

Safety Specification for an External Contractor – Building Renovation

Project: BONAMELO Hostel Renovation

Location: BONAMELO CAMPUS

Contractor: [External Contractor Name]

Client: MALUTI TVET COLLEGE

Core Principle: The external contractor bears full legal responsibility for construction safety. The college bears responsibility for coordinating the site and controlling learners and staff. Physical isolation and time separation are the two most critical controls because work coincides with normal school activity.

1. Legal Framework – Contractor Obligations

1.1 Contractor as Principal Contractor

In terms of the OHS Act 85 of 1993 and the Construction Regulations 2014, the contractor must:

Provide a site-specific Health and Safety Plan based on the client's (college's) health and safety specification, and review/update it throughout the project.

Keep a Safety File on site at all times, containing all statutory documents, available for inspection by an inspector, the school, or its representatives.

Ensure that any subcontractors appointed are competent and have the necessary resources and appoint them in writing.

Conduct site audits and document reviews at least every 30 days.

Have the right and duty to stop any work that does not comply with health and safety requirements or poses a threat to persons.

1.2 Safety File – Required Contents

The Safety File must contain project-specific documents. Generic templates are not acceptable.

Category	Requirements
Company Compliance	Company registration, OHS policy, Letter of Good Standing (COIDA), insurance certificates
H&S Plan	Site-specific plan based on the College's specification
Risk Assessments	Baseline risk assessment + task risk assessments for breakdown/demolition, building, painting, and glass work
Method Statements	Safe work procedures for each activity
Statutory Appointments	Construction Manager, Safety Officer, Risk Assessor, First Aider, Fire Fighter, competent persons
Training & Competency	Site induction, toolbox talks, working-at-height training, glass handling training, equipment operator certificates
Medical Certificates	Medical Certificate of Fitness for all construction personnel
Emergency Procedures	Evacuation routes, first aid arrangements, assembly points, incident reporting
Inspection Records	Daily/weekly site inspections, scaffold inspections, equipment inspections

2. Mandatory Isolation Measures for the College Environment

2.1 Physical Isolation (Non-Negotiable)

The construction area must be completely physically separated from teaching areas. This is the single most critical control for school renovation projects.

Use solid barriers (e.g., drywall, hard hoarding), not warning tape alone. Heavy-duty plastic sheeting may serve as a dust barrier but must not replace physical isolation.

Isolation barriers must be inspected and maintained regularly to prevent dust and contaminants entering teaching areas.

Construction materials must be stored securely and fenced off. Gates must be kept locked at all times when no worker is on guard.

For external renovation, any walkway or passage below the work area must have overhead protection or be completely closed with warning signage.

2.2 Separation of Routes and Movement

Dedicated staircases and/or lifts must be designated for construction personnel. Construction workers must not use corridors, staircases, or lifts used by learners and staff.

Construction vehicles must have a separate access route that does not cross learner pedestrian flow. Heavy delivery vehicles must not enter the school grounds during learner activity periods or arrival/dismissal times.

Dedicated safe routes and activity areas must be created for teachers and learners. Learners must be strictly prohibited from approaching the construction site.

2.3 Time Separation

Noise control: Construction noise must not exceed 60 dBA in occupied spaces. If this limit cannot be met, work must be scheduled outside occupied hours or acoustic measures must be implemented.

High-risk operations: Demolition of roof and structure should be scheduled during school holidays, weekends, or after school hours. If work must proceed during teaching time, isolation protection must be increased and a dedicated safety officer must monitor the isolation zone at all times.

3. Demolition of Old Roof and Structure – Specific Risks and Controls

3.1 Asbestos Risk (Must Be Investigated First)

South Africa banned asbestos in 2008, but school buildings built before 2008 may contain asbestos cement roof sheets, fascia boards, and gutters.

Mandatory requirements:

A Refurbishment and Demolition Asbestos Survey must be conducted before demolition of any pre-2000 building component. This is an intrusive, comprehensive survey requiring access to all parts of the building.

If asbestos is found, demolition must be carried out by an authorised asbestos contractor under controlled conditions.

