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Safety Specification for an External Contractor – Bonamelo Roof Renovation

Project: Demolition of old roof and structure, rebuilding, plastering, and painting

Location: Maluti TVET College Bonamelo Campus – occupied school building

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 students 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 school's specification
Risk Assessments	Baseline risk assessment + task risk assessments for demolition, working at height, plastering, painting
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, 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 School 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 walkways and toilets must be designated for construction personnel. Construction workers must not use corridors, walkways and toilets 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. School's Coordination and Oversight Responsibilities

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

6.1 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 learner activity schedule and sensitive areas (e.g., examination periods, learners with special needs).

6.2 Appoint a Liaison and Monitor

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

The school has the right to stop any unsafe work.

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

6.3 Learner and Staff Management (School'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.

Class teachers must supervise learners during breaks and pay special attention to learners with special needs.

Teachers must count learners at the start of every lesson. If a learner is missing, contact the class teacher immediately.

Establish learner safety monitoring groups in each class to monitor that learners do not climb, cross isolation barriers, or loiter near the isolation wall.

7. Documents the Contractor Must Submit Before Commencing Work

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

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

Risk Assessments and Method Statements (for each work phase)

Demolition 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, etc.)

Site Isolation Plan (showing physical separation between construction and teaching 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 school have the right to stop work immediately. The contractor's safety responsibility is not transferred or reduced by the school's oversight.

8. Emergency Procedures (School-Specific)

The contractor must develop an emergency evacuation plan for the construction area, aligned with the school'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, or any situation that may threaten the safety of learners and staff.

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