## WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Step-by-step – Setting up for a safe 3

working environment on your farm

Self assessment – Add your actions 4

to your Action Plan

[Noise 6](#_TOC_250006)

[Dusts 9](#_TOC_250005)

[Heat, cold and UV exposure 10](#_TOC_250004)

[Facilities for workers 11](#_TOC_250003)

[Psychosocial hazards 13](#_TOC_250002)

[Injury management 17](#_TOC_250001)

[Emergency response plans 20](#_TOC_250000)

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

From The Vet Group January 6, 2017



**Is your dairy herd prepared for a bushfire?**

ZOE VOGELS

*Prepare low risk areas for bushfire emergencies.*

Recent bushfires in the region have provided us all with a timely reminder to sit down and plan what actions we will take in the event our properties are threatened by bushfire.

It goes without saying that your safety and the welfare of your family must come first and the CFA along with other key Government agencies do a good job of communicating

this. The information and tools available at [**cfa.vic.gov.au**](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/) are relevant to everyone and I want to stress that they should be used to plan of the safety and welfare of your family.

What about the dairy herd?

I would encourage all farmers to take some time to sit down

with family members, employees and even neighbours to talk through actions that can

be taken to protect your herd from fire.

One of the most important decisions to make is where you will move your herd and young stock to on days of extreme

or catastrophic fire danger – or should a fire be imminent in your area.

If it is safe to do so, your herd should be moved to a low risk area. This might include chewed-out crop paddocks,

ploughed paddocks, irrigated paddocks, green summer crops or yards and small paddocks that are protected by laneways or firebreaks.

If you can’t identify such an area – now might the time to create one. Maybe you could mow or, better still, plough a firebreak around a suitable site. While you’re at it, why not do the same thing along roads, under powerlines and around haystacks and other buildings?

## STEP-BY-STEP – SETTING UP FOR A SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT ON YOUR FARM

This topic covers safety in the farm working environment across five distinct areas:

**BY LAW**

**Work Health and Safety regulations require that you must assess and manage the risks to health and safety associated with the working environment of the farm. You must:**

* Identify reasonably foreseeable hazards that could give rise to the risk of an injury
* Eliminate the risk so far as is reasonably practicable
* If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk, minimise it by implementing control measures in accordance with the hierarchy of control
* Consult, so far as is reasonably practicable, with workers who are (or are likely to be) affected by the working environment
* **Physical environment hazards**, including noise, dust, heat, cold and UV exposure
* Facilities for workers
* **Psychosocial hazards**, including contributors to workplace stress, fatigue, harassment, bullying and violence
* **Injury management**, including health monitoring, injury reporting and compensation, health and safety communication
* **Emergency responses**, including emergency response plans, facilities and equipment



**Getting started**

**Read through this information pack.**

Complete the working environment **Safety Self-Assessment** (traffic lights) page.

**Make a list** of things to do and **set a date** to have each thing completed in the **Action Plan.**

Set up your Policies and **Standard Operating Procedure**.

Put a copy with the documents you use to **induct new staff**.

Pick a topic to discuss with staff or family at your next **workplace meeting** (you should have at least one safety topic each meeting).

**Resources in this section**

* **Information** about safety in relation to working environment on dairy farms and your legal obligations.
* Safety Self-Assessment.

Information and templates provided in this folder are also available at [**thepeopleindairy.org.au/farm-safety**](https://thepeopleindairy.org.au/farm-safety/)

You can edit the templates to suit your farm.

## SELF ASSESSMENT – ADD YOUR ACTIONS TO YOUR ACTION PLAN AT THE BACK OF THIS FOLDER

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **For working environment** | **Poor practice**  **Address these areas immediately!** | **Improving safety practice**  **There is still work to be done** | **Great**  **safety practice**  **Monitor and review**  **to continually improve** |
| Sources of hazardous noise | Not identified | Some identified | All identified |
| Controls to reduce exposure to hazardous noise | Not done | Some done | All in place and maintained |
| Appropriate hearing protection (where noise is controlled but still exceeds exposure standards) | Not supplied or not worn | Supplied,  not always worn | Always worn |
| Hearing tests for workers who regularly wear heating protection | Not conducted | Some done, not up to date | All up to date |
| Sources of dust | Not identified or controlled | Some controlled, but not all | All controlled |
| Dust masks (when exposed to dust) | Not available | Supplied,  not always worn | Always worn |
| Asthma management plans | Not known if workers have asthma | Some asthma plans in place | All asthma plans in place |
| Risks of heat and cold stress and UV exposure | Never addressed with workers | Some info for workers | All workers aware |
| PPE to protect workers from temperature extremes and UV exposure | Not available | Some available, not always used | Available and always used |
| Extreme heat, cold and UV exposure | Not considered in work schedules | Sometimes considered | Always considered |
| Sun screen and fresh drinking water | Not readily available | Sometimes available | Always available for all workers |
| Access to appropriate facilities | Not available | Some available | Always available for all workers |
| Physical hazards that may influence stress (e.g. noise, dust, fumes, poor lighting) | Not identified or controlled | Some controlled, but not all | All controlled |
| Psychological hazards that cause significant work stress (e.g. bullying, harassment, issues with diversity, inclusion and respect, aggression and violence fatigue) | Not identified or controlled | Some controlled, but not all | All controlled |
| Organisational factors such as job roles, responsibilities, supervision, resource allocation, reward and recognition | Not considered in work planning | Sometimes considered | Always considered |
| Follow-up | None | Limited review and action | All issues acted on |



