

The Work Health and Safety Laws:
Guide for Tasmania's Rural Industry





Please note

This information is for guidance only and is not to be taken as an expression of the law. It should be read in conjunction with the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 and the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 and any other relevant legislation. To view, go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au

This guide was produced by staff from WorkSafe Tasmania.

We welcome your feedback on this guide. Send to: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au

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Introduction

This guide provides those working in rural industries with an overview of the Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (WHS Act). It will help you understand your work health and safety (WHS) duties in the workplace.

This act and its accompanying regulations are supported by codes of practice, which provide practical guidance on your WHS obligations. You can find these Codes at the WorkSafe Tasmania website. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'codes'.

Definitions

Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) — the WHS Act does not use the term 'employer' because the Act covers all working relationships in workplaces, including contractors and volunteers. For that reason the term 'Person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) is used.

A PCBU can be a sole trader (for example a self-employed person), a partnership, a company, an unincorporated association, an individual trustee of a trust, a government department or public authority (including a municipal council).

The majority of farmers will most likely be PCBUs.

Worker — employees, contractors, subcontractors, outworkers, apprentices and trainees, work experience students, volunteers and PCBUs who are individuals if they perform work for the business.

Officer — a person who makes decisions or participates in making decisions that affect the whole or substantial part of the organisation's activities.

Due diligence — emphasises the

corporate governance responsibilities of officers. Officers of corporations and unincorporated bodies need to show that they have taken reasonable steps to:

- acquire and update their knowledge of WHS matters
- understand the operations being carried out by the PCBU they are employed in, and the hazards and risks associated with the operations
- ensure that the PCBU has, and uses, appropriate resources and processes to remove or reduce WHS risks arising from work being done
- ensure that the PCBU has appropriate processes in place to receive and respond promptly to information regarding incidents, hazards and risks
- ensure that the PCBU has, and uses, processes for complying with duties or obligations under the WHS Act.

Reasonably practicable — the guiding principle of the WHS Act is that all people are given the highest level of health and safety protection from hazards arising from work, far as reasonably practicable. The term 'reasonably practicable' means what could reasonably be done at a particular time to ensure WHS measures were in place.

General responsibilities

Managing risks to health and safety

A PCBU has a duty to manage risks to the health and safety of workers and to customers and onlookers to the work activity.

A PCBU must manage these risks by identifying all reasonably foreseeable hazards, applying a control measure that is reasonably practicable after working through a hierarchy of risk control measures, and then maintaining and reviewing these risk control measures.

An injury is the most common outcome of a workplace incident, but a near miss might be fatal the next time it occurs. Workers should report all incidents, including near misses, to their employer. Workers are often the best-placed people to identify hazards, especially those caused by faulty equipment.

Risk management

A safe and healthy workplace does not happen by chance or guesswork. You have to think about what could go wrong at your workplace and what the consequences could be. Then you must do whatever you can (in other words, whatever is 'reasonably practicable') to remove or reduce WHS risks arising from your business or undertaking.

This process is known as risk management and involves four steps. For more information see the How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice; go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP112'.

- ▮ **Identify hazards** — find out what could cause harm.
- ▮ **Assess risks if necessary** — understand the nature of the harm that could be caused by the hazard, how serious the harm could be and the likelihood of it happening.
- ▮ **Control risks** — implement the most effective control measure that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.
- ▮ **Review control measures** — to ensure they are working as planned. The most important step in managing risks involves eliminating them so far as is reasonably practicable, or if that is not possible, minimising the risks.

In deciding how to control risks, you must consult your workers and their representatives who will be directly affected by this decision. Their experience will help you choose appropriate control measures; their involvement will increase the level of acceptance of any changes that may be needed to the way they do their job.

There are many ways to control risks. Some control measures are more effective than others.

You must consider various control options and choose the control that most effectively removes the hazard or reduces the risk in the circumstances. This may involve a single control measure or a combination of different controls that together provide the highest level of protection that is reasonably practicable.

The ways of controlling risks are ranked from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest. This ranking is known as the hierarchy of risk control.

The hierarchy of risk control

Level 1

- ▮ Eliminate the hazard.

Level 2

- ▮ Substitute the hazard with something safer.
- ▮ Isolate the hazard from people.
- ▮ Reduce the risks through engineering controls.

Level 3

- ▮ Reduce exposure to the hazard using administrative actions.
- ▮ Use personal protective equipment.

