

Visitors, children and traffic

Children on farms (including visitors' children)

Farms are great places to grow up and develop independence and skills and this is especially so if it happens in a strong culture of caring about safety.

Every area of the farm poses risks for children. This is true for those who live on the farm, including tenants' children, and those who visit the farm (around 30% of children who die on farms are visitors). Chemicals, water, heights, vehicles, workshops and livestock are all hazards that can cause serious injuries for kids.

The most common causes of fatalities and injuries to children on farms are:

- › Drowning of toddlers
- › Falling off or being crushed by Quad bikes
- › Runovers by tractors and farm vehicles
- › Falling off the back of moving farm utes
- › Farm vehicle crashes
- › Entanglement in farm machinery
- › Being crushed by livestock

Many of the topics in your Farm Safety Manual have covered these areas in detail, particularly in Water and Effluent, Quads and Motorbikes, Farm Vehicles, and the section on Traffic in this topic. Think about children as you use these resources.

It is wise to have a policy around workers bringing children to work. The safest option is for no children of workers to be present but if children are allowed it should only happen with permission and there should be clear rules about where they are permitted to be, what they can and can't do, and the supervision required.

The positive message of getting it right ("this is what we expect" via a code of conduct or statement of policies / protocols) must be underpinned by making the consequences of not doing it very clear (i.e. a zero-tolerance disciplinary procedure). Use the template in this topic to draft a policy for your farm, then discuss and develop it with your staff. If they contribute to the final version of the policy it is more likely to be workable and followed.

The following is a summary of best practice suggestions to reducing the risk of fatalities and injuries to children on farms, as supported by Farmsafe Australia and Kidsafe Australia.

Best practice

1. Create a Safe Play Area for toddlers
2. Supervise children on farms
3. Remove keys from vehicles, Quads and tractors
4. Do not allow children under 16 years of age to operate Quads
5. Do not carry children as passengers on tractors, farm machinery or Quads
6. Do not allow children to ride in the back of utes, side-by-sides or trailers
7. Ensure that children wear seat belts inside farm vehicles
8. Ensure that everyone wears helmets when riding horses, bicycles and motorbikes

The list of reminders and recommendations below is not exhaustive, but provides a guide. A walk-through by parents, grandparents, older children and others will help to identify hazards that need to be addressed on each farm.

Around water, including effluent ponds, wells, irrigation channels and dams

1. Provide young children with safe play areas that are escape-proof
2. Fence around houses to restrict (and define boundaries) for children
3. Fence off swimming pools
4. Where practical, fence off dams, effluent ponds and solids traps near houses
5. Fit secure covers to wells, drains and tanks
6. Fill in holes, ditches and post holes that fill with water (and check if there are containers that may fill with water after heavy rain).
7. Inform workers and visitors (include house renters and farm stay tenants) of the water hazards present on the farm
8. Fit reminder signage to close gates around safe play areas, around house yards and around fenced off water hazards
9. Fit signage warning of relevant water hazards
10. Ensure adult supervision of children when in, on or around water. Never take your eyes off children around water

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11. Have children undertake a water awareness program
12. Have workers and others undertake CPR training
13. Establish emergency response procedures

Quads

14. Do not allow children under 16 to operate Quads
15. Do not carry passengers, including children, on Quads

Motorbikes

16. Match the motorbike size and power to child's size, strength and judgement
17. Consider power governors / speed restrictors
18. Establish rules around speed, 'no go' zones and no passengers
19. Provide instruction in controls and correct riding techniques, including varying terrain and surfaces
20. Insist that the child wears a correct fitting motorcycle helmet (AS 1698)

Tips



Is it the right sized motorbike for the child?

- › Can the child lift the bike from the ground unassisted? and
- › Can the child reach the ground with their feet when astride the bike?

Livestock

21. Provide clear direction to visitors regarding 'no go' zones on the farm
22. Always supervise young children around animals (including calves and dogs)
23. Ensure there are physical barriers between them and any animal
24. Locate bulls in secure paddocks away from the house
25. If they are riding horses on the farm, match the horse to the child's experience and confidence
26. Ensure riders wear a correct fitting helmet (that meets AS 3838 Equestrian helmet) and riding boots
27. Teach children to wash their hands after touching animals

Tractors, farm vehicles and farm machinery

28. Fit warning devices and reversing cameras
29. Dress children with highly visible clothing
30. Establish rules for operators and children including:
 - › Do not leave tractors, vehicles and machinery running unattended
 - › Remove keys and lock cabins
 - › Reverse park into sheds to ensure clear vision when exiting
 - › No children as passengers on tractors or farm machinery
 - › Do not allow play on tractors and machinery
 - › Lower all raised implements (including loader and forks) after use
 - › Explain hazards associated with tractors and machinery to children
 - › No riding on trays of utes or trailers
 - › Use child restraints and seat belts at all times (and set the example)

Farm workshop and machinery maintenance shed

31. Have lockable doors to isolate whole area
32. Return all tools to storage after use
33. Ensure Safety switches cover all power outlets
34. Ensure all portable electric tools are turned off and disconnected
35. Maintain guards on equipment such as air compressors and small engine belt drives

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The dairy and feed areas

36. Ensure that hot water taps are clearly marked (red) and out of reach of children and/or locked off
37. Return chemicals to secure storage
38. Isolate chemicals in use, contain spills within the isolated area, and ensure all are out of reach of child hands and fingers
39. Store refrigerated chemicals in a separate lockable fridge
40. Never decant chemicals into drink or water bottles
41. Teach children not to touch, smell or drink chemicals
42. Ensure that all plant is guarded (with attention to automated equipment) and isolate with physical barriers if not able to be guarded
43. Fit child-proof guards or cut off ladder access on silos and tanks
44. Guard feed plant including augers, crushers and rollers
45. Isolate feed processing sheds
46. Fence off and secure hay and silage stacks (routinely inspect stability of stacks)
47. Instruct children not to play on hay stacks or on bulk feed bunkers
48. Store firearms in a compliant gun safe
49. Consider secure, visible child area within the office area of the dairy
50. Supervise all children visiting the dairy

Tip



Be a role model. Kids are quick to pick up the difference between what we say and what we do. Building a safety culture on the farm is about being clear and consistent all the time.

Learn more



Child care options for farm families

http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/Child%20Safety%20Resources/childcare_factsheet_farmingfamilies.pdf

Children in the workplace

www.commerce.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/atoms/files/children_at_the_workplace.pdf

www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/10200/FINAL_Children_Safe_in_workplace_WEB_231210.pdf

Learn more



Children helping out Children are always keen to help on the farm but chores or jobs should be matched to their physical, mental and emotional development.

Child Safety on Farms is an excellent guide to understanding child development and capability at different ages, and gives practical tips about educating children about safety.

http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/uploaded/fs_docs/guidance/Child_Safety_on_Farms.pdf