Farm safety - machinery
Common tractor accidents involve roll-overs, run-overs and unguarded power take-off shafts. Fit your tractor with a roll-over protection structure (ROPS) and seatbelts. Ensure that everyone working on the farm is thoroughly familiar with operating procedures and safety requirements for any machinery they use. Organisations such as WorkSafe Victoria, Farmsafe Australia and the Agriculture Victoria offer information on the safe operation of tractors and other farm machinery.

Poorly used or faulty machinery is a major cause of death and injury on farms. Common tractor accidents involve roll-overs, run-overs and unguarded power take-off (PTO) shafts. Other dangerous machinery includes quad (four wheel) bikes and motorbikes, chain and bench saws, harvesters, generators, augers and earth-moving equipment.

Farms make up only 10 per cent of Victorian workplaces, but they account for between 25 and 50 per cent of all work-related deaths (fatalities) in any given year. One in four unintentional farm deaths are caused by unsafe tractor operation. Tractors have a high centre of gravity and can flip and crush the driver if not fitted with a roll-over protection structure (ROPS). Hands, hair and clothing can be caught by unguarded PTO shafts or other unguarded moving parts such as pulleys and belts. People can be injured by front-end loaders, falling from a moving tractor or being struck by its wheels.

Machinery accidents can be prevented by keeping the machine in good repair, fitting and ensuring all safety equipment (such as guards, safe access platforms and ROPS on tractors) is operating with the machine at all times.

**Farm machinery safety measures**

General safety suggestions include:

- Read and follow the manufacturers’ instructions for operation.
- Don’t remove or modify safety features.
- Ensure that everyone working on the farm is thoroughly familiar with operating procedures and safety requirements for any machinery they use.
- If needed, replace and fit guards to cover the moving parts of machinery – for example, a PTO guard.
- Make sure that tractors are correctly ballasted or weighted for particular jobs.
- Fit falling object protective structures (FOPS) on front-end loaders.
- Keep a well-stocked, up-to-date first aid kit in an accessible area.
- Always wear appropriate protective and visible clothing.

**Train workers thoroughly in farm machinery safety**

Your farm is a workplace and you are responsible for the health and safety of workers and visitors. Inexperienced workers are much more likely to be injured in farm accidents. You can prevent injuries in many ways:

- Supervise inexperienced workers at all times.
- Make sure your workers are thoroughly trained in equipment operation and safety.
- Keep all equipment in good repair.
- Warn workers of potential hazards and insist they undertake training and use equipment safely.
- Only allow a worker to perform a task when you are confident they can handle it.
- Keep visitors and children well away from operating machinery and warn them of potential hazards.

**Safe tractor operation**

Keep your tractor in good repair and immediately fix or replace faulty parts. Make detailed notes on services and repairs in a logbook and conduct a general maintenance check on the tractor every day before use. If you are uncertain about how to properly service and maintain your tractor, it is recommended you have a close working relationship with your local machinery expert.

Other safety suggestions include:

- Devise safety procedures that everyone on your farm must follow, such as only starting the tractor when sitting in the driver’s seat and turning the tractor engine off before leaving the driver’s seat.
- Install ROPS and seatbelts on all tractors.
- If using a front-end loader, install FOPS.
- Don’t allow anyone to stand near the tractor when it’s being started.
- Don’t operate your tractor close to dams, pipes, drains or powerlines, on steep slopes or near other potential hazards.
- Remember that tractors have a high centre of gravity and are more likely to tip when riding over hilly ground.
- Don’t carry passengers.
- Make sure that steps and control pedals are non-slip and kept clean.
Unguarded power take-off shafts are extremely hazardous

All moving machinery parts should be guarded so that clothing, hair or fingers can’t get caught. Power take-off (PTO) shafts can cause serious injury and death. Safety suggestions for PTOs include:

- Guard the entire length of the shaft.
- Anchor the shaft guard to stop it from rotating.
- Enclose the joints with a guard.
- Keep shields in place when using the tractor.
- Always make sure all guards and shields are re-attached if removed during maintenance.