Workplace incidents/procedures

You must notify WorkSafe Tasmania of a death, serious injury or illness, or dangerous incident that arises out of the conduct of your business or undertaking.

You must notify WorkSafe Tasmania immediately after becoming aware that a notifiable incident has occurred. The fastest way possible is normally by calling the Helpline on 1300 366 322 (inside Tasmania) or (03) 6166 4600 (outside Tasmania).

You must keep a record of each notifiable incident for at least five years from the date you notify WorkSafe Tasmania.

Serious injury or illness:

A serious injury or illness means work-related injury that results in:

- ▮ immediate hospital treatment as an in-patient
- ▮ immediate treatment for serious injuries (for example amputation, scalping, a spinal injury, loss of bodily function or serious laceration, burn, head injury or eye injury), or

- ▮ medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance.
- ▮ medical treatment (treatment by a doctor) within 48 hours of exposure to a substance.

Infections

The PCBU must also notify WorkSafe Tasmania of any infection that carrying out work is a significant contributing factor to. This includes any infection that is reliably attributable to carrying out work:

- ▮ with micro-organisms
- ▮ involving providing treatment or care to a person
- ▮ involving contact with human blood or body substances
- ▮ involving handling or coming into contact with animals, animal hides, skins, wool or hair, animal carcasses or animal waste products.

It also includes the following occupational zoonoses contracted in the course of work that involves the handling or coming into contact with animals, animal hides, skins, wool or hair, animal carcasses or animal waste products:

- ▮ anthrax
- ▮ avian influenza
- ▮ brucellosis
- ▮ hendra virus
- ▮ leptospirosis
- ▮ psittacosis
- ▮ Q fever.

Dangerous incidents

The PCBU must also notify WorkSafe Tasmania of any dangerous incident that exposes a person to a serious health or safety risk from immediate or imminent exposure to:

- an uncontrolled escape, spillage or leakage of a substance
- an uncontrolled implosion, explosion or fire
- an uncontrolled escape of gas or steam, or an uncontrolled escape of a pressurised substance
- electric shock
- the fall or release from a height of any plant, substance or thing
- the collapse, overturning, failure or malfunction of, or damage to, any plant that is required to be authorised for use in accordance with the regulations
- the collapse or partial collapse of a structure
- the collapse or failure of an excavation or of any shoring supporting an excavation
- the inrush of water, mud or gas in workings, in an underground excavation or tunnel
- the interruption of the main system of ventilation in an underground excavation or tunnel.

General workplace management — duties of the PCBU

Training, information and instruction

You must ensure workers receive training, information and instruction that is suitable, adequate and understandable to meet their needs and is relevant to the nature of the work and risks.

Adequate and accessible facilities

You must provide and maintain (as far as reasonably practicable) adequate facilities for workers, including toilets, drinking water, washing facilities and eating facilities.

You must also provide and maintain (as far as reasonably practicable):

- a safe means of entry, exit and movement within workplace
- a safe work space
- floors and surfaces in a safe condition
- adequate lighting to enable each person to carry out work, move within the workplace and evacuate in an emergency
- adequate ventilation
- control of risks associated with extremes in temperatures
- control of risks associated with essential services.

For more information refer to the Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP124'.

First aid and emergency plans

You must provide, and ensure your workers have access to, first aid equipment, first aid facilities, and an adequate number of trained workers to administer first aid.

Keep emergency phone numbers handy for the following services:

- local fire service
- local doctor and ambulance
- Poisons Information Centre (131 126).

You must develop procedures to deal with workplace emergencies. These procedures include:

- evacuation procedures
- notifying emergency service organisations at the earliest opportunity
- medical treatment and assistance
- effective communication
- testing of the emergency procedures, including the frequency of testing
- information, training and instruction to relevant workers on implementing the emergency procedures.

Your workers should be familiar with emergency procedures for the workplace, such as:

- who to report to in an emergency
- emergency telephone numbers
- evacuation procedures and the designated meeting place
- the type of fire extinguisher to use for different fires.

Personal protective equipment

You should control the exposure to risks by using one or more measures other than providing personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is the least effective method of controlling a safety risk.

When choosing appropriate PPE, consider how the equipment will protect your worker. For example, a helmet will reduce the severity of a head injury to a rider of a quad bike or two-wheel motorbike if they were to fall off, but it does not prevent the incident from occurring. Relying on PPE alone will not reduce the risk of an incident, but it could reduce the severity of an injury.

