

# Safe Acquisition of Plant and Equipment Guideline

WHS-PRO-GUI-027a

## Intent

This guideline has the intent to ensure James Cook University (JCU), as far as reasonably practicable, eliminates or minimises health and safety risk associated with the acquisition of plant and equipment at its premises.

This document forms a part of the Vehicles, Plant and Equipment series and outlines the base guidelines for the safe acquisition of plant and equipment at James Cook University (JCU). This guideline supports and should be read in conjunction with:

- [WHS-PRO-027 Plant and Equipment Safety Procedure](#)

Note: [FMPM 710 Procurement Policy](#) and [FMPM 711 Procurement Procedure](#) are part of the purchasing process to acquire goods and services at JCU.

## Scope

The Safe Acquisition of Plant and Equipment Guideline applies to all JCU employees, students, JCU affiliates, volunteers and contractors conducting work or activities at James Cook University (JCU) facilities.

For the purposes of this guideline, plant encompasses any machinery, equipment, appliance, container, implement, and tool, as well as any component or item fitted or connected to any of those.

## Exclusions

This guideline does not apply to JCU Controlled Entities, JCU Brisbane and JCU Singapore.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Person Requesting the Acquisition	The person in control of selecting the equipment to be purchased.
Plant/Equipment	Includes any machinery, equipment, appliance, container, implement and tool and includes any component or anything fitted or connected to any of those things. Plant includes lifts, benchtop centrifuges, machinery, photocopiers, desks, filing cabinets, vehicles, computers, power tools, fume cupboards and amusement devices.
Plant/Equipment Design	Design, redesign or modification of plant/equipment or a part of an item of plant/equipment.
Registrable Plant	Plant which must be registered with the relevant WHS Regulator.
Risk Assessment	A systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.
Supervisor	Any person who is responsible for Workers, the allocation of tasks to Workers and/or the oversight of all JCU students during teaching and/or learning activities including field trips.
Worker	A person who carries out work in any capacity for JCU, and includes working as: an employee, a volunteer, an apprentice or trainee, a student gaining work experience (paid or unpaid), a contractor or subcontractor and their employees, labor hire company employees assigned to work for JCU.

## 1 Obligations and Responsibilities

### 1.1 Person Requesting the Acquisition

- Ensure safe equipment is purchased considering the points in sections 2 and 3.
- Complete risk assessments and review safe operating procedures prior to the operation of plant/equipment. The risk assessment must note if registration and/or high work licenses apply to plant/equipment.
- Ensure the Estate Office is consulted prior to any purchases associated with the built environment or purchases which require modification of infrastructure to accommodate the plant/equipment.
- Ensure that the plant/equipment can be maintained (i.e. considering resource requirements, both people and material) in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations, risk assessments and Australian Standards

## 2 Planning the acquisition of the plant or equipment

Comprehensive pre-acquisition checks and planning must be undertaken before acquiring or procuring plant, including ensuring that the goods proposed for acquisition are to agreed specifications, and meet statutory requirements and Australian Standards.

### 2.1 Before acquiring plant/equipment, you must determine:

- If there is a less hazardous piece of plant/equipment available.
- The hazards and risks associated with the installation, operation, inspection, maintenance, storage of the plant/equipment.
- The control measures needed to minimise these hazards and risks and how these are documented and communicated.
- The manufacturer's recommendations in relation to the frequency and type of inspection and maintenance needed.
- Any special skills required for people who operate the equipment or carry out inspection and maintenance.
- Any alterations or modifications to be made to the plant/equipment.

### 2.2 Registration and certification:

- Determine if plant is registrable under WorkSafe Queensland guidelines.
- Register plant or plant designs as required by WorkSafe Queensland.
- Obtain necessary permits or licenses for transportation, operation, and disposal, particularly if hazardous materials are involved.
- Ensure compliance with safety standards through certification by a Registered Professional Engineer of Queensland (RPEQ) where required.

By fulfilling these legal requirements, you ensure that plant and machinery are used safely and in compliance with Queensland's strict workplace health and safety regulations.

