding compound.

5.6 Disposal requirements

All asbestos waste, including contaminated equipment must be disposed of correctly.

All asbestos containing material and any contaminated equipment must be:

- Double wrapped in heavy duty plastic, a minimum of 200 µm in thickness.
- Clearly labeled 'Danger Asbestos – Do not open or damage bag. Do not inhale dust'.
- Sealed with durable duct tape.
- Stored in closed containers, wherever practical.

Once secured, the waste material must be:

- Transported according to the relevant state or territory Environment Protection Authority (EPA) requirements.
- Only disposed of at site licensed to take asbestos waste.

6 Manage Asbestos related work

- 6.1 What is asbestos-related work** Asbestos-related work means work involving maintenance of, or service work on materials that contain non-friable asbestos and there is a potential for the material to be disturbed.
- ARTC Employees are not permitted to remove any asbestos containing material.
-
- 6.2 Conducting asbestos-related work** ARTC employees are only permitted to perform asbestos-related work when the following requirements are met:
- The Workers has undergone asbestos awareness training.
 - Specific work instructions are developed, and the person trained in those instructions.
 - A Safe Work Method Statement is developed; and
 - The materials are non-friable and in good condition.
- If any of these conditions cannot be met, a suitably licenced asbestos removal contractor must be engaged.
-
- 6.3 Personal Protective Equipment requirements** During asbestos-related work, the following Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn:
- Class P2 Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE).
 - Disposable coveralls rated type 5, category 3 with fitted hoods and cuffs to be worn. Fitted hoods must always be worn over the straps of respirators and loose cuffs should be sealed with tape.
 - Rubber/polyurethane gloves and footwear covers.
-
- 6.4 Decontamination requirements** Decontamination methods must be chosen and implemented. These may include:
- Wet Method - Using wet-rags to wipe down external surfaces and then dispose of rags in asbestos wastes bags.
 - Use disposable items – Remove all disposable clothing (PPE) and dispose of in waste bags.
 - Laundering non-disposable clothing – Wet and dampen clothing, place in impermeable containers or bags (heavy duty - 200 µm), attach asbestos label and send to a specialist laundering service.
 - Sealed containers – Tools used for asbestos related work to be wiped down using wet method and stored in sealed containers until next use.
-

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6.5 Tools and Equipment

Tools and equipment that generate dust must not be used for asbestos - related work. This includes:

- High-speed abrasive power and pneumatic tools, for example angle grinders, sanders, saws and high-speed drills.
- Brooms and brushes (unless brushes are used for sealing).
- High-pressure water spray, jets, power or similar tools and instruments on asbestos in the workplace.
- Compressed air.

Manually operated (non-powered) hand tools should be used wherever possible.

If manual tools won't provide enough force, then battery powered hand tools must be used at low speed in conjunction with wet methods for dust control.

6.6 Asbestos vacuum cleaners

Asbestos vacuum cleaners must be a minimum of a Class H.

Filters for these vacuum cleaners must conform to the requirements of AS 4260-1997 High efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters – Classification, construction and performance or its equivalent.

Household vacuum cleaners must not be used.

7 Manage exposure to lead

7.1 Identify work areas potentially containing lead

All attempts must be made to identify materials potentially containing lead.

ARTC owns steel bridges that have lead paint on them or have used lead as a jointing material. It is assumed that if the bridge was built before 1990 that it will contain lead.

Lead is found in the soil in some communities which ARTC work. These include:

- Broken Hill, New South Wales (NSW).
- Goulburn, New South Wales (NSW).
- Port Pirie, South Australia (SA).



NOTE: Known sites with lead contamination in soil are documented [ARTC Contaminated Land Database](#) and in [ARTCMap](#).

7.2 Managing lead containing material

Once lead containing material has been identified, it must be left in place, where safe to do so.

If the material is flaking or deteriorating, then the removal of the product must be implemented.

7.3 What is lead risk work

Lead risk work is a lead process that is likely to cause the blood lead level of a worker carrying out the work to exceed the prescribed standard.

The lead process work at ARTC is any of the following activities:

- Machine sanding or buffing surfaces coated with lead paint containing more than 1% by dry weight of lead.
- Welding, cutting or cleaning, to the surface of metal coated with lead paint containing more than 1% by dry weight of lead.
- Using a power tool, including abrasive blasting and high-pressure water jets, to remove a surface coated with paint containing more than 1% by dry weight of lead.
- Excavation at sites known to have lead contamination in soil.

7.4 What's required after lead risk work

After completing lead risk work, or working in lead contaminated areas:

- All workers must wash their hands before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- All clothing, tools and the work area must be decontaminated.

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7.5 Washing work clothes

All lead contaminated clothes must be correctly washed or disposed of after use.

Contractors are responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place for their own workers.

For ARTC Employees, clothes that have been contaminated with lead compounds must be placed in designated bins and then laundered off site at a facility that specializes in this type of work.

7.6 Manage lead risk work contractor

All lead risk work must be completed by competent contractor.

Prior to work, the Contractor must:

- Provide a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) for review and acceptance by ARTC.
- Notify Comcare and the State/Territory regulator at least 7 days before the work. [Lead Risk Work Notification form \(comcare.gov.au\)](https://www.comcare.gov.au) to be used for Comcare.
- Have a health surveillance program in place.

During the work, the Contractor must:

- Wear the correct face protection, with a minimum P2 protection.
- Display signs in the lead risk work area.
- Conduct air monitoring.
- Limit access to the work area.
- Ensure appropriate decontamination facilities are in place.
- Have work areas, change rooms and eating facilities all separated.