PPE must be suitable to the risk, the work and the worker. It must be maintained, repaired or replaced to ensure it is in good working order, and is clean and hygienic. A worker must be provided with and must use PPE in accordance with information, training and instruction about the safe use of the PPE.

Hazards and hazardous work

Confined spaces

Storage tanks, silos, field bins, wet and dry wells, manure and silage pits are some of examples of confined spaces that your workers might be expected to work in.

You must manage the risks associated with any confined space at their workplace. Other specific and related duties include confined space entry permits, signage, communication, emergency procedures and written risk assessments.

Working in a confined space has the potential to increase the risk of injury from noise, being overcome by fumes, gases or oxygen depletion, high or low temperatures, manual handling and slips, trips and falls.

Some of the hazards when working in confined spaces include:

- oxygen deficiency caused by absorption of grains
- carbon monoxide build up in wells from the exhaust of an operating internal combustion engine if it is located near the well's opening
- the presence of contaminants in the atmosphere caused by disturbing decomposed organic material in a bin, letting out toxic substances
- the build-up and release of gases like ammonia, methane, carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulphide in manure pits
- suffocation caused by solids such as grain, sand or fertiliser.

If you are working in a confined space, you must follow certain procedures, including:

- placing a stand-by person outside the

confined space to talk to anyone in the confined space and implement emergency procedures if required

- providing personal protective equipment, rescue, first aid and fire suppression equipment and training for workers entering the confined space
- supplying safety harnesses and safety or rescue lines where there is a danger of falling during the ascent or descent to access the confined space
- erecting signs that show entry is only permitted after signing the entry permit
- ensuring the area is well ventilated.

For more information see the Confined Spaces Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP103'.

Demolition work

You must notify WorkSafe Tasmania of any demolition work at least five days before the work begins, if this demolition is:

- of a structure or part of a structure that is load-bearing or otherwise related to the physical integrity of the structure that is at least six metres in height, or
- involves load-shifting equipment on a suspended floor, or
- involves explosives.

For more information see the Demolition Work Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP106'.

Electrical safety

You must manage electrical risks in your workplace. Make sure you:

- keep electrical equipment away from water
- protect all electrical equipment by using a residual current device (RCD)
- secure and protect extension leads from damage and ensure they are uncoiled when in use
- maintain equipment in good working order and ensure it is regularly inspected and tested by a competent person, where required
- identify the location of overhead power lines with ground markers
- understand the use of exclusion zones when working near overhead power lines.

There is:

- a prohibition on live work
- a requirement for prior testing, security of de-energised electrical equipment and inadvertent re-energising.

RCDs may be portable or installed. Testing RCDs should be conducted regularly by a competent person.

For more information see the Managing Electrical Risks in the Workplace. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP117'.

Falling objects

You must manage the risks associated with an object falling on a person if the falling object is reasonably likely to injure them.

If it is not reasonably practicable to remove the risk, you must reduce it by providing adequate protection by preventing an object from falling freely (as far as reasonably practicable).

If it is not reasonably practicable to prevent an object from falling freely, then a system (for example, a secure barrier or exclusion zone) to arrest the fall of a falling object must be used.

Falls

You must manage the risks associated with any fall by a person from one level to another that is reasonably likely to cause them or anyone else injury (this does not apply to horse riding).

You must ensure (as far as reasonably practicable) that any work that involves the risk of a fall is carried out on the ground or on a solid construction. If this is not reasonably practicable, then you must reduce the risk of a fall by providing adequate protection.

For more information see the Managing the Risks of Falls in the Workplace Code of Practice.

Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP122'.

Hazardous atmospheres

You must manage the risks associated with a hazardous atmosphere. An atmosphere is hazardous if:

- it does not have a safe oxygen level — for example, grain respiration occurring in grain silos leading to an oxygen depleted atmosphere, or effluent pits depleted in oxygen as a result of microbial action, or using vehicle exhaust gas to purge a tank or vessel
- the concentration of oxygen in the atmosphere increases the fire risk — for example, a gas leak from a compressed oxygen cylinder used for welding activities in a confined area raising the oxygen concentration
- the concentration of a flammable gas, vapour, mist, or fumes exceeds five per cent of the lower explosive limit for the gas, vapour, mist or fumes — for example, tanks and containers containing residual fuel, or use of solvents in enclosed areas. A hazardous chemical in the form of a combustible dust is present in a quantity and form that would result in a hazardous area. Combustible dusts include wood dust, biosolids, sugar, starch, flour, feed, and grain. Hazards may exist when these dusts are finely divided, accumulate and become suspended in the air to create a hazardous atmosphere — for example, grain silos or enclosed grain handling facilities where air-borne dust is generated.