**SELF ASSESSMENT – ADD YOUR ACTIONS TO YOUR ACTION PLAN AT THE BACK OF THIS FOLDER**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **For injury management on the farm** | **Poor practice**  **Address these areas immediately!** | **Improving safety practice**  **There is still work to be done** | **Great**  **safety practice**  **Monitor and review**  **to continually improve** |
| Worker’s compensation insurance | Not in place | Some workers covered | All workers covered |
| ‘If you are injured’ poster | Not displayed | Up but not seen by all workers | Clearly displayed for all |
| Notifiable incidents (by law to regulator) | Not understood or reported | Understanding  but not clear action | Well understood, would be reported |
| System for reporting hazards and near- misses by all workers | Not in place, not encouraged | Some involvement, not clear | Well understood and active |
| System for recording injuries | Not in place | In place but not always used | Register established and always used |
| Investigations of hazards, near-misses and injuries | None | Limited review and action | All investigated and acted on |
| Records of investigations made and kept 5 years | None | Some | All |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **For emergency responses on the farm** | **Poor practice**  **Address these areas immediately!** | **Improving safety practice**  **There is still work to be done** | **Great**  **safety practice**  **Monitor and review**  **to continually improve** |
| A written, emergency response plan, with clear procedures | Not done | Some parts done | Complete and up to date |
| Farm managers, workers, supervisors and others including families instructed and trained in the procedures | Not done | Some instructed/ trained | All people on the farm |
| Emergency contact details (e.g. fire, police, poison information centre) | Not displayed | Up but not easily accessible | Clearly displayed, easily found |
| Site plan showing the location of fire protection equipment, first aid kits, emergency exits and assembly areas | Not available | Some parts done | Complete and up to date |
| First aid facilities and emergency equipment relevant to the types of emergencies that may occur | Not available | Some available | All available |
| Fire protection equipment suitable for the types of risks at the workplace | Not available | Some available | All available |
| Workers and others trained to use emergency equipment | Not done | Some trained | All trained |
| Emergency practice runs (e.g. evacuation drills) undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the emergency plan | Never done | Some aspects, rarely done | Regularly done |
| Someone responsible for reviewing the emergency plan and updating workers and others of any changes | No-one allocated this role | Ad hoc role | Someone clearly responsible |
| Follow-up | None | Limited review and action | All issues acted on |

## NOISE

#### According to Farmsafe Australia approximately two-thirds of farmers have measurable hearing loss, with hearing levels 10 to 15 years worse than the general population.

Dairy farms can be noisy places. Sources of noise include mobile plant such as tractors, quad bikes and side-by-sides, and fixed plant such as vacuum pumps, compressors, augers, hammer and roller mills. Workshop equipment such as chainsaws, angle grinders and rattle guns all contribute to operator noise exposure. At milking the level of noise can be exacerbated by steel sheds, the

use of radios and the noise of cows as they move through the dairy.

The risk of hearing loss depends on both the noise level and the length of time the person is exposed to it. Hazardous noise, in relation to hearing loss, means noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise in the workplace. Thresholds are often reached with an accumulation of noise sources. Noise-induced hearing

loss can be gradual, over a period of time, or immediate if the noise is very loud.

Noise is measured in decibels(dB(A)and dB(C)). There is a range in people’s susceptibility to hearing loss from noise, but research shows that 8-hour average daily noise exposure levels below 75 dB(A), or instantaneous peak noise levels below 130 dB(C), are unlikely to cause hearing loss.

With progressively increasing noise levels, the risk becomes greater. The occupational exposure standard for noise protects most, but not all, people, so workplace noise should be kept lower than the exposure standard if reasonably practicable.

WHS Regulations set the occupational exposure standard for noise at 85 dB(A) for 8 hours and a peak noise level at 140 dB(C).

If 85 decibels over an 8-hour period is exceeded then hearing loss is likely. Hearing loss can be immediate if the noise level exceeds 140dB(C).

**TIP**

**Testing noise levels** Do your workers complain that there is too much noise or that they can’t clearly hear instructions or warning signals? If you are standing a metre apart and need to raise your voice to be heard, the noise levels may be too high.

More accurate testing can be undertaken using a calibrated portable sound meter available at most electronic equipment outlets.

There are also smart phone apps that can be used to measure noise levels:

[**healthyhearing.com/report/47805-The-best-**](https://www.healthyhearing.com/report/47805-The-best-phone-apps-to-measure-noise-levels)[**phone-apps-to-measure-noise-levels**](https://www.healthyhearing.com/report/47805-The-best-phone-apps-to-measure-noise-levels)

Hazardous noise affects the functioning of the inner ear, which may cause temporary hearing loss. After a period away from noise, hearing may be restored. With further exposure to hazardous noise, the ear will gradually lose its ability to recover and the hearing loss will become permanent.

Permanent hearing loss can also occur suddenly if a person is exposed to very loud impact or explosive sounds. This type of damage is known as acoustic trauma.

Permanent hearing loss results from the destruction of hair cells in the inner ear. These cells cannot be replaced or repaired. Usually, hazardous noise first affects the ability to hear high-frequency (high- pitched) sounds. This means that even though a person can still hear some sounds, conversation will start to sound ‘muffled’ and they find it more difficult to understand what is being said.

Workers exposed to hazardous noise may also experience tinnitus (often referred to as ringing in the ears), which could become permanent.

Severe tinnitus may disrupt sleep, increase fatigue, reduce concentration, make people extremely irritable and lead to depression.

The table below demonstrates the length of time a person without hearing protectors can be exposed before the standard is exceeded. For every 3 dB(A) increase in noise level, the exposure time is halved.

Equivalent noise exposures

**Noise level (dBA) Exposure time**

80 16 hours

82 12 hours

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 85 | 8 hours |
| 88 | 4 hours |
| 91 | 2 hours |
| 94 | 1 hour |
| 97 | 30 minutes |
| 100 | 15 minutes |
| 130 | 0.9 seconds |

**Best practice**

Consult with all workers who are or may be affected by exposure to hazardous noise on farm.

1. Identify the sources of hazardous noise on the farm
2. Apply the hierarchy of control
3. Eliminate the sources of hazardous noise if practicable.
4. If not able to eliminate, then control by substitution, engineering isolation, safe work practice and PPE
5. Arrange audiometric testing for workers and others who are required to wear hearing protection to protect against hearing loss.

**LEARN MORE**

**Selection of hearing protection** should be based on:

* consulting with all workers who are or may be affected by exposure to hazardous noise on farm
* the amount of noise reduction required
* individual comfort (including relationship with other PPE or headwear) and
* the environment in which it is to be used

Hearing protection should not over-protect where there is a need to communicate with other workers, hear machine operation and hear audible warning devices such as reverse beepers.

Talk to your professional safety gear supplier for the appropriate hearing protection.

For guidance on selection and fitting of hearing protection visit:

[**au.prochoicesafetygear.com/hearing-protection**](http://au.prochoicesafetygear.com/hearing-protection)

**TIP**

Check noise ratings of operating machinery and equipment before purchase.

Manufacturers often list these ratings in operator manuals or indicate them on labels on the machinery or equipment.

