



A Guide for

# Farmers

To Manage Hazards in the Workplace

*This chart, linkage questions and accompanying farm bulletins are designed to help you control hazards in your agricultural operation — hazards that could cause death or serious harm to yourself, your family, your employees and others. The systematic approach is in line with the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.*





## LINKAGE QUESTIONS — FARM VEHICLES: 1. Tractors, 2. ATVs, 3. Farm Bikes

### ASSESSMENT OF SKILL LEVEL TO OPERATE

- Is the operator's experience level adequate, given the task to be performed?
- Does the operator have knowledge of safe operating procedures (best practice)?
- Is the operator's skill level adequate for sloping terrain and high-risk ground conditions?
- Is the operator able to recognise potential high-risk situations?
- Have you verified the operator's current skill level by viewing a practical demonstration?

### VEHICLES LIMITATIONS GIVEN THE TASK TO BE PERFORMED

- Are the designer's and manufacturer's recommendations on vehicle use being followed?
- Have the types of ground conditions the vehicle is suited to been established?
- Has the maximum slope for safe operation of the vehicle been established?
- Has the maximum implement size for the vehicle been established?
- Has the safe operating speed for the vehicle been established?
- Are the vehicle's maximum weight and load distribution limitations known?

### USE OF IMPLEMENTS AND EFFECT ON VEHICLE

- Is the vehicle safe to use with the implement?
- Has the weight and load distribution of the implement been established?
- Has any additional operator skill required with the implement been identified and attained?
- Have potential high-risk situations with the implement been identified?

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- Is there knowledge of past and present weather effects on ground conditions?
- Have any existing ground conditions, which could impact on vehicle use, been identified?
- Have high-risk locations due to weather and ground conditions been identified?

### TERRAIN

- Are there no-go areas for vehicles and implements on the farm?
- Are there no-go areas given certain weather and ground conditions?
- Have areas of high risk due to ground conditions been identified?
- Has the effect of terrain slope on vehicle handling been identified?
- Are any high-risk obstacles on sloping terrain identified?

### VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

- Have the supplier's service recommendations been followed? (Regular service periods)
- Are daily checks undertaken on brakes, tyres, steering and vehicle controls?
- Is there a reporting procedure for vehicle defects?

### PASSENGERS ON FARM BIKES AND ATVS

- Have operating limitations of the vehicle with a passenger been assessed?
- Is passenger safety assessed given terrain and ground conditions?
- Has assessment of operator skill to carry passengers been undertaken?

### AGE OF RIDER AND DRIVER

- Has a check of operator's age against age restrictions for the vehicle been carried out?
- Is the young person aware of the potential risks involved with the vehicle?
- Has the young person's ability to safely control the vehicle been assessed?
- Has a level of supervision and training required been established following assessment?

### SAFETY FRAMES, SEAT BELTS AND GUARDS

- Is the safety frame fitted to the vehicle in good condition?
- Are exposed shafts guarded?
- Does the vehicle have seat belts for use at appropriate times?
- Is provision made for protection against noise, solar UV radiation and weather conditions?

## LINKAGE QUESTIONS — MACHINERY: 4. SAFE GUARDING OF FARM MACHINERY

### GUARDING — TRANSMISSION, DANGEROUS PARTS AND PTO SHAFTS

- Are all V-belts, chains and sprockets, exposed shafts, power take-offs and dangerous parts checked to ensure they are adequately guarded or safe by position? (Check pump sheds, milking shed, implements, vehicles and general machinery)

## LINKAGE QUESTIONS — 5. LIVESTOCK HANDLING

### TYPE OF STOCK TO BE HANDLED

- Is an assessment made of the type or breed of stock to be handled? (Be aware of varying characteristics and behavioural differences in animals)
- Have you identified animals with high-risk potential to cause harm? (Seasonal cycle effects on behaviour, calving, animals in season, etc.)

### SUITABILITY OF YARDS

- Is the design of the yards suitable for the task to be performed?
- Is the design of the yards practical and does it eliminate unnecessary handling?
- Are the yards regularly inspected and adequately maintained?
- Are the yards designed to handle various animal behaviours?
- Is there access for workers around pens and escape routes?
- Does the design of the yards facilitate the free flow of stock?

### STOCK HANDLING METHODS

- Are obstacles that may cause stock to become unsettled, identified and removed?
- Is an assessment carried out to establish stock handlers general skill, knowledge and experience?

## LINKAGE QUESTIONS — HEALTH ISSUES: 6. AGRICHEMICALS

### LABELLING/MSDS INFORMATION

- Has information from the supplier of chemical products been obtained? (Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or information from label)
- Does the information obtained include safe handling methods, protective equipment, emergency procedures, safe storage and disposal?
- Have you read and understood what precautions are required to be taken prior to using the chemical?  
NOTE : Request clarification from the supplier if information is not clear. If you do not have adequate information on a chemical product, do not use it.