Hazardous manual tasks

Common manual task injuries include sprains and strains to the back, knees and shoulders, ruptured discs and hernias.

Common causes of manual task injury include:

- handling and restraining live animals
- uncoupling equipment
- lifting and carrying loads — for example, fence posts
- bending and reaching when performing tasks — for example, handling animals, including drenching and dipping
- repetitive bending and awkward positions — for example, vegetable picking and packing
- slips, trips and falls from tractors and machinery.

You must manage the risks associated with a hazardous manual task. In determining what control measures to implement, you must consider all relevant matters that may contribute to a musculoskeletal disorder, including:

- postures, movements, forces and vibration relating to the hazardous manual task
- the duration and frequency of the hazardous manual task
- workplace environmental conditions that may affect the hazardous manual task or the worker performing it
- the design of the work area
- the layout of the workplace
- the systems of work used
- the nature, size, weight or number of persons, animals or things involved in carrying out the hazardous manual task.



Possible solutions might include:

- eliminating the problem tasks or parts of the tasks
- redesigning the work area or finding a better way of doing the tasks
- improving storage heights of heavy objects
- using mechanical aids — for example, calf cradles, cattle crush, tailgate loaders, trolleys, forklifts, telehandlers or tractor platforms
- using smaller bags (lighter to personally handle) or large bulk containers/bins (that can be handled by a forklift)
- controlling animals by using better restraining equipment and yards
- talking to workers about identifying appropriate solutions
- giving training and instructions to workers about their job or tasks
- ensuring workers have adequate rest breaks.

For more information see the Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP110'.

High risk work licences

Anyone carrying out high risk work (such as operating a forklift) must hold a high risk work licence from WorkSafe Tasmania.

You must ensure that workers are provided with adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to perform this high risk work safely. This applies whether or not the worker is required to hold a licence to operate a piece of plant.

There is no longer any licensing requirement for earthmoving and particular crane certificates. However, operators must be able to demonstrate competence in the safe operation of the particular piece of plant they use.

For more information go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and choose the 'licensing' tab.

Noise

You must protect yourself and your workers from the risk of exposure to excessive noise. To do this, you must assess whether or not noisy activities on your property present a potential risk to yourself or your workers.

A worker who is frequently required to wear hearing protection to protect against noise that exceeds the exposure standard must be provided with audiometric testing within three months of starting the work, and at least every two years.

Noise-induced hearing loss usually develops slowly over several years so you

do not realise there is a problem until it is too late. When using firearms, if proper protection is not used, hearing loss can happen after a few shots.

Repeated exposure to excessive noise will eventually lead to permanent hearing loss and may also create health problems such as increased blood pressure and heart rate, heart disease and stress.

For more information see the Managing Noise and Preventing Loss at Work Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP118'.

| dB(A) | Farming machinery or operation | Maximum time |
|------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 80 | Tractor idling | No limit |
| 85 | Working in a tractor with an enclosed cab | 8 hours |
| 90 | Shearing shed | 2 hrs 30 min |
| 90 | Chainsaw idling | 2 hrs 30 min |
| 95 | Angle grinder | 48 min |
| 95 | Grain auger | 48 min |
| 95 | Header | 48 min |
| 100 | Tractor operating under load without a cab | 15 min |
| 100 | Orchard sprayer | 15 min |
| 105 | Pig shed at feeding time | 4 min |
| 120 | Chainsaw cutting | 8 seconds |
| 140 | Aircraft at 15 m | No safe limit |
| 140 dB (C) | Shotguns/rifles and other firearms far exceed the 140 dB limit | No safe limit: instantaneous damage |

This table shows likely upper levels of noise from different farming machinery and the respective allowable exposure times without hearing protection. Noise is excessive where it exceeds the exposure standard of 85 dB(A), averaged over an eight hour period or where a peak noise level of 140 dB (C) occurs.