Protect children from tractor accidents

Children account for a high proportion of farm-related fatalities, and children under the age of fourteen account for one in four tractor-related deaths. You can protect children from harm in many ways:

- Warn children of the hazards and make them aware of safety issues.
- Always remove keys from tractors.
- Separate play areas from active farm working areas.
- Make sure that equipment storage areas are securely locked and inaccessible.
- Don’t leave running machinery unattended.
- Lower your tractor’s front-end loaders or three-point linkages after use.
- Don’t allow children to ride on or drive the tractor.
- Make sure proper training is undertaken before allowing young adults to operate machinery.

Draw up a farm safety emergency plan

An emergency plan is vital. Some suggestions include:

- Ensure easy access to a suitable and well-stocked first aid kit.
- Make sure at least one person on the farm is trained in first aid.
- Keep emergency numbers and correct addresses next to the telephone.
- Plan routes to the nearest hospital – make sure it has an operational emergency department.
- Regularly talk through your emergency plan with your family and other workers.
- Make sure your children understand what to do in an emergency.

Where to get help

- In an emergency, always call triple zero (000) for an ambulance
- Your doctor
- WorkSafe Victoria Tel. (03) 9641 1555 (general enquiries), 1800 136 089 (advisory service), 13 23 60 (24-hour emergency line to report serious workplace injuries)
- National Centre for Farmer Health Tel. (03) 5551 8533
- Agriculture Victoria Tel. 136 186
- Farmsafe Australia Tel. (02) 6269 5622

References

- WorkSafe Victoria, Victorian WorkCover Authority, Australia. More information here.
Please note that we cannot answer personal medical queries. If you are looking for health or medical advice we recommend that you:

- talk to your doctor or pharmacist
- dial triple zero (000) in an emergency
- ring NURSE-ON-CALL Tel. 1300 60 60 24.

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More information

Safety

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Safety basics
- Child safety
- Safety in and around the home
- Safe lifestyle and entertainment
- Outdoor, weather and sports safety
- Travel and transport safety
- Fire, flood and other disasters
- Work and environmental safety
- Farm safety

Safety basics

- Bites and stings – first aid
If you are bitten or stung by an insect or animal, apply first aid and seek medical treatment as soon as possible...

- How to survive a rip current (video)
  Learn what to do if you find yourself in a rip current...

- Ladder safety matters – Mick (video)
  Stop and think before you use a ladder...

- Ladder safety matters – Nick (video)
  Stop and think before you use a ladder...

- Ladders Safety Matters - Paul (video)
  We can keep our pools safe, healthy, and most importantly fun...

- Look after your health at harvest time (slide show)
  Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness...

Child safety

- Animals and child safety
  Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...

- Babies and safety
  Most injuries to babies do not occur by chance - many are predictable and largely preventable...

- Baby care - moving from cot to bed
  Some children are unsettled the first few nights in a 'big bed'. Try to be patient, loving and reassuring...

- Baby furniture - safety tips
  Even if your baby furniture meets every safety standard and recommendation, your child still needs close supervision...

- Bicycle safety and children
  As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety and become safer road and bicycle users...

- Burns and scalds - children
  Most hot tap water scald injuries to children happen in the bathroom...

- Child safety and injury prevention
  By making a few practical changes to your home, you can dramatically reduce the risk of injury to your child...

- Child safety in the car
  Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries...

- Eating tips for young toddlers
  Children have a natural ability to sense when they are hungry and when they are full...

- Farm safety – children
  Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers...

- Hot weather and child safety
  Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration...

- Internet safety for children
  A child's digital footprint can be as easy to follow as their real footprints...

- Look after your health at harvest time (slide show)
  Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness...

- Mobile phone safety for children
  Teach your child strategies for responding to mobile phone bullying...

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
Playgrounds and child safety

Play environments can be safe and beneficial for your child. With proper planning, you can make sure your child gets plenty of playtime activity...

Poisoning and child safety

Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 immediately if you suspect your child has been poisoned or given the wrong medicine or the wrong dose of medicine...

Road and traffic safety for children

As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety, and become safer road users...

Scooters and child safety

Scooters can travel at fast speeds and falls and collisions are disturbingly common...

Water safety for children

Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water...

Safety in and around the home

Animals and child safety

Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...

Asbestos in the home

Asbestos fibres breathed into the lungs can cause a range of health problems including lung cancer and mesothelioma...

Chemicals in the home

Learn how to safely store and dispose of household chemicals, and how to respond when a person is poisoned...

Electric shock

Always disconnect the power supply before trying to help a victim of electric shock...