Asbestos removal must not take place while the building is occupied, unless the isolated wing or major portion can be completely separated from the rest (sealed non-combustible structural isolation, independent exits, physically isolated ventilation systems).

Cutting or drilling asbestos cement sheets must be done under controlled conditions using wet methods and low-speed cutters. Operators must wear respiratory protection.

3.2 Structural Collapse

A competent person must conduct a structural engineering survey before demolition. The written method statement must specify the demolition sequence, temporary support measures, and inspection intervals.

Temporary supports (shoring, bracing, tie-back systems) must be designed by a competent person and installed before any load-bearing component is cut.

No person may work under unsupported overhanging materials or structures.

3.3 Falls from Height and Falling Objects

All edges and openings where the fall height exceeds 2 metres must have collective fall protection (guardrails, safety nets, catch platforms), which takes priority over personal fall arrest systems.

Hard exclusion zones must be established around all demolition areas, with warning signs and dedicated supervision.

Materials must not be thrown outward from the building. Large debris must be removed through enclosed chutes or mechanical means, not through corridors or occupied spaces.

4. Rebuilding and Roofing

4.1 Manual Handling

Mechanical lifting (cranes, hoists, material lifts) must be used where reasonably practicable. Manual handling is permitted only when mechanical assistance is not reasonably practicable.

Personnel must receive manual handling training. Use team lifting for heavy loads.

4.2 Sharp Edges and Cuts

Metal roofing sheets have sharp edges. Cut-resistant gloves must be worn.

Use appropriate lifting aids when handling metal sheets. Avoid dragging hands along edges.

4.3 Working at Height During Roofing

Same controls as the demolition phase: collective fall protection first, catch platforms, exclusion zones.

Do not work on two or more levels in the same area simultaneously without protection from falling materials.

5. Plastering and Painting

5.1 Plastering Risks

Dust: Mixing plaster and sanding dried plaster generates dust containing silica, which can cause silicosis. N95 or higher-grade respirators must be worn. Use dust extraction or wet methods for dust suppression.

Chemical burns: Wet plaster is alkaline and can cause chemical burns to skin and eyes. Goggles and chemical-resistant gloves must be worn. Wash stations with clean water and soap must be provided.

Platform work: Plastering must be performed from permanent platforms or scaffolding. Working from lean-to ladders is prohibited.

5.2 Painting Risks

Chemical exposure: Paints, thinners, and solvents contain VOCs and other toxic substances. Enclosed spaces must be adequately ventilated, with local exhaust ventilation where necessary. Appropriate respiratory protection (organic vapour cartridges) and chemical-resistant gloves must be worn. MSDS must be kept on site.

Fire and explosion: Solvent-based paints and thinners are flammable. Ignition sources must be strictly controlled. Smoking and hot work are prohibited in painting areas. Flammable liquids must be stored in approved flammable liquid storage cabinets.

Contractor responsibility: The contractor must control chemical fumes from painting and ensure they do not enter occupied spaces or air intakes.

6. Glass Work – Specific Risks and Controls

6.1 Glass Handling and Breakage

Risk: Glass panels are heavy, fragile, and have sharp edges. Breakage during handling or installation can cause severe lacerations.

Controls:

Cut-resistant gloves and safety glasses must be worn at all times when handling glass.

Glass must be transported in vertical position using appropriate glass carriers or suction lifters.

Glass must be stored in designated secure areas away from student traffic, in racks or A-frames.

Never stack glass flat or lean it against unstable surfaces.

6.2 Working at Height During Glass Installation

Risk: Installing glass in windows, doors, or skylights may require working at height.

Controls:

Use scaffolding or mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs). Working from ladders while handling glass is prohibited.

Establish exclusion zones below all glass installation areas.

Use fall protection where required.

6.3 Broken Glass and Debris

Risk: Broken glass fragments can cause cuts and puncture wounds.

Controls:

Broken glass must be removed immediately and placed in designated, labelled glass waste containers.

Never use hands to pick up broken glass. Use brooms, dustpans, and shovels.

Glass waste containers must be stored securely and removed from site regularly.