Remote or isolated work

Remote or isolated work means work that is isolated from the assistance of other people because of location, time or the nature of the work. 'Assistance' includes rescue, medical assistance and the attendance of emergency service workers.

You must reduce risks for remote and isolated workers and provide a safe system of work that includes effective communication.

For example, a single worker irrigating on a property during the day and the night must have a safe system of work. This could include a call in system, providing communication tools such as a two-way radio or phone, or a buddy system. The system you implement needs to be reasonably practicable for the situation.

Plant and equipment

Chainsaws

Chainsaw operators must be competent to undertake the task safely — you must never allow an inexperienced person to use a chainsaw. Sending your workers to a chainsaw operator's course is one way of ensuring they will be competent.

Before you operate a chainsaw, it is important to:

- follow the manufacturer's instructions
- ensure the chainsaw is in good working order
- provide and ensure the appropriate protective equipment is worn.

Cutting and welding

Workers who cut or weld metal should be trained, and should understand the risks associated with the task.

Particular care must be taken when cutting or welding containers and structures that contain chemical residues such as fuels and oils.

Drums that contain residual flammable or combustible substances or vapours may explode when exposed to heat. Additionally, drums that have contained substances such as pesticides may release hazardous gases when exposed to heat. Never cut drums that have contained flammable or combustible liquids or gases. Even drums that have been empty for a very long time can contain enough residue substances to explode and/or emit hazardous gas when exposed to heat. Be aware that rinsing drums with water is not a fail-safe method for purging vapours from containers.

When choosing appropriate protective clothing, take into account protection of body parts from electric shock and burns from radiation or hot metal parts and splashes.

For more information see the Welding Processes Code of Practice.

Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP134'.

Elevating work platforms (EWPs)

EWP operators must use the equipment safely, and ensure:

- operation is authorised and in accordance with the safe work procedure
- mechanical faults are reported
- pre-operational checks are made
- safe working load (SWL) or maximum rated capacity of the platform is not exceeded
- operating speed is consistent with load, terrain and weather conditions, and does not exceed the maximum recommended by the manufacturer
- either a lower body or full body harness is worn that is connected to the platform anchor point by a short lanyard. Where absence of an anchor point negates wearing a harness, a secondary gate restraint is engaged unless the manufacturer's design prevents ejection from the platform.

Extreme caution must be exercised when operating in the vicinity of overhead power lines. Work must be carried out in such a way to ensure that no person or conductive hand held equipment or any part of the platform being used in the vicinity of a power line can enter the exclusion zone. Exclusion zones vary depending on whether the person is 'authorised' by the owner of the power line, 'instructed' by the authorised person

or is 'untrained'. They also depend on the voltage and insulation status of the overhead power line.

Specific requirements for EWPs include:


- design registration of all newly purchased or modified machines
- formally training operators, and keeping records of this training
- assessing operator competency by a competent person
- eliminating EWP roll over
- developing safe work procedure to support training and subsequent safe use
- using operator harnessing where an anchor point has been provided
- keeping records of inspection, maintenance and repair procedures
- using lock-out procedures that exclude worker access to faulty machines.

The EWP manufacturer must supply an operating instruction plate or durable label with the machine that sets out the rated SWL on the platform and safe working incline for its operation. The date, name and address of the manufacturer and the maximum platform height must also be provided.

Guarding

A guard is any shield, cover, casing or physical barrier which is intended to prevent contact between the moving part and a person or their clothing.

Generally, guards should be provided where any rural plant part is within reach of people and could become hazardous during operation, routine maintenance or adjustment. This includes situations where it is necessary to service, maintain or adjust the plant while it is operating or mobile.



These hazardous parts need guarding to prevent injury:

- any rotating shaft (including joints, coupling, shaft ends and crank shafts), gear (including friction roller mechanism), cable, sprocket, chain, clutch, coupling, cam or fan blade
- the run-on point of any belt, chain or cable
- keyways, keys, grease nipples, set-screws, bolts or any other projections on rotating parts
- any crushing or shearing points — for example, augers and slide blocks, roller feeds, conveyor feeds
- ground wheels and track gear
- rotating knives, blades, tines or similar parts of power-driven machines
- any machine component which cuts, grinds, pulps, crushes, breaks or pulverises farm produce
- hot parts of any machine where the surface temperature exceeds 120°C in normal operation.