**BY LAW**

**Work Health and Safety regulations require:**

* That the noise a worker is exposed to at the workplace does not exceed the exposure standard for noise
* That audiometric testing is conducted for any worker who is frequently required to use personal hearing protectors to protect

**LEARN MORE**

**Code of practice – Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work, July 2020**

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-**](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-noise-and-preventing-hearing-loss-work)[**managing-noise-and-preventing-hearing-loss-work**](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-noise-and-preventing-hearing-loss-work)

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/model_code_of_practice_managing_noise_and_preventing_hearing_loss_at_work.pdf)[**model\_code\_of\_practice\_managing\_noise\_and\_**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/model_code_of_practice_managing_noise_and_preventing_hearing_loss_at_work.pdf)[**preventing\_hearing\_loss\_at\_work.pdf**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/model_code_of_practice_managing_noise_and_preventing_hearing_loss_at_work.pdf)

**Noise Exposure Ready Reckoner for specific time periods: Refer to Appendix D**

**LEARN MORE**

**Audiometric hearing tests** must be conducted within 3 months of the employee starting work and every 2 years thereafter. The initial test establishes the base line for each worker and the subsequent tests monitor and establish if hearing loss has occurred.

**Refer to relevant state WHS Regulations – Noise**

If hearing loss is detected, further investigation with the tester will be needed to identify factors that may have caused an increase in exposure to noise.

**Hearing tests explained:** [**betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/hearing-tests)[**conditionsandtreatments/hearing-tests**](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/hearing-tests)

A range of audiologists provide hearing tests for workers. Some have a portable booth; others require a visit to a regional centre. Shop around.

However, the test must be undertaken to the Australian Standard AS1269 Occupational noise management.

**THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EXAMPLES OF RISK MANAGEMENT FOR HAZARDOUS NOISE:**

**Elimination**

* Dispose of or decommission noisy machinery

**Substitution**

* Select and/or purchase equipment and plant that operates quietly

**Isolation/Engineering examples**

* Enclose noisy plant such as vacuum pumps and compressors outside the dairy or in an insulated plant room
* Direct exhausts on vacuum pumps away from the work area
* Use well-sealed cabins on tractors and other mobile plant
* Fit and maintain exhausts to combustion engines
* Fit sound absorbing materials to walls and roofs of feed processing sheds
* Fit rubber stoppers to automatic steel gates
* Use plastic chutes instead of steel

**Administrative controls**

* Identify sources of hazardous noise and measure the noise levels if they are not known
* Ensure correct operation and scheduled maintenance of plant such as vacuum pumps, compressors, augers and grain crushers
* Maintain exhausts and cabin seals of mobile plant
* Provide exclusion zones for other workers and bystanders when operating noisy equipment
* Regulate the volume of radios in the dairy
* Rotate work tasks to limit exposure to noise
* Display signs where hearing protection is required (e.g. outside plant room, on tractors without cabins, on specific items such as angle grinders)
* Arrange hearing tests (audiometric testing) for employees who are required to wear hearing protection.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

* Provide and use hearing protection when noise controls are not sufficient. Hearing protection must meet the Australian Standard AS1270.2002

## DUSTS

#### On dairy farms, harmful organic dusts primarily occur from processing and handling of feeds such as hay, silage, grain and pellets. They may consist of plant, fungi, bacteria, material from livestock, rodents and insects (including excreta), chemical residues, soil and sometimes mould from spoiled hay or silage.

**LEARN MORE**

Disposable dust masks are designed for use against dust, mists and fumes. They consist of a shaped piece of filter material held to the head by 2 straps (a mask with only one strap does not provide a close enough fit). When the mask loses its shape or when breathing resistance becomes too great the mask should be discarded. They should be replaced daily in very dusty conditions. These dust masks are not suitable for use with spray painting, toxic dusts or chemicals, or in oxygen-deficient atmospheres. Half face masks can be used with reusable particulate filter cartridges.

For guidance on selection and use of respiratory masks:

[**au.prochoicesafetygear.com/respiratory-protection**](http://au.prochoicesafetygear.com/respiratory-protection)

Grain dusts pose a risk of respiratory disease, particularly for people with asthma. Smokers are significantly

more prone to respiratory problems. Dusts from cattle yards can also be hazardous because they may be contaminated with the bacteria that causes Q Fever. (See topic on Working with Livestock)

Sources of dust should be identified and reduced where possible. For example, dust from feed grain may be reduced by the addition of vegetable oils; fitting water sprinklers may be helpful to reduce dusts in yards.

**THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EXAMPLES OF RISK MANAGEMENT FOR DUSTS:**

**Substitution**

* Use pellets instead of grain or add a dust- suppressing oil

**Isolation/Engineering examples**

* Locate the feed processing shed down wind of the dairy
* Use longer drop tubes into feeders in the bail
* Use enclosed blower tubes instead of augers
* Fit dust extractors in sheds
* Install water sprinklers at cattle yards
* Use tractors with cabins when feeding out; harvesting; or cleaning yards, pads and calf sheds

**Administrative controls**

* Stand away and upwind when auguring grain
* Avoid manual handling of mouldy hay and silage
* Monitor dust levels of feed grain and pellets and ensure adequate dust suppressant is added.
* Follow confined space entry procedures if entering silos
* Do not smoke near dusty environments
* Display signage where dust masks are required and smoking is prohibited

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

* Provide and use dust masks or respirators where required

Dust masks or respirators are necessary when working in feed sheds, handling mouldy hay or silage, or when cleaning out a dusty dairy or dusty machinery such as balers.

It is important that workers and others with asthma are identified and their exposure to dust minimised. All people with asthma who work on the farm should have an asthma management plan arranged with their doctor and ensure that they have ready access to their medication.

**TIP**

**Could it be asthma?** If you have wheezing, breathlessness, a feeling of tightness in the chest and or a persistent cough you should get this checked out as these may be symptoms of asthma.

[**asthma.org.au/about-asthma/understanding-**](https://asthma.org.au/about-asthma/understanding-asthma/)[**asthma/**](https://asthma.org.au/about-asthma/understanding-asthma/)

**LEARN MORE**

**Organic farm dusts – for more detailed information:**

[**sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs\_**](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/guidance/12.%20Organic%20Farm%20Dusts.pdf)[**docs/guidance/12.%20Organic%20Farm%20Dusts.pdf**](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/guidance/12.%20Organic%20Farm%20Dusts.pdf)

## HEAT, COLD AND UV EXPOSURE

#### Dairy farming in Australia occurs in variable climates with temperature ranges from

**LEARN MORE**

**Heat stress and heat stroke information for workers:**

[**safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/working-in-**](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/working-in-extreme-heat)[**extreme-heat**](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/working-in-extreme-heat)

**Information for employers: Managing risks when working in heat – Guidance Material**

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1902/guide_for_managing_the_risks_of_working_in_heat_1.pdf)[**documents/1902/guide\_for\_managing\_the\_risks\_of\_**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1902/guide_for_managing_the_risks_of_working_in_heat_1.pdf)[**working\_in\_heat\_1.pdf**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1902/guide_for_managing_the_risks_of_working_in_heat_1.pdf)

45 to minus-10 degrees Celsius. Working temperatures can be a lot higher in sheds and a lot lower with wind chill factors.

