



NSW WILDLIFE
INFORMATION
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SERVICE

Work Health and Safety Risk Assessment

Identified activity for Risk Assessment

Working with firearms

Describe the identified activity / actions

1. Use of firearms for the destruction of native large mammals
2. Transport of firearms and ammunition
3. Storage of firearms and ammunition
4. Maintenance of firearms

Location of actions

1. Rescue property (private)
2. Volunteer property
3. Public place (national parks (with appropriate authority), roadway, waterway)
4. Shooting range

Identify the hazards, potential risks and current risk controls then rate them

1. Identify each hazard associated with the actions
2. List existing controls and determine a risk rating
3. List any tools or equipment needed



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RISK MATRIX

What harm could occur?		What is the likelihood of the harm occurring?		Calculate the Risk Score						
Consequence	Description	Likelihood	Description	Consequence	Likelihood					
					Rare	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Almost certain	
Catastrophic	Potential for death, permanent disability of ill-health	Almost certain	The event will definitely occur at some time or occur as a consequence of another event. Once every 1-3 years.		Catastrophic	Moderate	Moderate	High	Critical	Critical
Major	Potential serious long-term injury	Likely	The event is expected to occur at some time in the near future. Once every 3-5 years.		Major	Low	Moderate	Moderate	High	Critical
Moderate	Potential for injury or illness resulting in short term hospitalisation	Possible	The event does occur from time to time. Once every 5-8 years.		Moderate	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Minor	Potential for injury or illness resulting in medical attention and several days off work	Unlikely	The event might occur but is not expected. Once every 8-10 years.		Minor	Very low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Insignificant	No treatment required or first aid treatment.	Rare	Conceivable but highly unlikely to occur. Once every 10-15 years.		Insignificant	Very low	Very low	Low	Low	Moderate



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			Likelihood	Consequence	Risk Rating	
Handling and using a firearm. Includes: loading, discharge, unloading and maintenance of a firearm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury or death of a person or a non-target animal • Prolonged suffering of animal • Destruction or damage to infrastructure, plant or personal belongings • Damage to hearing • Unintended shot or ricochet • Firearm malfunction • Discomfort or injury from firearm recoil or kickback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firearm is not loaded until ready for use • Always have firearm pointed in a safe direction, even when not in use • Maintain control of weapon • Wear suitable PPE • Remove bystanders • Assessing site and conditions and not discharging firearm if not safe to do so • Completing and compliance with procedures in WIRES Firearms Authorisation Training • Notify police of your intention to discharge firearm or immediately after euthanising the animal • Regular refresher training to assess for shooting competency • Use suitable calibre of firearm for the animal and distance as per Codes of Practice and firearms license category conditions • Completion of the Firearms Safety and Training Council • Compliance with safety instructions outlined by the range when at a range • Ensure firearm is free of ammunition before conducting maintenance 	Unlikely	Catastrophic	Moderate	Physical Injury, fatality
Handling and transport of firearm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accidental discharge of firearm • Damage to firearm • Unauthorised access to firearm • Vehicle breakdown or accident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the NSW Firearms Act Sect 39 and licence conditions for safe storage of firearms. • Firearm appropriate safe secured to vehicle • Ensure is maintained and serviced prior to operation • Manage fatigue • Adhere to road rules and drive to conditions 	Rare	Moderate	Low	Fatality Legal exposure



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Storage of firearm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accidental access by other people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with the NSW Firearms Act Sect 39 and licence conditions for safe storage of firearms. Firearm appropriate lockable safe 	Unlikely	Major	Moderate	
Humanely destroy animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological distress Contact with animal bodily fluids - zoonotic diseases Strains, sprains, manual handling injuries from removal of carcass Failure to euthanise animal on first shot / suffering of animal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-task Briefing; Covering emotional impacts and allowing responders to opt out Access to EAP, Counselling Wear suitable PPE, which could include impervious gloves and disposable overalls. Carry a means of washing/disinfecting contaminated skin, e.g. a container of water or waterless hand cleaner. Thorough cleaning of equipment used with an antibacterial agent Accept call outs only when emotionally capable Debrief with Branch Safety Officer after incident Support services contact details provided Consider taking another member to assist in moving carcass Apply appropriate lifting techniques i.e. through the legs with a straight back 	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Health and Wellbeing



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the Firearms Safety and Training Council training which covers suitable target areas for wildlife (head or heart) • Use suitable calibre of firearm for the animal and distance as per Codes of Practice and firearms license category conditions • Conduct post-euthanasia checks 				
Site conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slips, trips & falls • Exposure to sun • Weather • Restricted space • Vehicle collision • Buildings/businesses/ establishments/homes in surrounding area that may be occupied • Misidentification of target • Accidental shooting of non-target • Low visibility condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take the time to assess the rescue site for obstacles before proceeding • Determine the actions you may take to control/lessen these risks, e.g. alternative routes that may be more easily accessible • Wear appropriate sun protection including long sleeved shirt, long pants, hat, sunglasses and sunscreen • Stop somewhere that does not impede traffic flow and activate the vehicle hazard lights • Exit from the passenger side, if possible • Wear a bright, Hi-vis safety vest • Police may need to be on site to coordinate the traffic • Activity avoided in low visibility condition where possible • Use appropriate lighting equipment • Additional site assessment prior to discharge • Firearm not discharged unless clear identification and safe backstop is confirmed • Shooting at night is generally discouraged 	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Human safety



