

## Toolbox Talks



### We all need to remember

- If you are unsure of anything or feel that something you have been asked to do is dangerous, DO NOT begin the task. ASK for assistance or more information and we will work together to find a safe way to do the job or solve the problem.
- Ensure you are aware of the location of the nearest First Aid Kit.
- Make sure everyone is fit for work, free from signs of fatigue, drugs or alcohol. If in doubt, ask or talk to your manager.
- This farm is a workplace, but may also be a place of residence for the owner, their managers and employees. Be vigilant for children and bystanders at all times. Refer to *Child Safety on Farms*.
- The safety, health and wellbeing of all who live on, work on and visit this farm is the most important responsibility we all share.

Even if we are busy and under time or financial pressures, safety MUST come first.



**emergencyplus**

Save the App that could save your life.

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

In case of emergency, CALL 000 or your local emergency service provider, then call your manager or supervisor.

**POISONS 13 11 26**  
Poisons Information Centre

### A Practical Guide

# Lone and Remote Workers

**Remote or isolated work is work that is isolated from the assistance of other people because of the location, time or nature of the work being done. Assistance from other people includes: Rescue, Medical Assistance, and Emergency Services.**

Remote and isolated work isn't limited to work that is carried out where there is a large geographical distance between the worker and other people. Remote and isolated work also covers situations where people may be working in the same vicinity as other people but due to the task that they are performing, or the time that they are performing task, their access to the assistance of other people is restricted or delayed. An example of an isolated worker may be a person who is on the inside of a silo performing repairs with the nearest person 2 meters away on the outside of the silo. Due to the time it would take for the person outside the silo to rescue the person inside the silo, or provide first aid or other assistance, the worker inside the silo is considered to be working in an isolated situation. Another example may be a person driving a harvester at 2am on a farm. If all other people available to provide assistance to the person on the harvester are asleep, then the harvest driver is considered to be isolated from the assistance of others. Remote and isolated work poses significant challenges when it comes to keeping people healthy and safe.

Isolated and remote work environments increase the risk of physical injuries due to limited access to immediate medical assistance, resources, and support. Additionally, the psychological impact of isolation, loneliness, and the challenges associated with remote and isolated work can contribute to mental health issues, making workers more vulnerable to both physical and mental injuries.

## The Hazards and Risks

### Geographically Remote & Isolated Work

#### Limited Access to Emergency Services

In remote areas, emergency services such as medical assistance or firefighting may take longer to reach the location of an emergency. This delay can exacerbate the severity of injuries or medical conditions, potentially leading to life-threatening situations.

#### Communication Challenges

Distance often means poor or limited communication options. This lack of communication can hinder the ability to call for help or report emergencies promptly, delaying the response time of rescue teams.

#### Reduced Availability of Resources

Remote locations often have limited access to essential resources, including medical supplies, food and water, or tools. In case of an incident, the lack of immediate resources can delay first aid and increase the risk of complications.

#### Isolation from Support Networks

Working in remote areas can lead to isolation from colleagues and support networks. In mental health emergencies, the absence of nearby colleagues can make it difficult to get timely assistance or support, impacting the injured person's wellbeing.



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**Lone and Remote Workers**

## The Hazards and Risks

### Situational Remote & Isolated Work

#### Limited Access to Assistance

In a confined space like a silo, or at the top of a windmill tower, people may have restricted access to be able to provide assistance to another person. In emergencies, the lack of immediate access routes can delay the response time of rescuers, increasing the risk of injury or fatality.

#### Difficulty in Monitoring

Supervisors and colleagues might find it challenging to monitor the wellbeing of the isolated person in real-time, especially if the work is being undertaken in an enclosed space with no visibility from the outside. This lack of monitoring can delay the discovery of incidents or health issues.

#### Lack of Immediate First Aid

If an injury occurs to someone in an isolated situation the lack of immediate access to first aid resources may make the outcome of injuries more severe. Delayed medical attention can exacerbate the harm and increase the risk of complications.

#### Difficulty in Rescue Operations

If an incident occurs in an isolated situation like a confined space, the process of rescuing the injured person becomes complex due to limited access points. Rescue operations are often time-consuming and require specialised training and equipment.



### Links and Resources

SafeWork Australia - Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice  
[safeworkaustralia.gov.au](https://safeworkaustralia.gov.au)



## Psychological Hazards

### Remote & Isolated Work

**Working in isolation for extended periods can pose significant psychological hazards, which can have a profound impact on an individual's mental health and wellbeing. Some of these psychological hazards include:**

#### Loneliness and Social Isolation

Prolonged isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, social withdrawal, and a sense of disconnectedness from the outside world. Lack of social interaction can negatively affect mental health, leading to depression and anxiety.

#### Stress and Anxiety

People working in isolated situations might experience heightened levels of stress and anxiety due to the lack of social support and the pressure of handling tasks alone. The absence of immediate assistance can create a constant state of alertness and concern, contributing to chronic stress.