Guards must comply with the relevant Australian Standards.

Plant and structures

You must manage the risks associated with plant. That means maintenance, repair, inspection and testing must be carried out by a competent person (or if not reasonably practicable, inspection must be at least annually).

For more information see the Managing the Risks of Plant in the Workplace. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP123'.

Quad bikes

Quad bike incidents are among the leading causes of injuries and deaths on farms.

Quad bike operators must be competent to undertake the task safely — you must never allow an inexperienced person to use a quad bike. PCBU's sending their workers to a quad bike operator's course is one way of ensuring they will be competent.

- Consider whether a quad bike is the right tool for a particular task.
- Ensure all operators are trained.
- Protect yourself by wearing a properly fitting helmet, eye protection, gloves, sturdy footwear and clothing that covers arms and legs.
- Reduce your speed, especially if you are on rough or uneven ground that might cause you to lose control.
- Be aware of the terrain and changes due to rain or excess vegetation.
- Leave attachments behind that you don't need. Towing attachments adds to the overall weight and instability of the bike.
- Take extra care when carrying liquid loads as the weight will shift when turning corners or crossing slopes, making the bike unstable.
- Consider whether your quad bike would benefit from having a rollover/crush protection installed.
- Never let children under 16 use an adult-sized quad bike.

Tractor safety

Tractors are usually quite safe when operated properly. However, they become dangerous if incorrectly used. Tractors are heavy and powerful machines that can lead to a serious injury or death through only a minor mistake.

You should consider each type of tractor hazard and associated risk. Control measures should be chosen, implemented and regularly reviewed to ensure the health and safety of tractor operators.

Guards should protect the operator or any other person from parts of the tractor which are potentially hazardous either when the tractor is in normal operation or undergoing routine maintenance.

The use of canopies with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and/or falling object protective structures (FOPS) should be considered to reduce the operator's exposure to direct sunlight and ultraviolet radiation exposure.

- Do not attempt to adjust or work on implements while they are in motion.
- Do not use or attach implements unless the power shaft or power take-off (PTO) shaft is guarded.
- Do not dismount from a moving tractor.
- Ensure the park brake is on and working effectively before dismounting.
- Do not park a tractor on a steep slope.
- Remove the starting key when the tractor is not in use.
- Train all operators on the safe use of tractors.
- Wear a seat belt where a ROPS is fitted.

Tractors and rollover protective structures (ROPS)

Make sure the tractor is not used unless it is securely fitted with a ROPS. A plate or decal confirming compliance should be attached to the ROPS's frame, or inside the tractor's cabin.

Suppliers must fit a ROPS to tractors weighing between 560 kilograms and 15,000 kilograms. It does not matter whether the tractor is new or second hand. A farmer who sells a tractor privately is classed as a supplier and therefore must also do this.

If a tractor is used under trees (in an orchard) or in a place too low (within a building), it may not be practicable to work with an approved ROPS fitted. In such a situation, the ROPS may be lowered or removed. In this case, you must ensure the tractor is operated with due care and the ROPS is returned to its normal operating position immediately after the height restriction no longer affects the use of the tractor with a ROPS.

Exempt tractors

A tractor does not require a ROPS if it:

- weighs less than 560 kilograms
- weighs more than 15,000 kilograms
- is used in a fixed position and in a manner which it can no longer be used as powered mobile plant
- is being maintained, modified, serviced or repaired where it is necessary to remove the ROPS to carry out that work
- is being used for historical purposes
- is being sold for scrap or spare parts.

There are many situations where rural mobile plant — including harvesters, spray rigs and earth moving equipment — could pose a risk of injury to the operator in the event of a roll-over.



Falling object protective structures (FOPS)

If tractor (and any other rural mobile plant) is used where there is a risk to the operator of falling objects (such as in tree-felling or lifting bales), then the equipment should be designed and fitted with a FOPS.

A FOPS is a mesh sheeting structure attached to the plant to protect the operator from branches, rocks, bales and other falling objects.

This applies to any earthmoving machinery that weighs more than 1500 kilograms (not including attachments to the machinery). A FOPS must comply with AS 2294 – Earthmoving machinery – Protective structures – General.

Hazardous chemicals

For more information see the Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP120'.

Most rural properties and farms handle, use and store hazardous chemicals. Hazardous chemicals cover those chemicals that have been classified as dangerous goods and/or hazardous substances. Examples are fuels, LP gas, ammonia gas, toxic pesticides and herbicides, various acids and industrial gases.