#### Exposure to temperature extremes can reduce work effectiveness by increasing fatigue and reaction times, and increase the risk of ill-health and accidents.

Heat stress occurs not only with increase in temperature but also with increase in humidity. Other factors that contribute to heat stress include:

* Less air inside protective clothing

**THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EXAMPLES OF RISK MANAGEMENT FOR HEAT, COLD AND UV EXPOSURE:**

**Engineering examples in the dairy:**

* Install insulation and reflective surfaces to sheds
* Provide shutters, blinds and doors that can be opened or closed to control direct sunlight, wind and ventilation
* Install air ducts or fans in the roof or end walls
* Maintain air conditioning of cabined plant
* Install heating at the cups-on station of rotaries (e.g. in the concrete)

**Administrative controls**

* Where practical rotate or schedule jobs to avoid extreme temperatures, humidity and peak UV exposure, especially if the tasks involve use of heavy PPE
* Provide clean drinking water to work areas
* Supply broad spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen and promote its use
* Provide information to workers on the risks of skin cancer and dehydration

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

* For cold, especially when outside on bikes and quads, promote the use of gloves, beanies, lined safety footwear and insulated/thermal clothing and waterproof jackets and pants
* For prevention of skin damage and cancer promote lightweight clothing including long pants and sleeves, broad brimmed hats and UV resistant wrap around safety-sunglasses
* Radiant heat from fires and machinery
* Inadequate shade
* Cabined tractors without working air conditioners
* Performing manual tasks under hot and humid conditions

Symptoms of mild heat stress include fatigue, headaches, thirst and irritability. Extreme heat stress can lead to dehydration and heat stroke.

Sun exposure is the cause of about 99% of non- melanoma skin cancers and 95% of melanoma in Australia. Both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers can appear anywhere on the body, not just sun exposed areas. Businesses and workers need to be

vigilant to the risks of working outdoors without adequate protection from the sun.

**TIP**

**Motorcycle helmets used for quad bikes** can be fitted with removable broad brims, neck flaps, ear coverage and UV visors.

**LEARN MORE**

**More information on UV exposure provided by the Cancer Council of Australia:**

[**cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-**](https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-at-work)[**prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-**](https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-at-work)[**at-work**](https://www.cancer.org.au/cancer-information/causes-and-prevention/sun-safety/be-sunsmart/sunsmart-at-work)

## FACILITIES FOR WORKERS

#### The number of workers on the farm determines the size and type of facilities required.

**LEARN MORE**

**Code of practice – Managing work environment and facilities**

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-work-environment-and-facilities)[**managing-work-environment-and-facilities**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-managing-work-environment-and-facilities)

Because the dairy is the focus of most of the work, it should include the facilities for workers, or they should be close by. A dining area, access to drinking water, toilet(s), hand basins and shower(s) should be available at all times and must be maintained in clean, safe and good working order. Consumables such as soap, paper towel, and toilet paper should be replenished regularly.

Equipment and furniture such as toasters, fridges, lockers or seating should be maintained in good working order.

**TIP**

The lunchroom is also a good place to have a **dedicated health and safety noticeboard**. This promotes a positive safety culture on your farm. The noticeboard should not be cluttered with other information but be specific to health and safety. This could include the ‘if you get injured at work’ poster, your farm health and safety policy statement and the hazard and incident reporting requirements.

The number and type of toilets required depends on the number of employees, their gender and whether any employees have special needs or disabilities. Generally, separate toilets need to be provided in workplaces where there are both male and female employees. However, one unisex toilet may be provided in workplaces with both male and female employees where the total number of people who normally work at the workplace is 10 or fewer, or there are two or fewer employees of one gender. If there are employees with a disability that require an accessible toilet then this would need to be catered for.

**BY LAW**

**Work Health and Safety regulations place obligations on a person conducting a business or undertaking in relation to the work**

**environment and facilities for workers, including requirements to:**

* ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the layout of the workplace, lighting and ventilation enables workers to carry out work without risks to health and safety
* ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the provision of adequate facilities for workers, including toilets, drinking water, washing and eating facilities

**TIP**

**Drinking water** – An adequate supply of clean drinking water must be provided for workers at all times:

* free of charge
* at or below 24 degrees Celsius
* supplied in a way that they do not drink directly from a shared container
* located separate from toilet or washing facilities.

Tap water not suitable for drinking should be signed and/or locked off, to prevent accidental or child use.



*Image: Hilary Walker*

**12**

Sufficient lighting must be provided, whether it is from a natural or artificial source, to allow safe movement in and around the dairy and to allow workers to perform

their jobs without having to adopt awkward postures or strain their eyes. Particular focus should be on lighting for milking, night pickups of milk, working with cattle and vet work including assisted calving.

**TIP**

**Facilities for workers on small farms**

An area within the workplace for making tea and coffee and preparing and storing food may be all that is needed on farms where there are only one or two workers. The area should be protected from the weather, free of tools and work materials and separated from toilet facilities and any hazards

(including noise and heat). It should be supplied with seating, a sink with hot and cold water, washing utensils and detergent, an appliance for boiling water, clean storage, including a refrigerator for storing perishable food and vermin-proof rubbish bins (which should be emptied at least daily).

**BY LAW**

**Who has legal responsibility for managing accommodation for workers?**

A person conducting a business or undertaking who provides accommodation for workers and owns or manages the accommodation must, so far as is reasonably practicable, maintain the premises so that the worker occupying it is not exposed to health and safety risks.

**TIP**

**Accommodation** provided should be secure, with safe access, electrically safe, with smoke alarms and relevant extinguishers, drinking water, facilities for washing, cooking and laundry, heating and cooling and rubbish collection.

