



The University of Sydney



Farm Worker Safety Induction

A Practical Guide
for Employers

Employer Guideline



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY



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Employer Guideline

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For the employer – some basic information about safety induction

Booklet

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B. Worker discussion guide – a practical discussion guide for farm worker safety induction.

Discussion booklet with specific inserts



1. *What* is safety induction?

Safety induction is the first step that you will take with your workers to be sure that they have the information and also the skills that they need to look after their own safety, and the safety of others while at work on your farm or property.

There is a *general induction* to safety that you must undertake when each worker, or contractor, first comes to work on the property. This is a general introduction to safety and how you manage safety, and also the time to make sure that each is aware of the key risks that may be present that everyone needs to know about – for example, the paths and tracks to be followed when moving around the farm, overhead powerlines, traffic hazards, etc.

Then before a new job or activity is carried out, a safety induction should be part of showing the worker how to do the job. For example, operating any vehicle or piece of equipment, horse handling, cattle handling jobs, moving machinery etc.

Even if your new worker has been doing the same jobs on other farms, you cannot assume they have the information and skills to do the job safely on your farm, or with your equipment.

A safety induction is *NOT* effective if you just give a worker something to read and sign. Its not just about laying down the law. You must be as sure as you can be that the worker understands what you mean, and is ready to play his or her role in safety.

Doing a practical safety induction at time of starting work can also help to create a good and positive relationship with your workers if you have the discussion in a spirit of welcome and concern for the health, safety and wellbeing of all on the property.

2. *Why* must we do safety induction?

Generally speaking, we cannot assume that any worker starting employment on the farm or property is aware of his or her responsibilities in health and safety.

Further, workers generally will not be aware of your responsibilities as manager, or employer, in ensuring the safety of the workplace, and the need for their cooperation to ensure that you can fulfil your responsibility.

You cannot assume that a new worker has the skills needed to carry out all farm jobs safely.

The farmer/ farm manager is required to:

- Inform the worker of his/ her responsibilities, and those of the employer.
- Inform the worker of the specific hazards of work on the farm and of relevant rules and expected safe practice.
- Assess the skills of the farm worker to ensure that jobs are undertaken in such a way that the safety of the worker is protected.
- Train the worker so that the necessary safety skills are developed.

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT

Not only because you will want to demonstrate your concern for the safety of everyone on the property, but also because successful prosecutions under OHS laws are commonly based on failure of farmer employers to fulfil these obligations!

3. *When* is safety induction necessary?

The best time to properly communicate your role and your expectations of workers in relation to health and safety is at the commencement of work.

Once a worker has started out, if you notice that your worker is not taking the safety action that you expect, it is *MUCH* more difficult to have a discussion about safety in a positive and constructive way.

If you have not agreed upon the rules at the beginning, safety will become a *PROBLEM*, and not be seen as one of your business's *CORE VALUES*.

If you do it at the outset, it then becomes a straightforward matter to take up safety issues with the worker at any time, and for the worker to communicate with you about his or her safety concerns.



4. How do I do safety induction?

Part of this package is a *Rural Worker Safety Induction Discussion Guide* that you can use to help you take up the subject of safety for your General Safety Induction.

Some tips to help get it right:

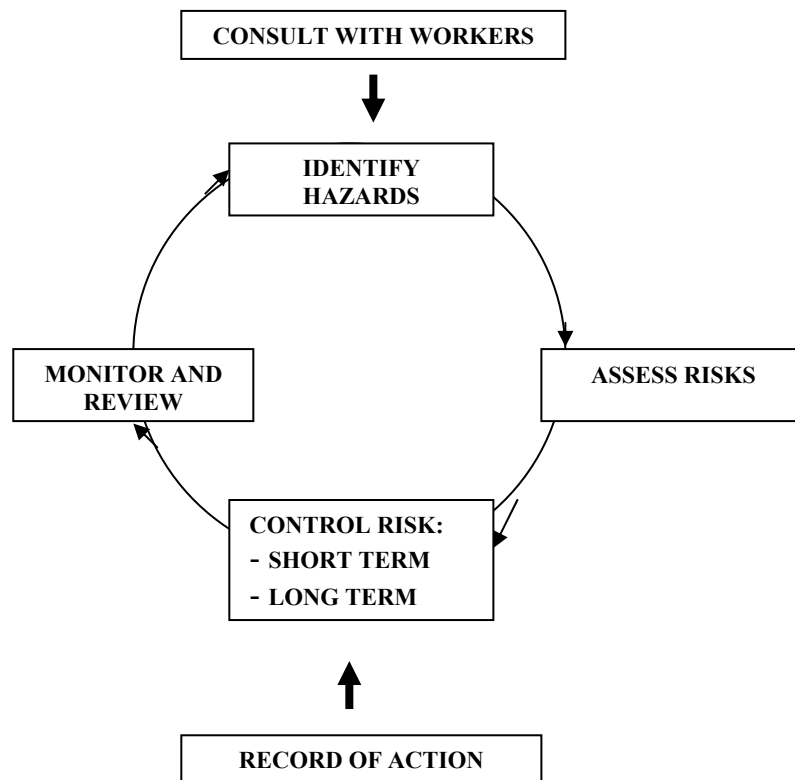
- Set aside the *TIME* to do the job properly.
- Have the discussion in a *PLACE* where both you AND the worker feel most comfortable.
- Check that your worker/s have understood each safety issue before you move on. Encourage *QUESTIONS*.
- Have the worker *TAKE HOME* a copy of the Induction Guide, and bring back any further questions.
- Encourage safety talk in the workplace – so that any safety problem is taken seriously.
- *ACT* on each safety problem as it is raised, so that you are reinforcing the content of the Safety Induction.
- A victim of injury should not immediately be blamed for the event – there should be an open discussion about how everyone could have worked to prevent the injury, and reinforce the role that all can play to keep everyone, even careless workers, safe.

5. How does this help me comply with the law?

A brief summary of what you are required to do to manage OHS risk is as follows:

1. **Consult with workers** - There must be systems for workers to participate in the OHS program of your enterprise.
2. **Identify hazards** - Safety hazards must be identified in a systematic way.
3. **Assess risk** - Risks associated with safety hazards must be considered carefully.
4. **Control risk** - Risks must be controlled to prevent injury.
5. **Keep records** - Records of the above processes must be kept.

These are not steps to be taken on a once off basis. The process would be better described like this:



Safety Induction is just the start. Safety management is an ongoing activity.

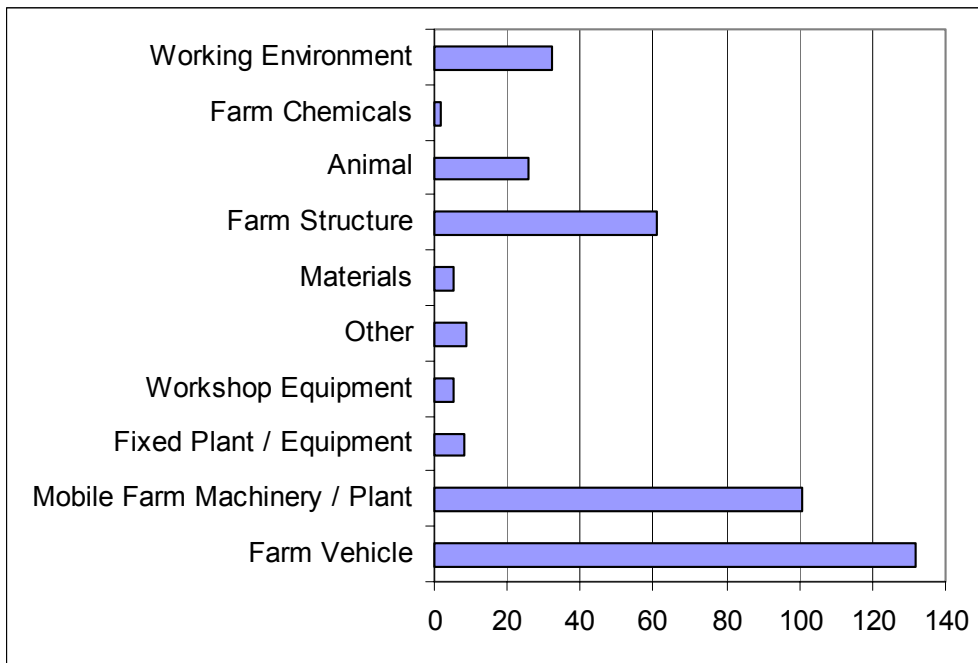
Buts its made MUCH EASIER if you have undertaken safety induction with each worker at the beginning of employment.