Each chemical has an identification code, called a UN number (a four-digit number assigned by the United Nations to identify dangerous goods), which you can find stamped on the container or on its label. It is also found on the relevant Safety Data Sheet (SDS). If you call an emergency number to report a chemical incident, tell them the UN number.

Clean up — spills

Remember the health and safety of yourself and others when cleaning up chemical spills, especially if it is a chemical concentrate. The SDS gives information for cleaning up a chemical spill.

Try to contain a chemical spill so that it does not get into a watercourse or storage facility.

Notifications (Written)

Notification of a manifest quantity workplace

A PCBU must notify WorkSafe Tasmania if your property uses, handles or stores hazardous chemicals in excess of the prescribed manifest quantity in Schedule 11 of the Work Health and Safety Regulations (available at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au). For example, having more than:

- 2,500 litres of petrol
- 100,000 litres of diesel
- 5,000 litres (water capacity) of LP gas
- 500 litres (water capacity) of ammonia gas
- 2,500 litres of toxic substances.

Notification of a facility exceeding 10 per cent of Schedule 15 threshold

A PCBU must notify WorkSafe Tasmania if your property has hazardous chemicals present in excess of 10% of the Schedule 15 threshold of the Work Health and Safety Regulations (available at www.worksafe.tas.gov.au). For example, having more than:

- 20 tonnes of anhydrous ammonia gas (UN1005)
- 1 tonne of arsenic pentoxide (UN1559)
- 2 tonnes of toxic solids and liquids classified as very toxic or 20 tonnes if classified as toxic in Schedule 15.

Notification of abandoned tank

A PCBU must notify WorkSafe Tasmania if your property has any abandoned underground tank previously used to store a flammable gas or flammable liquid.

Notification of a hazardous chemicals pipeline

A PCBU must notify WorkSafe Tasmania for a proposed or existing pipeline that conveys hazardous chemicals into a public place.

Labelling hazardous chemicals in pipe work

A PCBU must ensure (as far as reasonably practicable) that a hazardous chemical in pipe work is identified by a label, sign or other way on or near the pipe work.


Storing hazardous chemicals

The chemical label provides advice on safe handling, storage and use. It provides information about the chemical's identity and toxicity.

Chemical manufacturers must supply you with safety data sheets (SDS). These sheets provide detailed information on health hazard information, precautions for use, first aid and safe handling information, safe storage and disposal procedures.

Hazardous chemicals should be stored:

- in a well-ventilated and lockable well-lit shed that has an impervious floor and impervious shelving
- with a bund or other spill containment system to contain leaks and spills
- away from respirators, protective clothing and equipment
- away from incompatible chemicals
- in original containers, with labels intact (if labels come off, always re-label container)
- securely from unauthorised access
- with access to nearby fire-fighting equipment.



You must manage the risks associated with chemical storage. Specific control measures include:

- keeping a register which includes the safety data sheet
- erecting the required placarding for the hazardous chemicals (where specified)
- erecting safety signs to convey appropriate safety information
- providing a manifest for emergency services (where specified)
- developing emergency plans for hazardous chemicals
- preventing fire and explosions by eliminating or controlling potential ignition sources around flammable materials
- preventing contamination and interaction of incompatible goods
- controlling risks from storage and handling systems — for example, tanks and vessels
- immediately cleaning up spills
- decommissioning storage or handling systems that are no longer used
- ensuring workers have sufficient knowledge about safe storage and handling, by providing information, education, training and supervision
- making sure personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided and worn — for example, respirators, gloves, chemical resistant boots, eye wash
- preventing access by unauthorised people.

Storing flammable or combustible substances

If you keep flammable or combustible substances at your workplace, you must ensure these are kept at the lowest practicable quantity for your workplace.

Flammable or combustible substances include:

- flammable and combustible liquids, including waste liquids in containers, whether empty or full
- gas cylinders, whether empty or full.

Spray drift

Spray drift from applying agricultural chemicals has the potential to adversely affect the health and safety of people in the areas not being targeted by the chemical.

You must eliminate spray drift, or reduce it to a level where it will not cause adverse health impacts.