#### Depression

Persistent isolation can trigger depressive symptoms, characterised by feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest in activities. The absence of positive social interactions and support networks can exacerbate depressive tendencies.

#### Cognitive Decline

Prolonged isolation can impact cognitive functions, including memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. Lack of mental stimulation and social engagement can lead to cognitive decline over time.

#### Sleep Disturbances

Isolated individuals may experience disruptions in sleep patterns, including insomnia or irregular sleep cycles. Sleep disturbances can further worsen mood disorders and increase stress levels.

#### Increased Risk of Mental Health Disorders

Long-term isolation is associated with a higher risk of developing mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), especially if the isolation is accompanied by traumatic events or high-stress situations.



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## Reducing the Risks

### Geographically Remote & Isolated Work

Reducing the risks for geographically isolated workers involves implementing a combination of proactive measures to ensure their safety, wellbeing, and effective communication. Here are several strategies to consider:

#### Comprehensive Risk Assessment

Personally assess the isolated work environment, identifying potential hazards, and devising preventive measures accordingly.

#### Effective Communication Systems

Carry reliable communication devices like satellite phones, two-way radios, or distress beacons to maintain constant connectivity with others or emergency services.

#### Regular Check-Ins

Establish personal check-in routines, communicating status and location at specific intervals.

#### Emergency Response Plan

Familiarise yourself with the emergency response plan, understanding procedures for various scenarios, including medical emergencies, incidents, or natural disasters.

#### First Aid and Training

Equip yourself with comprehensive first aid knowledge, including addressing common injuries and emergencies. Ensure you know how to use available first aid supplies on-site.

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Wear appropriate PPE tailored to your tasks and environment. Regularly inspect and replace damaged or worn-out PPE to maintain effectiveness.

#### Workplace Design and Safety Measures

Stay vigilant about safety measures, including clear signage, adequate lighting, and non-slip surfaces. Be aware of your surroundings and report hazards promptly. Carry adequate food and water to sustain life for expected rescue periods.



#### Training and Skill Development

Participate in training sessions focusing on remote work challenges. Develop situational awareness, decision-making, and problem-solving skills to navigate remote environments effectively.

#### Mental Health Support

Take advantage of available mental health resources and counselling services. Reach out to helplines if you are facing psychological challenges. Prioritise your mental wellbeing.

#### Maintain Work-Life Balance

Actively maintain a healthy work-life balance. Engage in activities promoting relaxation and social interaction, even in remote settings. Balance your work responsibilities with personal time for relaxation and social engagement.

By implementing these measures and fostering a safety-conscious culture, the risks for geographically isolated workers can be significantly reduced, promoting a safer and more secure work environment.

## Reducing the Risks

### Situationally Remote & Isolated Work

Reducing the risks for situationally isolated workers involves implementing specific measures tailored to the unique challenges they face in their tasks or work environments. Here are strategies to consider:

#### Effective Communication Protocols

Establish clear communication channels and protocols, including check-in times and emergency response procedures. Carry reliable communication devices like two-way radios or smartphones to stay connected.

#### Buddy Systems

Collaborate with colleagues and form buddy pairs to support and monitor each other. This approach is especially useful when operating machinery or engaging in tasks requiring extra vigilance.

#### Regular Self-Monitoring

Be proactive about your safety. Periodically assess your surroundings and conditions, ensuring you are aware of potential risks. Stay vigilant and report any concerns promptly.

#### Training and Skill Development

Seek specialised training related to your tasks. Focus on safety protocols, risk awareness, emergency response techniques, and proper equipment usage.

#### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Wear the appropriate PPE for your specific tasks, and make sure it fits well and is in good condition. Regularly inspect your PPE to ensure it offers maximum protection.

#### Emergency Response Drills

Participate in emergency response drills. Simulate various scenarios and familiarise yourself with the necessary actions to take to ensure you are prepared to handle emergencies effectively.

#### Task-Specific Risk Assessments

Assess the risks associated with your specific tasks and working conditions. Identify unique hazards and devise personal strategies to mitigate them. Stay informed about potential dangers.

#### Access to Immediate Support

Be aware of how to access immediate support. Familiarise yourself with nearby colleagues and communication channels. Establish clear procedures for yourself to call for help when needed.

# Toolbox Talks

## Facilitator Guide

### INSTRUCTIONS

The information sheet is background information ONLY. Be sure to customise your talk to your operation and facilities.

#### How to deliver an effective Toolbox Talk

- Know your Topic. If you don't understand the material it will be hard to explain and make it relevant.
- Print copies of the Toolbox Talk Info sheet for yourself and each of the participants.
- Hold the talk in a location relevant to the topic being discussed.
- Explain why the Toolbox Talk is being held.
- Stay on topic and keep it simple.
- Encourage conversation and participation.
- Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible.
- Be open to questions.
- Read through the provided cases studies.
- After each study ask attendees what could have been done to prevent this situation.
- Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- Record the details of the Toolbox Talk including the location, date and names of attendees.