Gas heating - health and safety issues

If you service your gas heater regularly and use it correctly, it will be safe and economical to use...

Greywater - recycling water at home

When handled properly, greywater can be safely reused for the garden...

Groundwater

Groundwater quality varies across Victoria; in some areas, groundwater is not suitable for use...

Ladder Safety – Mick's story

Injuries associated with ladder falls have been steadily increasing in Australia, especially among men aged 60 years and older doing work in and around the home...

Ladder Safety – Nick’s story

Injuries associated with ladder falls have been steadily increasing in Australia, especially among men aged 60 years and older doing work in and around the home...

Ladder Safety – Paul’s story

Paul was sanding the exterior of his house when he overreached and fell more than two metres from his ladder...

Ladders Safety Matters - Paul (video)

We can keep our pools safe, healthy, and most importantly fun...

Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)

Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury...
and illness...

• Medicines - safety issues
  Make sure your doctor knows about every medicine you take, including vitamins.

• Older people – preventing falls at home
  Falls are a major cause of injury for older people. Find out how you can prevent falls around your home.

• Pest control in the home
  If you use pesticides to control pests around the house, make sure you use as little as possible.

• Vision loss - safety around the home
  There are many ways to improve home safety for people whose vision is deteriorating.

• Water quality in tanks, bores and dams
  Make sure your private drinking water supply is safe.

• Water safety for children
  Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water.

Safe lifestyle and entertainment

• Internet safety for children
  A child's digital footprint can be as easy to follow as their real footprints.

• Mobile phone safety for children
  Teach your child strategies for responding to mobile phone bullying.

• Partying safely – tips for teenagers
  Don't advertise a party via SMS or the internet to limit the risk of gate-crashers and violent situations.

• Solariums (sunbeds and tanning beds)
  There is no such thing as a safe solarium tan.

Outdoor, weather and sports safety

• Exercise safety
  Training too hard or fast is a common cause of sports-related injuries.

• Heat stress and heat-related illness
  Heat kills more Australians than any natural disaster. Find out how you can treat and prevent heat-related illness.

• Heat stress and older people
  People aged 65 years and over are at increased risk of heat-related illnesses and need special care in hot weather.

• Heat stress – preventing heatstroke
  Heatstroke is a life-threatening emergency that can be avoided by following simple prevention measures.

• Hot weather and child safety
  Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration.

• How to cope and stay safe in extreme heat
  Know the effects of extreme heat, who is at risk and how you can prepare yourself and others.

• How to survive a rip current (video)
  Learn what to do if you find yourself in a rip current.

• Hypothermia
  The early responses to hypothermia will be moving around, seeking shelter, hair standing on end (goosebumps) and shivering.

• Walking - safety and environmental issues
  Choose a route that is appropriate for your age and fitness level. Warm up and cool down with a slow, gentle pace to ease in and out of your exercise session.
Water from natural resources

Drinking untreated water, such as creek water, bore water and sometimes even rainwater can lead to illnesses including gastroenteritis.

Water safety for children

Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water.

Travel and transport safety

Bicycle safety and children

As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety and become safer road and bicycle users.

Child safety in the car

Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries.

Look after your health at harvest time (slideshow)

Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Motor vehicle crashes

Motor vehicle crashes continue to be one of the biggest killers and causes of injury in Victoria.

Road and traffic safety for children

As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety, and become safer road users.

Safe driving

Safe driving is up to every individual on the road. You can be a safe driver by being alert and ready to take action at any time.

Scooters and child safety

Scooters can travel at fast speeds and falls and collisions are disturbingly common.

Travel safety tips

You can reduce your risk of being mugged or robbed while travelling by taking a few simple precautions.

Fire, flood and other disasters

After a flood – animal and insect related hazards

When returning to a flood-affected area, remember that wild animals, including rats, mice, snakes or spiders, may be trapped in your home, shed or garden.

After a flood – returning home safely

When returning to your home after a flood, take precautions to reduce the possibility of injury, illness or disease.

Bushfire aftermath - safety tips

Houses, sheds and other buildings or structures burnt in a bushfire can leave potential health hazards.

Bushfire preparation advice

Being prepared for a bushfire helps you cope better in an emergency.

Bushfire smoke

Bushfire smoke can reduce air quality in rural and urban areas, and may affect people's health.

Emergencies - floods

You and your family should work out an emergency plan in case of flood.