- Develop a property plan that takes into account future application requirements.
- Establish buffer zones, vegetation barriers and no-spray zones to reduce downwind impact of spray drift on sensitive areas.
- Communicate with your neighbours about proposed spraying activities.
- Consider alternatives for reducing the pest: modify crop culture, or adopt mechanical or biological control methods.
- Install equipment that provides information on wind speed and direction, temperature and humidity.

- Understand the agricultural chemical to be sprayed. Read the label and use the right chemical for the right purpose.
- Use the correct application techniques.
- Understand the atmospheric conditions and the impact these will have on spraying operations and the chemical label's recommendations.
- Make sure your workers have appropriate training, skills and knowledge to reduce the risk of off-target spray drift.
- Keep records of spray application, chemical usage and storage details.
- Develop emergency procedures.

The WHS Act does not apply to residential property owners. However, they are still potentially liable at common law for adverse impacts on the health of their neighbours caused by spray drift of agricultural chemicals originating from applications to their gardens or yards.

Asbestos

Materials that contain asbestos can be found in buildings, workplaces and dwellings built before 1990. Asbestos can also be found in products such as cement sheeting or brake disc pads.

Asbestos registers

An asbestos register is required for all workplace buildings unless they have been constructed after 31 December 2003 and no asbestos has been identified, and where asbestos is not likely to be present.

The asbestos register must be maintained and kept up to date.

You must take reasonable steps to label and record asbestos in your register; and inform everyone on the premises where asbestos is present, the consequences of exposure to asbestos and other appropriate control measures.

Asbestos management

An asbestos management plan will help you prevent your workers and others being exposed to airborne asbestos fibres. Your plan should set out clear aims, stating what is going to be done, when it is going to be done, and how it is going to be done.

Asbestos licensing

An asbestos licence is required for work to remove any amount of friable asbestos or for removal of more than 10 m² of non-friable (bonded) asbestos.

The required licences for removal of asbestos containing material are:

- A *class licences* which cover work to remove friable and non-friable asbestos material

- *B class licences* which cover the work to remove non-friable asbestos materials only.

The removal of 10 m² or less of non-friable asbestos does not require a licence. However it can only be performed by a competent person — someone who possesses adequate qualifications (such as suitable training and sufficient knowledge, experience or skill) to perform a specific task safely.

Work to remove any asbestos containing material must be done to comply with the How to Safely Remove Asbestos Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP113'.

Air monitoring and clearance inspections

When asbestos work is complete, a visual inspection of the work area must be conducted to ensure that it has been cleaned and all asbestos waste removed.

For Class A removal work: an independent licence assessor is required to perform air monitoring, clearance inspections and to issue a clearance certificate.

For Class B removal work: an independent competent person is required to carry out a clearance inspection and issue a clearance certificate.

For more information see the How to Manage Asbestos in the Workplace Code of Practice. Go to www.worksafe.tas.gov.au and search for 'CP111'.

Animal handling

You must manage the risks associated with livestock and other animals. This includes providing and maintaining animal handling facilities.

Livestock handling facilities should be well designed and functional for both workers' safety and animal welfare. Consider:

- the design and placement of yard and loading facilities
- separating people and animals
- ensuring livestock handlers have a good working knowledge of animal behaviour
- selecting livestock that demonstrate a preferred temperament.

You must also manage the risk of zoonotic diseases. Most zoonotic disease is spread through people coming in contact with the bodily fluids and excrement of animals. Good hygiene is one way to reduce the risk.

Where it is reasonably practicable to assume that a worker is at risk of contact with an animal that may carry Q Fever, the worker should be tested and immunised.

Heat stress and skin cancer

Heat stress is excessive exposure to heat that may lead to a number of heat illnesses, from mild (prickly heat) to life-threatening (heat stroke).

Our body temperature is a balance between heat generated internally or taken in from the environment, and heat lost. It is important to maintain this balance and avoid a rise in core body temperature which may lead to heat illnesses.

If people increase heat production by heavy or intensive outdoor work or by staying for long periods in high temperatures, they must make sure they lose body heat.

To avoid heat stress, workers who may feel weak or faint from working outdoors in hot conditions should stop work immediately and cool down.

Everyone on the farm (including children) should be encouraged to protect themselves against the sun.

Children and young workers

Water hazards — including ditches, dams and troughs — are quite often close to the house and are accessible to children. If you have children on your property, provide:

- safe play areas
- adequate supervision of young children
- adequate instruction and training of older children.

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