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People on-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggressive behaviour Psychological distress Accidentally shot Damage to hearing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify role as WIRES shooter (wear WIRES Hi-Vis vest) and carry WIRES I.D card, firearms license and WIRES Firearms Authorisation letter at all times Notify those on site and in the vicinity that a firearm will be discharged and allow them time to move away or prepare for discharge, before discharging firearm Members of public must be removed completely from the site before the firearm is discharged. Children and pets must be asked to be removed from site. Abort the rescue if threat to safety Refer to the WIRES Working with the Public Community Risk Assessment 	Possible	Major	Moderate	Human safety, Wellbeing
Injured animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour of the animal Kicks, bites, scratches from animal Moving of carcass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine if animal need to be safely confined or restrained. Do not shoot at a moving animal and do not have anyone else holding the animal Wearing appropriate PPE Members to be trained in appropriate firearm euthanasia techniques Washing of the wound with antibacterial soap and water and/or application of an appropriate skin antiseptic should be administered immediately. Medical advice should be sought. Do not lift carcass if over 15kg. Seek second person or drag the body from the area Refer to the WIRES Large Mammal Risk Assessment Refer to the WIRES Working with Deceased Animal Bodies Risk Assessment 	Possible	Minor	Moderate	Animal welfare breach Physical injury



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Working in rural/remote areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of reliable communication (e.g. mobile phone coverage). Becoming lost / disoriented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry reliable communication device, e.g. mobile phone, UHF radio, personal locator beacon (PLB). Take a map of the area or reliable GPS navigator. In the event of becoming lost or disoriented, cease the activity and regain bearings or call for assistance. Consider taking another member along on remote Tasks. Notification of attendance, intended location and duration Refer to the WIRES Working Remotely Risk Assessment 	Possible	Major	Moderate	Human safety
Unauthorised filming or photographing of euthanasia activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological distress Reputational damage to WIRES Escalation of public conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear identification as WIRES authorised shooter Request members of public not to film Escalation to police if situation becomes unsafe Refer to WIRES Working with the Public Community Risk Assessment 	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Health and wellbeing, reputational harm
Firearm cleaning using solvents or chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skin or eye irritation Inhalation of fumes Chemical/lead exposure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of cleaning chemicals in well-ventilated areas Wearing appropriate PPE including gloves and eye protection Compliance with manufacturer instructions and SDS Safe storage of cleaning chemicals Refer to WIRES Chemical Risk Assessment 	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate	Physical injury or illness



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Emotional distress affecting decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impaired judgment Delayed or inappropriate euthanasia Increased likelihood of error 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-task briefing acknowledging emotional impact Responders encouraged to opt out if emotionally distressed Access to EAP, counselling and peer support Post-incident debriefing with Branch Safety Officer 	Possible	Moderate	Moderate	Health and wellbeing, animal welfare breach
Firearm misidentification or use of incorrect ammunition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Firearm malfunction Unintended discharge Injury or death to people or animals Damage to firearm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ammunition type and calibre checked prior to use Ammunition stored separately and clearly labelled in a locked container as per Sect 40(1)(d) and 41(1)(c) Firearms Act. 	Rare	Catastrophic	Moderate	Physical injury, fatality
Fatigue while handling firearms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced concentration Poor judgement Delayed reaction time Increased likelihood of error or accidental discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members self-assess fitness and fatigue prior to call-out Responders permitted to decline call-outs if fatigued Avoidance of prolonged or consecutive euthanasia tasks 	Possible	Major	High	Physical injury, fatality



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Inadequate backstop or bullet travel beyond target	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projectile striking unintended person, animal or structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of safe backstop prior to discharge • Firearm not discharged unless bullet path and backstop are confirmed safe • Appropriate calibre selected for task • Selection of firing angle to minimise projectile travel • Abort activity if safe backstop cannot be established 	Unlikely	Catastrophic	Moderate	Physical injury, fatality
Delayed police notification or misunderstanding by authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police response to firearm use • Increase stress and disruption at site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police notified prior to and immediately after firearm discharge • Shooters carries firearm licence and WIRES firearm authorisation letter • Clear communication of location and purpose of activity 	Unlikely	Major	Moderate	Psychological distress, legal exposure



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References

[Firearms Act 1996 No 46 - NSW Legislation](#)

[Firearms Regulation 2017 - NSW Legislation](#)

[Crimes Act 1900 No 40 - NSW Legislation](#)

[Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 No 200 - NSW Legislation](#)

[Work Health and Safety Act 2011 No 10 - NSW Legislation](#)

[Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and orphaned macropods | Environment and Heritage](#)

[Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and orphaned wombats | Environment and Heritage](#)

[Code of Practice for Injured, Sick and Orphaned Koalas | Environment and Heritage](#)

[National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies for Non-commercial Purposes - DCCEEW](#)

[Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 No 63 - NSW Legislation](#)

[Transportation Fact Sheet.pdf](#)

[Level 1 Safe Storage Fact Sheet.pdf](#)

[Ammunition Safe Storage Fact Sheet.pdf](#)



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