An evacuation plan for bush fire risk areas is recommended. Refer to [**cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare**](https://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare)

## PSYCHOSOCIAL HAZARDS

#### The term ‘psychosocial’ refers to the inter- relationships between a person’s thoughts and behaviours and their social environment. In the occupational health and safety, psychosocial hazards refer to hazards arising within the workplace and the work environment. They most commonly relate to stress, bullying

and harassment, diversity, inclusion and respect, occupational violence and fatigue.

Generally, work is good for you. It enhances your mental health and personal wellbeing by providing structure, purpose, a sense of identity and self-worth. Work also enables people to develop and display skills and develop social relationships.

However, in some circumstances work can have an adverse impact on individuals and risks to psychological health should be viewed in the same way as other health and safety risks. This involves you consulting with workers and others to identify the hazards, risks and controls, and then implementing and reviewing the controls within your workplace.

At work the risk of psychological injury can be influenced by environmental, organisational and individual psychosocial factors.

* Environmental factors

Exposure to some physical hazards in the work environment can influence a person’s comfort and performance. For example, exposure to poor air quality (dusts, fumes), high levels of noise, poor lighting, extreme temperatures or unsafe machinery may contribute to a stress response.

* Organisational factors

Risk to psychological health can be influenced by organisational factors such as the design of work and jobs, poor communication and interpersonal relationships, fatigue, bullying and occupational violence.

Designing a job that is do-able and rewarding is the key to minimising unhealthy stress for workers. Take into

consideration the demands involved for the job; the level of control of aspects of a job such as pace of work or how

and when a job is done; the amount of support, supervision and resources available; and the relationships with others who work on the farm. A perception of bias, inconsistency, unfairness or disrespect may also be contributors to stress.

Having clarity around all aspects of a person’s role is important so that they know the scope, responsibilities, objectives and expectations. If job roles are to change then communication and consultation is important.

Recognition through feedback on performance and opportunities for reward and skill development are important positive factors.

* Individual factors

People respond to stress at work in different ways. Individual differences may mean that some workers are more susceptible to harm from a hazard, for example

a worker with a disability or illness, or new and young workers, workers from diverse cultural backgrounds. Aspects of social environment outside work include factors such as family background, socioeconomic status and level of education. It is important to be aware of an individual’s non-work psychosocial factors because they may need to be considered when planning work.

**Best practice**

Consult with all workers on expectations of workplace behaviours.

1. Eliminate or control the environmental factors that may cause stress
2. Identify and address the farm organisational factors that may cause stress to workers and others
3. Make job roles clear including: objectives and expectations, responsibilities, skills, supervision, relationships, resources, recognition, feedback and reward
4. Develop workplans that take into account not only job roles but individual differences such as age, experience and disabilities
5. Establish workplans that will not cause fatigue
6. Develop and implement policies around adverse worker relationships and behaviour that could contribute to stress, psychological ill-health and physical injury

**TIP**

**Psychological hazards** may be identified by observing work performance and how workers interact with others, by one-on-one discussions and through feedback from workers. They may also be indicated by patterns of absenteeism, sick leave, staff complaints, staff turnover and compensation claims.

Four steps to preventing psychological injury at work

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1910/infographic-four-steps-to-preventing-psychological-injury-at-work.pdf)[**documents/1910/infographic-four-steps-to-**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1910/infographic-four-steps-to-preventing-psychological-injury-at-work.pdf)[**preventing-psychological-injury-at-work.pdf**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/1910/infographic-four-steps-to-preventing-psychological-injury-at-work.pdf)

### Fatigue

Fatigue is defined as an acute or ongoing state of tiredness that affects people’s performance, safety and health and requires rest and sleep for recovery.

Symptoms include:

* difficulty concentrating
* poor judgement
* reduced vigilance
* increase in mistakes and near misses
* slower reaction times
* blurred vision
* nodding, yawning and eye rubbing
* feeling drowsy, tired or sleepy
* frequent napping
* dropping into micro sleeps
* irritability
* impaired short-term memory
* reduced hand-eye coordination

Fatigued people may be more likely to engage in behaviours that put themselves and others at risk particularly when driving, operating machinery or undertaking critical tasks.

Accidents are more likely to occur at night (especially midnight to dawn) when people would normally

be sleeping.

Maintaining sufficient levels of sleep is necessary in the prevention of fatigue and sleep is essential to recovering from fatigue. The optimum amount of sleep required by an adult varies, the average amount being 7-8 hours.

Workers and others who continually do not get the sleep they need will be susceptible to fatigue.

It is important to establish work rosters and shifts that reduce the potential for fatigue. This may include consideration of timing and length of shifts and breaks, and number of consecutive days off between shifts It is critical to identify peak periods of work demands over long work days and plan shifts, rosters and breaks to reduce the risk of fatigue.

**LEARN MORE**

**Managing pressures of farming –** for some good practical tips for the farmer and the farm family in managing the stresses of farm life

[**sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/**](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/guidance/farm_family_handbook.pdf)[**fs\_docs/guidance/farm\_family\_handbook.pdf**](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/guidance/farm_family_handbook.pdf)

A range of actions can be taken if workers have not

had enough sleep or when signs of fatigue are emerging, for example providing an opportunity for napping, changing tasks (especially shifting to less safety critical tasks), working in pairs and increasing monitoring of fatigue symptoms.

### Best practice

Consult with all workers who are or may be affected by factors that contribute to fatigue.

1. Establish work rosters and shifts that reduce the potential for fatigue
2. Provide information to workers on identifying symptoms of fatigue
3. Direct workers to report if they are feeling fatigued
4. Establish actions taken if workers have not had enough sleep or when signs of fatigue are emerging
5. Regularly review fatigue management in consultation with workers and others

**TIP**

**Understanding the symptoms of fatigue** can be promoted by displaying a poster in the lunchroom

[**sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs\_**](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/Fatigue/Fatigue_selfassessment.PDF)[**docs/Fatigue/Fatigue\_selfassessment.PDF**](http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/Fatigue/Fatigue_selfassessment.PDF)

**Fatigue on the Farm – Infographic poster**

[**content.api.worksafe.vic.gov.au/sites/default/**](http://content.api.worksafe.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/ISBN-Fatigue-on-the-farm-2020-07.pdf)[**files/2020-07/ISBN-Fatigue-on-the-farm-2020-07.**](http://content.api.worksafe.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/ISBN-Fatigue-on-the-farm-2020-07.pdf)[**pdf**](http://content.api.worksafe.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-07/ISBN-Fatigue-on-the-farm-2020-07.pdf)

**LEARN MORE**

**The People in Dairy** website provides a lot of information about setting up jobs and teams in ways that will minimise work- related stress.