*Note: Refer to WorkSafe Queensland Government [Worksafe-Plant Registration, for more details.](#)*

## 3 Plant/Equipment

### 3.1 General Considerations

Think about how the plant or equipment will be utilised safely before purchasing it. Relevant considerations include:

- a) Is it fit-for-purpose and to be used for the same purpose as it was designed? For example, the item is manufactured for commercial, industrial or research applications.
- b) Compliance with statutory laws and relevant Australian Standards.
- c) Installation in a suitable location, in view of work environment layout and lighting.
- d) Has the item been supplied with:

- i. emergency shutdown buttons and other safety features.
- ii. a user manual, written in English, and all other required information.
- iii. required consumables, adaptors or other components that are industry standard.
- iv. all required guards, interlocks, lockout/isolation points, safety switches
- e) Compatibility with existing activities, substances and equipment.
- f) Adequate existing security arrangements to prevent unauthorised access.
- g) Adequate controls in place for abnormal situations, for example, foreseeable misuse, fluctuation in operating conditions or emergency situations.

### 3.2 Electrical Considerations

Verify that the plant or equipment will be supplied as electrically safe before purchasing it and consider how it will remain in that state (Australian vendors guarantee that they will adhere to electrical safety legislation and safety standards). Relevant considerations include:

- a) The vendor states the item is compliant with AS/NZS 3820 essential safety requirements for electrical equipment.
- b) The equipment is safe to operate without additional electrical protection for the facility.
- c) The equipment can run safely without a backup or uninterruptable power system.
- d) Is the plant to be installed in a space where a hazardous area is present. If so, ensuring it is not going to be an ignition source and/or does it need to be installed within the hazardous area.
- e) For domestic electrical equipment, the item is supplied with an Australian power plug and has a Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM).
- f) How the equipment will be tested and tagged.

It is important to take into consideration that if a piece of plant or equipment is not acquired from an Australian vendor, it might not meet Australian safety standards and may need to be certified by an Australian certifier under the Regulatory Authority (RA) or RECS (Recognised External Certification Scheme). The WHS Unit can be contacted to provide more details on this information.

### 3.3 Specific Hazards

Carefully think about how risks associated to certain hazards will be managed before purchasing plant or equipment. All risks present during inspection, maintenance, and repair activities should be addressed for plants that:

- a) are designed to be operated or energised remotely or automatically.
- b) produces hazardous dusts, fumes, noise or waste.
- c) includes hydraulic or pneumatic systems.
- d) contains asbestos (e.g. within the mechanism or as insulation).
- e) requires or is intended for use with hazardous chemicals or biologicals, particularly if these are being newly introduced into the work environment.
- f) is an electrical item that will be used in or around water.
- g) is powered mobile plant.

## 4 Risk Management

Early identification and assessment of plant and equipment risks enable proactive planning and effective control measures.

When acquiring plant/equipment, a risk assessment must be completed to identify any new risks or an increase in existing risks that may arise. The hierarchy of controls must be considered when

Version: 25-1	Approval Date: 23/04/2025	Next Review Date: 23/04/2030	Page 3 of 4
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WHS-PRO-GUI-027a

assessing and implementing controls for identified risks. Refer to the Risk Management Process in [WHS-PRO-002 WHS Risk Management Procedure](#) and the following template and examples for Plant and Equipment Risk Assessments:

- [WHS-PRO-TEM-002A Plant and Equipment Risk Assessment Template](#)
- [WHS-PRO-TEM-002b Plant and Equipment Risk Assessment \(example\)](#)

All risk assessments must be uploaded and attached to Riskware for storage, review and access purposes.

## 5 Training and competency

Before acquiring plant or equipment, consider training and competency requirements for its operation, inspection, maintenance and storage. These may include but are not limited to:

- a) Who may use the item
- b) How to safely access and operate the plant
- c) The correct use of guarding
- d) How to carry out inspections, shut-down, cleaning, repair and maintenance
- e) Emergency procedures

## Schedules/Appendices

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#)

[Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011](#)

[Managing the risk of plant in the workplace code of practice 2021](#)

## Administration

NOTE: Printed copies of this procedure are uncontrolled, and currency can only be assured at the time of printing.

Version	Approval date	Implementation date	Details	Author
25-1	23/04/2025	23/04/2030	Guideline established	Antonella Cuneo, WHS Support Officer.