6. Responsibilities of people on the farm

Employment category	Responsibility
Owner/ operator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that people are not exposed to risks to health or safety 2. Directors of corporations have obligations
Employer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain safe work areas, machinery and equipment 2. Organise safe systems of work for workers and contractors 3. Provide adequate information, safety induction, supervision, training of workers and contractors 4. Ensure workers are aware of potential hazards 5. Provide adequate personal protective equipment where other measures to control risk are impractical or inadequate 6. Consult with employees on health and safety matters 7. Make sure equipment and materials are used, stored, transported and disposed of safely 8. Identify hazards, assess risks and control hazards on farms 9. Ensure safety of persons not in his/ her employment – are not exposed to hazards 10. Monitor the health of workers, and keep records
Employee - worker	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasonable care to ensure his own safety and health at work 2. Avoid adversely affecting the health and safety of all persons who are at his/her place of work 3. Comply with instructions given for safety 4. Use PPE provided 5. Not misuse or damage safety equipment 6. Inform the employer of any OHS hazards identified
Employee - manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If in control of premises must ensure premises are safe and without risks to health 2. Should have other delegated OHS responsibilities
Employee - supervisor	Delegated responsibilities
Contractor	<p>As for owner/operator</p> <p>As for employer</p>
Visitors and others	Visitor's safety is to be protected. All adults have a common law duty not to cause harm to others either wilfully, or negligently

7. Some basic facts

Agents of injury deaths 2001-2004



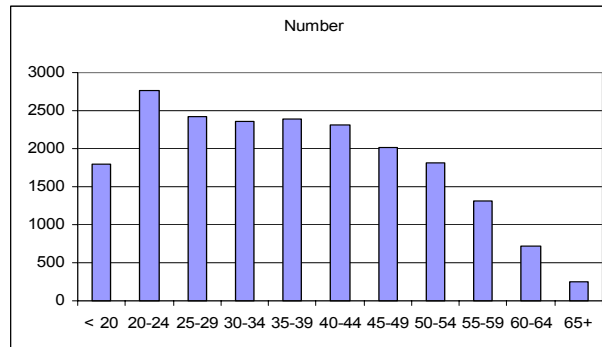
Number of on-farm non-intentional injury deaths by age and gender.

Australia 2001-2004

	Male (No.)	Male (%)	Female (No.)	Female (%)
< 15 yrs	44	11.6	24	6.3
15-24 yrs	40	10.6	4	1.1
25-34 yrs	25	6.6	2	0.5
35-44 yrs	34	9.0	3	0.8
45-54 yrs	45	11.9	7	1.8
55-64 yrs	51	13.5	4	1.1
65 plus	88	23.2	13	3.4
TOTAL	327	86.3	57	15.0

Source: NCIS database

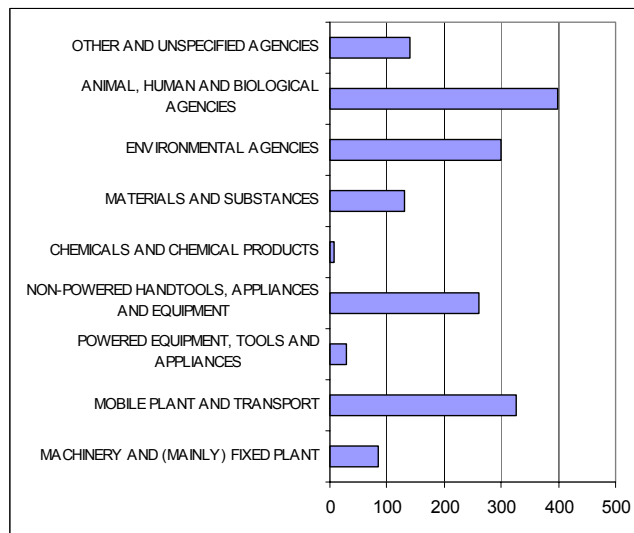
Workers compensation claims in agriculture Australia.2001-2005.



Excluding travel claims. More than 1 week off work

Agency of injury associated with workers compensation claim.

Workers aged <20 years. Australia 2001-2005





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