[**thepeopleindairy.org.au**](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/)

**Farming Fatigue Self-Assessment**

# See your

**farm manager before commencing or continuing to work if you answer “YES” to any of these**

* 1. **I had less than 6 hours sleep in the past**

**24 hours?**

* 1. **I had less than 12 hours sleep in the past**

**48 hours?**

* 1. **I will have been awake for 16 hours or more when I finish this shift?**
  2. **I have 3+ of the following signs of fatigue?**
     + **Yawning**
     + **Irritable**
     + **Rubbing or closing eyes**
     + **Struggling to stay awake**
     + **No energy or motivation**
     + **Poor short term memory**
     + **Near misses**
     + **Can’t concentrate on task**
     + **Reduced co-ordination**
     + **Nodding off or Microsleeps**



# Help us all to get home safely

[**www.aghealth.org.au**](http://www.aghealth.org.au/)

### Bullying and harassment in the workplace

A worker is ‘bullied at work’ if, while at work, an individual or group repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards the worker and that behaviour creates a risk to the health and safety of the worker. The sort of behaviours which could amount to bullying are:

* aggressive and intimidating conduct
* belittling or humiliating comments
* victimisation
* spreading malicious rumours
* teasing, practical jokes or initiation
* displaying offensive material
* exclusion from work-related events
* unreasonable work expectations

Under federal and state legislation unlawful harassment occurs when someone is made to feel intimidated, insulted or humiliated because of their race, colour, national or ethnic origin, sex, disability, sexual preference or some other characteristic specified under anti- discrimination or human rights legislation. It can

also happen if someone is working in a ‘hostile’ – or intimidating – environment. Harassment can include behaviour such as:

* telling insulting jokes about particular racial groups
* sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails
* displaying offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers
* making derogatory comments or taunts about someone’s race or religion
* asking intrusive questions about someone’s personal life, including their sex life

Workers should understand what is and what is not bullying behaviours and harrassment, and that your workplace does not tolerate bullying behaviours or harassment. They should feel that any complaint will be dealt with fairly and transparently.

### Best practice

Consult with all workers on expectations of workplace behaviours.

1. Ensure that you have bullying and harassment policies in place and that all workers are aware of them and acknowledge their understanding of behaviour expectations in the workplace.
2. Ensure that you have a grievance procedure which can be used to address bullying or harassment

complaints and that all workers are aware of it and feel comfortable using it.

1. If you receive an allegation of bullying or harassment from a worker - act immediately.
2. Apply your performance management processes consistently and fairly with all workers and document everything in writing.

**LEARN MORE**

**Farm workplace policies** define acceptable workplace behaviours and set out implications for not complying with the policies. For more information and templates:

[**thepeopleindairy.org.au/farm-safety/policies**](http://www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/farm-safety/policies)

**Preventing and responding to workplace bullying** [**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/bullying**](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/bullying)

**More specific information about what may constitute unlawful harassment is available from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission**

[**humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12040**](http://humanrights.gov.au/quick-guide/12040)

## INJURY MANAGEMENT

### Recording and reporting injuries

See the **Getting Started** topic in this Farm Safety Manual for information and templates for recording hazards, incidents and injuries.

All states and territories require the recording of all work- related injuries, with a follow up internal investigation and action to ensure the injury does not reoccur.

Workplace deaths, serious injuries and certain serious incidents are required to be reported to the regulator in your state or territory, these are known as notifiable

incidents. The table below describes the **types of injuries that must be notified to the regulator** (and those that are not required to be notified).

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **To be notified** | **Example** | **It does not include** |
| Immediate treatment as an in-patient | * Admission into a hospital as an in-patient for any duration, even if the stay is not overnight or longer. | * Out-patient treatment provided by the emergency section of a hospital (i.e. not requiring admission as an   in-patient)   * Admission for corrective surgery which does not immediately follow the injury (e.g. to fix a fractured nose). |
| Immediate treatment for the amputation of any part of the body | * Amputation of a limb such as arm or leg, body part such as hand, foot or the tip of a finger, toe, nose or ear. |  |
| Immediate treatment for a serious head injury | * Fractured skull, loss of consciousness, blood clot or bleeding in the brain, damage to the skull to the extent that it is likely to affect organ/face function. * Head injuries resulting in temporary or permanent amnesia. | * A bump to the head resulting in a minor contusion or headache. |
| Immediate treatment for a serious eye injury | * Injury that results in or is likely to result in the loss of the eye or total or partial loss of vision. * Injury that involves an object penetrating the eye (for example metal fragment, wood chip). * Exposure of the eye to a substance which poses a risk of serious eye damage. | * Eye exposure to a substance that merely causes irritation. |
| Immediate treatment for a serious burn | * A burn requiring intensive care or critical care which could require compression garment or a skin graft. | * A burn that merely requires washing the wound and applying a dressing. |
| Immediate treatment for the separation of skin from an underlying tissue (such as de-gloving or scalping) | * Separation of skin from an underlying tissue such that tendon, bone or muscles are exposed (de-gloving   or scalping). | * Minor lacerations. |
| Immediate treatment for a spinal injury | * Injury to the cervical, thoracic, lumbar or sacral vertebrae including the discs and spinal cord. | * Acute back strain. |
| Immediate treatment for the loss of a bodily function | * Loss of consciousness, loss of movement of a limb or loss of the sense of smell, taste, sight or hearing, or loss of function of an internal organ. | * Mere fainting * A sprain or strain. |
| Immediate treatment for serious lacerations | * Deep or extensive cuts that cause muscle, tendon, nerve or blood vessel damage or permanent impairment. * Deep puncture wounds. * Tears of wounds to the flesh or tissues—this may include stitching to prevent loss of blood and/or other treatment to prevent loss of bodily function and/or infection. |  |
| Medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance | * Medical treatment’ is treatment provided by a doctor. * Exposure to a substance includes exposure to chemicals, airborne contaminants and exposure to human and/or animal blood and body substances. |  |

### Notifiable Incidents

**LEARN MORE**

**Notifiable incidents -** if in doubt about notification, contact the regulator in your state

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/incident-notification-**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/incident-notification-fact-sheet)[**fact-sheet**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/incident-notification-fact-sheet)

Notification is also required for serious infections

and contract of certain zoonotic diseases, e.g. Q fever and Leptospirosis.