At the completion of work, the Contractor must:

- Wash their hands.
- Have decontamination procedures in place.
- Ensure waste containment and disposal is in accordance with relevant State or Territory Environment Protection Authority (EPA) requirements.



NOTE: For more assistance managing contractors, use [WHS-FM-026 Lead Risk Work Contractor Management Checklist](#).

8 Cutting, grinding or drilling concrete or stone materials

8.1 Cutting, grinding or drilling concrete or stone materials requirements

If cutting, grinding or drilling concrete or stone materials, you must:

- Only use tools with wet cutting methods and/or exhaust systems in place.
- Operator must wear a minimum P2 rated respiratory mask that has been fit-tested by a competent person.
- Restrict others from the work area by setting up exclusion zones and warning signs.



NOTE: For more details on fit testing and Personal Protective Equipment, refer to [WHS-PR-009 Personal Protective Equipment](#).

8.2 Minimum requirements for wet cutting equipment

Equipment or machinery used for wet cutting must:

- Have the water feed attached and directed at the contact point.
- Be supplied with consistent water flow and adequate water pressure for the duration of the work.
- Have a fit-for-purpose nozzle.
- Be fitted with guards, or plastic flaps to manage the water spray or mist containing respirable crystalline silica.
- Be maintained according to manufacturer's instructions.

8.3 Minimum requirements for exhaust systems

Equipment or machinery fitted with exhaust system must consist of a capturing hood, and an M or H class dust extraction unit or vacuum and tubing.

M or H class systems must meet the requirements of AS/NZS 60335.2.69:2017 Household and similar electrical appliances – Safety – Particular requirements for wet and dry vacuum cleaners, including power brush, for industrial and commercial use (IEC 60335.2.69 ED 5, MOD).

For power drills, the dust extractor can meet the requirements above, or use a HEPA-filtered tool mounted dust collector.

9 Health monitoring requirements

- 9.1 Health monitoring program requirements**
- ARTC must establish a health monitoring program for employees potentially exposed to the health hazards of lead, or asbestos.
- The monitoring will vary depending on the gender of the Employees and the potential exposure.
- ARTC has conducted hygiene monitoring to determine that our exposure does not require health monitoring for crystalline silica for our Employees.
- Contractors are required to undertake their own hygiene monitoring to determine if crystalline silica health monitoring is required.



NOTE: For more details on ARTC's health monitoring program, refer to [WHS-PR-421 Health and Fitness](#).

- 9.2 Health monitoring for lead exposure**
- ARTC must monitor lead exposure for Employees who:
- Conduct lead risk work; or
 - Work in a known lead contaminated area.
- Health monitoring must start within one (1) month after they commence the work.
- During ongoing health monitoring, Employees who are identified to have blood lead levels exceeding the prescribed standards must be removed from lead risk work immediately.
- The person will not return to lead risk work blood levels are below the prescribed level and the medical practitioner is satisfied that the worker is fit to return to carrying out lead risk work.
-
- 9.3 What is the prescribed standard for lead exposure**
- The prescribed standard for lead exposure is a blood lead level exceeding:
- for a female of reproductive capacity- 10 µg/dL (0.48 µmol/L); or
 - in any other case—30 µg/dL (1.45 µmol/L).
-
- 9.4 Health monitoring for asbestos exposure**
- An Employee must undergo health monitoring if there is potential that they have been exposed to airborne particles of asbestos.
- As ARTC do not perform asbestos removal work, exposure to asbestos may come from an unexpected find of asbestos, or disturbance of asbestos containing material through asbestos related work.
-
- 9.5 Medical assessment requirements**
- All medical assessments must be conducted by, or under the supervision of a registered Doctor.
- The medical practitioner carrying out the examination will advise on the ongoing surveillance requirements.
- Any advice from medical practitioner to prevent further exposure must be followed.
- Employees must be provided with copies of any test results.
-

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- 9.6 When to notify the regulator** The Regulator (Comcare) must be notified if:
- Medical results show the Employee may have contracted an illness, or has exceeded the prescribed blood lead level, as a result of carrying out work.
 - The medical practitioner recommends that corrective action must be taken, including if the Employee must stop carrying out work.
-
- 9.7 Medical report retention periods** Medical reports must be retained for:
- 30 years after the record is made, even if after the employee has left the organisation.
 - 40 years, for asbestos health monitoring.
-

10 References

Document ID	Title
WHS-ST-007	Working with Asbestos, Lead and Silica
COR-WI-004	Unexpected Finds
WHS-FM-025	Asbestos Removal Contractor Management Checklist
WHS-FM-026	Lead Risk Work Contractor Management Checklist
WHS-FM-019	Asbestos Register Document Specification
WHS-FM-028	Asbestos Management Plan Template
COR-PR-019	Contaminated Land Management Procedure
WHS-PR-421	Health and Fitness
WHS-PR-009	Personal Protective Equipment

11 Document Control

Applicability

ARTC Network Wide

Publication Requirement

Internal / External

Primary Source

Superseded WHS-PR-007 Asbestos (V1.0), WHS-WI-212 Asbestos Work Instruction (V2.0), COR-PR-030 Lead Management (V1.1), EHS-WI-001 Lead Management (V1.1), WHS-GL-004 Lead Procedure Overview

Document Status

Version #	Date Approved	Prepared by	Approved
1.0	12/02/2024	Safety System Lead	General Manager Safety Systems, Risk and Assurance

Amendment Record

Amendment Version #	Date Reviewed	Description of Amendment
1.0	02/2024	First issue