### HANDLING METHOD

- Have you referred to the supplier's information to determine a handling method that is low risk?
- Is unnecessary exposure to the chemical during handling being controlled and monitored?
- Is the level of protection adequate when handling concentrated chemicals? (i.e. decanting, mixing)

### LEVEL OF PROTECTION REQUIRED

- Have you referred to the supplier's information to determine the level of protection required to handle the chemical safely?
- When purchasing protective equipment, do you ensure that it is the correct type for the chemical being handled?
- Have you obtained advice on correct use and storage of protective equipment?

## STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

- Do you have the supplier's information with details of storage conditions and compatibility with other substances?
- Do you have information on the correct disposal method for the chemical?

## HEALTH MONITORING

- Are you aware of health effects and symptoms of the chemicals being handled? (Information is normally contained in the supplier's information)
- Are you aware of the health monitoring requirements for employees exposed to chemicals that are significant hazards? (Advice available from OSH)

## LINKAGE QUESTIONS — HEALTH ISSUES: 7. LEPTOSPIROSIS

### SOURCES OF INFECTION

- Have you assessed the likely sources of bacterial infection typically found in the urine and kidneys of cattle, pigs, rats and possums?

### EXPOSURE TO INFECTION

- Have you assessed the likely exposure to infection via infected urine, handling infected kidneys or bathing in contaminated water? (Entry into the body is via the mouth, nose, eyes, skin cuts and abrasions)

### VACCINATION

- Do you have your stock vaccinated against leptospirosis?

### LEVEL OF PROTECTION REQUIRED

- If there is a risk of exposure to infection, what assessment have you made to determine the appropriate level of protective equipment?

### HEALTH MONITORING

- If there is a risk of exposure to infection, do employees have their health monitored?

## LINKAGE QUESTIONS — HEALTH ISSUES: 8. MELANOMA

### EXPOSURE LEVEL

- Have you assessed the periods of exposure to solar UV radiation?

### LEVEL OF PROTECTION REQUIRED

- Have you determined the appropriate level of protection?

### HEALTH MONITORING

- Do employees have regular health monitoring checks for skin cancers?

The Critical Factors Chart, linkage questions and farm bulletins are a guide to the practicable steps a farmer can take when assessing and allocating work activities. They will also assist farmers to comply with their legal obligations.

Farmers who employ staff have additional duties as employers under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995. These duties include:

- Ensuring a safe place of employment.
- Applying the hazard management criteria of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992.
- Providing information to employees on emergencies and hazards.
- Providing training and supervision for employees.
- Recording and investigating accidents and reporting serious harm to employees to OSH.

Further advice and information on employers' duties can be obtained from OSH.

## PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF USE OF CRITICAL FACTORS CHART

### WORK SCENARIO

An experienced 18-year-old farm worker is required to use a 2-wheel-drive ATV with a trailer attached to take a load of hay to the top of a steep paddock during winter time.

#### STEP 1: Identify work activity with high risk potential.

Farm vehicles – ATV with implement.



#### STEP 2: Apply critical factors that apply to the work activity.

- **Assessment of skill level to operate:** knowledge; experience; riding technique; ability with use of implement given task and conditions; terrain.
- **Vehicle's limitations given task to be performed:** CC rating capable of pulling load; 4-wheel drive; 2-wheel drive; designed for implement.
- **Implements and effect on vehicle:** Load weight balance; effect on traction and handling.
- **Environmental conditions:** Wet and slippery; mud; ice affecting traction, etc.
- **Terrain:** Rolling to steep terrain.
- **Vehicle maintenance level:** Brakes; suspension; throttle; tyre pressure and general condition.

NOTE: Only 6 of the 9 Critical Factors for Vehicles apply in this case.



Assess colour coded linkage questions for each critical factor that applies to determine if a significant hazard exists.

#### Assessment

- The 18-year-old farm worker has adequate experience and skill to perform the task unsupervised.
- The ATV is of adequate size to pull the trailer and load and is in a well-maintained condition.
- Conditions are wet and slippery and the terrain is steep.

#### Decision

- An alternate route to the top paddock will be used via an established farm track.
- Information will be given to the farm worker on the outcome of the hazard assessment, i.e. the route to be taken due to the conditions and the hazards that exist or the farm worker creates.



#### STEP 3: Manage significant hazards by taking control action and monitor.

Review tasks and procedures regularly and investigate near-miss or harm accidents to determine what additional controls are needed.