Some dangerous work-related near misses will also need to be reported even if no one is injured. These include for example: an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage

of a substance, an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire, the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any registered plant such as a crane, the collapse or partial collapse of a structure.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Jurisdiction** | **Regulator** | **Phone to notify incidents** | **Website** |
| New South Wales | * SafeWork NSW | * 13 10 50 | [**safework.nsw.gov.au**](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/) |
| Victoria | * WorkSafe Victoria | 13 23 60 | [**worksafe.vic.gov.au**](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/) |
| Queensland | * WorkSafe Queensland | * 1300 362 128 | [**worksafe.qld.gov.au**](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/) |
| South Australia | * SafeWork SA | * 1800 777 209 | [**safework.sa.gov.au**](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/) |
| Western Australia | * WorkSafe WA | * 1800 678 198 | [**commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe**](https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/WorkSafe) |
| ACT | * WorkSafe ACT | * 02 6207 3000 | [**accesscanberra.act.gov.au/**](http://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/)[**app/**](http://app/home/workhealthandsafety)[**home/workhealthandsafety**](http://app/home/workhealthandsafety) |
| Tasmania | * WorkSafe Tasmania | * 1300 366 322 | [**worksafe.tas.gov.au**](http://www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/) |

### Workers compensation and return to work

Workers compensation is managed by a Workcover authority in each state and territory and the rules vary significantly from state to state. Workers compensation laws apply to all employees whether permanent or casual and failure to register and pay the workers compensation levy is an offence.

In some states, share farmers are deemed to be employees for workers compensation laws and most state workers compensation laws also deem certain independent contractors to be employees for the purpose of workers compensation responsibilities. The rules differ markedly and some of them are complex.

Contact the WorkCover authority in your state for information on worker’s compensation and return to work plans.

Return to work posters are available from your worker’s compensation insurer.

### Health monitoring

Health monitoring is required for some hazard substances and asbestos exposure. Aside from asbestos, one of the common hazardous substances farmers are exposed to are organo-phosphates (OPs) and health monitoring must be undertaken for some OPs. Consult each Safety Data Sheet (SDS) to determine what health monitoring is needed.

##### Consultation and communication

Throughout this Farm Safety Manual there are reminders that it is a legal requirement to consult with workers

on health and safety matters. For most farms, regular consultation could occur at your regular worker meetings with health and safety on the agenda.



*Discuss relevant safety topics at any meeting to keep safety top of mind Source: Dairy Australia*

**LEARN MORE**

**Consultation on workplace health**

**and safety –** Code of Practice is available from Safework Australia

[**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-work-health-and-safety-consultation-cooperation-and-coordination)[**work-health-and-safety-consultation-cooperation-**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-work-health-and-safety-consultation-cooperation-and-coordination)[**and-coordination**](https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-work-health-and-safety-consultation-cooperation-and-coordination)

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANS

#### Prevention of incidents and injuries is the clear objective of each farm safety program, but emergency plans and

facilities need to be in place to adequately respond if things do go wrong.

Time is often critical in an emergency. Having well- thought-out and practised plans, supported by well- trained people and access to the correct equipment, will provide confidence to respond. This can prevent or reduce the severity of injuries to people and livestock,

limit damage to infrastructure and in some circumstances, reduce the impact on neighbours and the community.

Your farm emergency plan must cover:

1. Emergency procedures
   * effective responses to possible emergencies
   * evacuation procedures
   * notification of emergency services at the earliest opportunity
   * medical treatment and assistance; and
   * coordination and communication of the emergency response for everyone at the workplace.
2. Testing of the emergency procedures (including how often they should be tested)
3. Information, training and instruction to relevant workers for implementing the emergency procedures

The first step in making an emergency response plan for your farm is to **identify the potential emergencies**. The types of emergencies that may occur on a dairy farm could include fire, flood, cyclone or severe storms, machinery entrapment, electrical shock, snake or spider bite, chemical exposure/spillage, injuries, illness and accidents, working alone

The requirements for **resources and procedures** will differ on each farm and will depend, for example, on the size of the farm, the activities involved, the

distance from emergency medical assistance, the first aid skill level of people on the farm, the presence of children, and the level of emergency communication (e.g. mobile phone coverage).

**Emergency facilities** must be appropriate for the types of emergencies that might occur (e.g. deluge showers, eye washes, firefighting equipment, first aid kits). The emergency facilities must be located where they are needed, installed correctly, regularly maintained, and access to them kept clear. The correct equipment must be available to contain and handle any chemical spills that might happen, see the topic: Farm Chemicals for more information.

**Evacuation routes** in buildings should be clearly marked and kept clear. Nominate evacuation assembly areas in a safe place (and have alternative assembly areas in case the first is affected by the emergency).

Planning for evacuation of people and movement of livestock may involve monitoring weather, fire or flood conditions and relocating stock early – the movement of livestock during an emergency event could put lives at risk.

**Nominate someone** to be responsible for emergency coordination and ensure they are trained in emergency management and control. This should be someone who is on the farm most of the time.

**Instruct everyone** working on the farm in the emergency response procedures. Include it in your **induction programs** and make sure that **contractors and visitors** to the farm also know what to do in the event of an emergency. Everyone should know the location of fire

alarms, fire extinguishers and first aid kits; how and where to contact emergency services; and where to safely assemble in the event of an emergency.

**Training** is important. No one should try to fight fires, deal with spills of hazardous substances, undertake rescues or do anything to control an emergency situation unless they are confident to do so, have been trained in the correct procedures and it is safe to do so.

**TIP**

Consult and engage the local emergency services about your plans as you set them up.

**TIP**

**Display emergency contact numbers** in locations such as the dairy, workshops, at first aid stations and in houses (include rentals) and accommodation supplied to employees. A template for an emergency notice is included in this topic of your Farm Safety Manual.

**TIP**

**On your farm map** show the location of the Emergency Assembly Area, location of fire extinguishers, first aid kits and chemical Safety Data Sheets.

List the name and mobile numbers of first aiders and supervisors. Include direction to call 000, and the poisons information number 13 11 26



**CALLING 000 (TRIPLEZERO)**

**Calling 000 [TripleZero] –**

is the quickest way to get the right emergency service to help you.

You can contact Police, Fire or Ambulance in life threatening or emergency situations via that number.