The work area must be thoroughly cleaned at the end of each shift to remove all glass fragments.

6.4 Glazing Compound and Sealants

Risk: Glazing compounds, sealants, and primers may contain hazardous chemicals.

Controls:

Wear chemical-resistant gloves and eye protection.

Ensure adequate ventilation.

Keep MSDS on site.

Follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use and storage.

6.5 Structural and Wind Loading

Risk: Improperly installed glass may crack, shatter, or fall out, especially in windy conditions.

Controls:

Glass must be installed according to manufacturer's specifications and relevant building standards.

Do not install glass in windy conditions where it may be difficult to control.

Ensure glass is properly secured and sealed before leaving the site.

7. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Minimum Requirements

Work Phase	Required PPE
Breakdown/Demolition	Hard hat, safety boots, high-visibility vest, safety glasses, dust mask (N95+), cut-resistant gloves, hearing protection (noisy operations)
Building	Hard hat, safety boots, non-slip gloves, safety glasses, fall protection harness (when required), high-visibility vest
Painting	Organic vapour respirator, chemical-resistant gloves, safety glasses, non-slip safety boots
Glass Work	Cut-resistant gloves, safety glasses/goggles, safety boots, high-visibility vest, fall protection harness (when required)

8. College's Coordination and Oversight Responsibilities

The external contractor bears full responsibility for construction safety, but the College must fulfil the following:

8.1 Provide Site-Specific Information

Provide the contractor with the asbestos inventory (if available) and building floor plans.

Inform the contractor of emergency evacuation procedures, assembly points, and first aid station locations.

Clearly communicate the student activity schedule and sensitive areas (e.g., examination periods, students with special needs, sleeping hours).

8.2 Appoint a Liaison and Monitor

The College must appoint a competent person responsible for daily liaison with and monitoring of the contractor.

The College has the right to stop any unsafe work.

All contractor personnel entering the campus must sign in. Security must verify identity documents and keep a register.

8.3 Student and Staff Management (College's Internal Responsibility)

Appoint a safety monitor to patrol the perimeter of the construction site throughout the day, especially during breaks and arrival/dismissal times.

Hostel wardens must supervise students during breaks and pay special attention to students with special needs.

Wardens must count students at the start and end of every hostel period. If a student is missing, contact the warden immediately.

Establish student safety monitoring groups in each hostel block to monitor that students do not climb, cross isolation barriers, or loiter near the isolation wall.

Emergency escape routes must be checked daily to ensure they remain unobstructed.

9. Documents the Contractor Must Submit Before Commencing Work

The College must receive and review the following before allowing the contractor on site:

Site-specific Health and Safety Plan (based on the College's specification)

Risk Assessments and Method Statements (for each work phase: breakdown, building, painting, glass work)

Demolition/Breakdown Method Statement (including structural survey report and support plan)

Asbestos Survey / Removal Report (if applicable)

Scaffold Inspection Report and competent person appointment letter

Public Liability and Employer's Liability insurance certificates

Worker competency certificates (scaffolding, demolition, first aid, working at height, glass handling, etc.)

Site Isolation Plan (showing physical separation between construction and hostel areas)

Emergency contact list and incident reporting procedures

Safety File (established before work commences, updated throughout the project)

Core Principle: If there is any doubt about the safety of any work, both the contractor and the College have the right to stop work immediately. The contractor's safety responsibility is not transferred or reduced by the College's oversight.

10. Emergency Procedures (Hostel-Specific)

The contractor must develop an emergency evacuation plan for the construction area, aligned with the College's overall emergency procedures.

All workers must know the location of first aid stations, fire extinguishers, and emergency assembly points.

Stop work and evacuate immediately in the event of: signs of structural instability (cracking, abnormal noises, displacement), fire, gas leaks, glass breakage, or any situation that may threaten the safety of students and staff.

Any incident or near-miss must be reported to the College's designated liaison person immediately.

Emergency escape routes from the hostel must remain unobstructed at all times. If a route is affected by construction, an alternative must be provided and clearly communicated to all occupants.