Smoke from planned burns

Bushfire smoke can reduce air quality in rural and urban areas, and may affect people's health. Planned burns are an important part of reducing the risk of bushfires.

Talking to children about bushfire risk

Children can be affected by information regarding bushfire risk and they may become concerned about issues of safety. Talking to children openly in a way that suits their age, while also involving...
Urban flash flooding can happen quickly and without warning. Heavy rain causes runoff to collect in dips, car parks and roads, and there is a risk of contamination, injury and disease.

Work and environmental safety

- Asbestos and your health
  When asbestos fibres become airborne, people working with asbestos may inhale particles which remain in their lungs.

- Cadmium
  Low-level exposure to cadmium over a long period of time may cause health effects because cadmium can accumulate in the body.

- Computer-related injuries
  Using a computer can contribute to problems of the muscles and joints, eyestrain and overuse injuries of the arms, wrists and hands.

- Eye safety at work
  Wearing eye protection appropriate for the task can significantly reduce the risk of injury.

- Ladder safety matters – Mick (video)
  Stop and think before you use a ladder.

- Ladder safety matters – Nick (video)
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- Q fever
  Q fever is caused by a micro-organism that can be carried by cattle, sheep and goats.

- Shiftwork
  A person working the night shift is at greater risk of various disorders and accidents.

- Skin cancer - protecting outdoor workers
  People who work outdoors are in one of the highest risk groups for skin cancer.

- Workplace conflict
  A clash of personalities at work is bad for business, because it can affect productivity and increase absenteeism.

- Workplace safety - confined spaces
  Around 60 per cent of people killed in confined spaces were trying to rescue someone else.

- Workplace safety - coping with a critical incident
  Stress responses can develop over time after trauma, and support may be required by some workers or groups.

- Workplace safety - dangerous goods
  Dangerous goods are objects or substances that are potentially harmful to people or the environment, such as explosives or chemicals.

- Workplace safety - hazardous substances
  A hazardous substance can be inhaled, splashed onto the skin or eyes, or swallowed.

- Workplace safety - infection control
  The spread of many pathogens in the workplace can be prevented with regular hand washing.

- Workplace safety - manual handling injuries
  A person can be injured when handling objects in a variety of ways including pulling, pushing, holding or restraining.

- Workplace safety - noise pollution
There are many ways to reduce exposure to excessive noise in the workplace.

- **Workplace safety - overuse injuries**
  Occupational overuse syndrome, also known as RSI, is caused by repetitive movements or awkward postures.

**Farm safety**

- **Chemicals and spray drift**
  Sprayed chemicals can drift over neighbouring properties or water sources, and can affect human health, animals or the environment.

- **Farm safety and handling agrichemicals**
  To reduce risks on the farm, use hazardous chemicals according to manufacturer guidelines or replace them with less dangerous options.

- **Farm safety -- children**
  Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers.

- **Farm safety -- confined spaces**
  Any confined space on a farm can be dangerous and the threat may not be apparent until it's too late.

- **Farm safety - crush injuries**
  Hand and finger injuries are the most common crush injuries that occur on Victorian farms.

- **Farm safety - falls**
  Falls are a common farm hazard, especially for older farmers.

- **Farm safety - handling animals**
  Any animal-handling practices can increase the risk of injury to farmers, farm workers and the animal.

- **Farm safety - machinery**
  Poorly used or faulty machinery is a major cause of death and injury on farms.

- **Farm safety - quad bikes**
  Most injuries and deaths involving quad bikes (all-terrain vehicles) are caused by the bike rolling over the rider.

- **Farm safety - risks and hazards**
  Farms can be dangerous places for workers and family members, but the risks can be reduced.

- **Farm safety – sheep and shearing**
  Handling sheep can cause manual injuries and badly designed shearing sheds can present a range of hazards.

- **Look after your health at harvest time (slide show)**
  Farmer health, wellbeing and safety are often neglected when facing the pressures of harvest. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the risk of injury and illness.

**Related Information**

- **Farm safety - risks and hazards**
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  Handling sheep can cause manual injuries and badly designed shearing sheds can present a range of hazards.

- **Farm safety - manual handling**
  Farm workers often experience muscle and ligament strain, but good manual handling techniques and safe work habits can prevent most injuries.
NURSE-ON-CALL

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