Teach children on the farm about 000

**‘Stay focused, stay relevant, stay on the line’**

For more information:

[**triplezero.gov.au/triple-zero/How-to-Call-000**](http://www.triplezero.gov.au/triple-zero/How-to-Call-000)

**LEARN MORE**

For guidance on formulating plans, first aid training and first aid kits, visit: [**safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-**](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-first-aid-workplace)[**first-aid-workplace**](http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/model-code-practice-first-aid-workplace)

The Dairy Australia website has a series of extreme weather information pages (including preparing for bushfires). Resources include a **dairy farm emergency preparedness checklist** to help farmers prepare for and reduce the potential for injury and property damage.

[**dairyaustralia.com.au/land-water-and-climate/**](https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/land-water-and-climate/extreme-weather)[**extreme-weather**](https://www.dairyaustralia.com.au/land-water-and-climate/extreme-weather)

**TIP**

**Poisons information line 13 11 26 -** if you think someone has been poisoned, taken the wrong medication or the wrong dose or been bitten or stung by a marine animal, spider, snake or insect.

**BUT In an emergency, call triple zero (000).** Do not call the Poisons information line in emergency situations where the person has collapsed, stopped breathing, is having a fit or has had an anaphylactic shock.

If someone has to go to hospital or an ambulance attends, try to have the relevant chemical SDS on hand (if the poison is known).

**TIP**

**Working alone – Contact is essential**

Time is never more critical if an injury occurs to someone working remotely or alone. There have been many farm incidents where an injured person has not been found for hours (sometimes days) because no one knew where they were and they did not have a means of communication or a system of checking in.

Having well-maintained, effective equipment such as mobile phones, personal alarm devices and two- way radios is essential.

**First aid**

**THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND EXAMPLES OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING:**

**Engineering**

* Provide fire extinguishers for facilities, including the dairy, workshops, feed sheds, chemical and fuel storage and houses
* Provide fire extinguishers for machinery and vehicles
* Fit smoke alarms in accommodation and offices
* Have spill kits for chemical storage
* Install deluge shower and eye wash station near chemical storage
* Locate lifesaving rings near ponds or steep sided slippery channels

**Administrative controls**

* Provide training and induction in emergency response
* Provide dedicated trained first aiders
* Establish a site evacuation plan and display strategically
* Establish and sign post an emergency assembly area
* Ensure someone with the skill set will be responsible to coordinate a response
* Provide adequate, relevant, up-to-date first aid kits
* Develop an effective communication plan for situations when working alone

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

* Include disposable gloves and resuscitation masks in the first aid kit
* Use appropriate clothing and PPE for responding to fires, chemical incidents and floods (may include personal flotation devices)

##### First aid kits

The main first aid kit for the farm should be kept in the dairy, accessible to all workers at all times, regularly checked and well-maintained.. There should be a sign outside the dairy to indicate to everyone that it is there, and a clear label on the kit itself. It should be hooked on the wall in a way that makes it easy to take to a casualty.

**BY LAW**

**Work Health and Safety regulations place obligations on a person conducting a business or undertaking in relation to first aid, including requirements to:**

* provide first aid equipment and ensure each worker at the workplace has access to the equipment
* ensure access to facilities for the administration of first aid
* ensure that an adequate number of workers are trained to administer first aid at the workplace or that workers have access to an adequate number of other people who have been trained to administer first aid.

Small first response kits could be carried in tractors, quads or utes when working remotely. Other kits may be located in accommodation and houses, again with their locations clearly signed.

Someone needs to be responsible for checking and updating first aid kits. Commercial suppliers will provide this service. Always record the date the kit was updated or checked



**WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

Farm Safety Manual 2021 **23**

##### First aid training

This is commercially available and can be conducted in a manner relevant to farming if you have sufficient numbers.

Always check the skills of new workers to see if they have up to date first aid training or other emergency response skills e.g. firefighting, SES, community ambulance first responder.

**TIP**

Consult the SDSs of chemicals used on the farm to assess the requirements for your first aid kits.

**TIP**

There are a range of commercial providers of first aid kits and first aid training. Shop around for those that meet the needs of your farm and situation.

### Fire extinguishers

Chose the type and size of fire extinguishers you need for buildings and plant and ensure they are serviced/ recharged at appropriate intervals.

**TIP**

Commercial services and some fire services will conduct both the servicing and assessment of your farms requirements. Always get quotes.

For comparison of extinguishers, advantages and disadvantages and estimated costs the following is a link to a commercial site:

[fireextinguishersales.com.au/resources.php](http://fireextinguishersales.com.au/resources.php)

*Image: Hilary Walker*

Portable Fire Extinguisher Guide



[shop@fpaa.com.au](mailto:shop@fpaa.com.au)

[technical@fpaa.com.au](mailto:technical@fpaa.com.au)

Fire Protection Association Australia

###### Type of Fire, Class and Suitability



Pre 1997

Current

Extinguishing Agent

###### Water

A

Wood Paper Plastic

B

Flammable & Combustible Liquids

C

Flammable Gases

E

Electrically Energised Equipment

F

Cooking Oils and Fats

D

Comments

Metal Fires

Dangerous if used on flammable liquid, energised electrical equipment and cooking oil/fat fires

✓XXXX

###### Wet Chemical

Dangerous if used on

XXXenergised electrical

Use only special purpose extinguishers and seek expert advice.

* equipment✓

###### Foam\*

Powder

(ABE)

(BE)

✓✓XXLIMITED

Dangerous if used on energised electrical equipment

Look carefully at the extinguisher to determine if it is a BE or ABE unit as the capability is different

✓✓✓✓X

X✓✓✓✓

###### Carbon Dioxide

LIMITED

LIMITED

Not suitable for outdoor

✓deep seated A Class Fires

X use or smoulderingX

###### Vaporising Liquid

✓LIMITED

LIMITED

Check the characteristics

of the specific extinguishing agent. 5 Yearly servicing must be done by ODS &SGG licenced persons.

X

✓

\* Fire Blankets may be used as a

✓heat and to control a fire in

###### Fire Blanket

LIMITED\*

LIMITED

XXthermal barrier against radiated

clothes being worn by a person.

LEGEND

✓= the class or classes in which agent is most effective

X= not recommend for these class of fires

For more information go to: [www.fpaa.com.au](http://www.fpaa.com.au/)

LIMITED = indicates that the Extinguishant is not the agent of choice for the class of fire, but it may have a limited extinguishing capability

\* Solvents such as alcohol or acetone mix with water and therefore require special foam

© FPA Australia ABN 30 005 366 576

*For more information go to:* [***fpaa.com.au***](http://www.fpaa.com.au/)*© FPA Australia ABN 30 005 366 576*