**Note:** This Facilitator Guide is intended to provide a basic structure for conducting a Toolbox Talk. Customise it as needed to suit your specific audience and objectives. Always prioritise safety and ensure that participants have a clear understanding of the information presented.

### A Practical Guide

## Lone and Remote Workers

### Introduction

- Welcome everyone to the session.
- Explain the purpose of the session: to raise awareness about the hazards and risks associated with remote and isolated work in agricultural settings.
- Emphasise the importance of being vigilant and proactive in ensuring personal safety in these challenging work environments.

**Icebreaker** Initiate a discussion about remote work experiences. For example, ask participants, "What is the most remote or isolated task you have performed on the farm?"

**Distribution of Resources** Handout printed Toolbox Talk Information Sheets and any other resources.

### Key Points

#### Know Your Environment

- Discuss the challenges of remote and isolated work, including limited access to resources, communication difficulties, and potential hazards unique to these settings.
- Highlight the significance of understanding the local terrain, emergency routes, and nearby resources in case of unforeseen situations.

#### Risk Identification

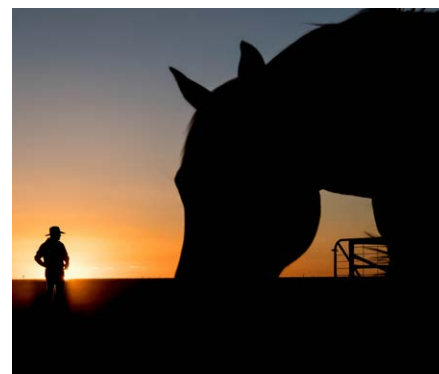
- Encourage participants to identify potential hazards specific to their work environments, considering factors like terrain, weather, and wildlife.
- Discuss strategies for risk mitigation, emphasising the importance of thorough risk assessments before undertaking any task.

#### Effective Communication

- Stress the importance of reliable communication methods in remote areas, such as satellite phones or two-way radios.
- Discuss the significance of regular check-ins and emergency protocols, ensuring everyone knows how to initiate communication in case of emergencies.

#### Emergency Plans and Procedures

- Make sure everyone is aware of emergency plans and procedures to be followed.
- Make sure everyone is aware of quantities of water and food to be carried when working in geographically remote locations.



### Interactive Discussion and Case Studies

Encourage participants to share their experiences and challenges related to remote and isolated work.

Use the Case Studies on the next page to prompt conversation. Read the case studies out loud and ask participants for their thoughts.

### Q&A Session

Allow participants to ask questions and seek clarification on any topics covered.

### Conclusion

Summarise the main takeaways from the talk.

Reiterate the importance of everyone's commitment to safety on the farm.

### Closing Remarks

Thank participants for their time and attention.

Remind them to apply the knowledge gained from this Toolbox Talk in their daily work.

### Feedback

Ask for feedback on the Toolbox Talk content and delivery to improve future sessions.

# Toolbox Talks Facilitator Guide

## CASE STUDIES



### Risk Management Tools

[DOWNLOAD ONLINE MATRIX](#)

Use this simple and effective tool to assess and manage the risk of your farming activities prior to commencing.

All team members can join in and contribute, developing different ways to manage risks on your farm. Doing a risk assessment helps determine hazards and develop appropriate control measures to lessen risks.

[farmsafe.org.au](http://farmsafe.org.au)

P. +61 2 6269 5622 | E. [info@farmsafe.org.au](mailto:info@farmsafe.org.au)

**Disclaimer:** This *Toolbox Talk* is intended as a *general* guide only and is designed to be used to increase risk awareness and safe work practices - it is not legal advice and does not take the place of proper individualised on-farm workplace inductions, work, health and safety training, or any other tailored steps which may be necessary to protect health and safety at specific worksites.

### CASE STUDY 1 Mental Health - Coping with Isolation

#### Scenario

A farm manager on a remote station was facing prolonged isolation due to the nature of the job. Limited social interaction and the vast, empty surroundings started affecting his mental health. He began feeling increasingly lonely, stressed, and anxious.

QUESTION	ANSWER
What could be done to reduce the risk of mental health issues for this person?	<p>Use this question to promote discussion around the importance of taking a proactive approach towards mental health issues. There are a variety of ways to reduce the risk of mental health issues. Responses could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing a routine to maintain a sense of normalcy.</li> <li>• Participating in regular exercise.</li> <li>• Journaling thoughts.</li> <li>• Connecting with loved ones through letters, phone calls, &amp; social media.</li> <li>• Ensuring better work-life balance.</li> </ul>

### CASE STUDY 2 Confined Space Isolation - The Silo Incident

#### Scenario

**Background:** A worker was tasked with cleaning the inside of a silo, a confined space where grain was stored. The silo hadn't been used for months, and there was a buildup of grain dust and residues on the walls and floor.

**Situation:** The worker was equipped with appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including a harness, lifeline, and a gas monitor. Before entering, the worker tested the atmosphere and ensured it was safe. They had a buddy stationed outside the silo, ready to respond in case of an emergency. Handheld radios were used to maintain contact.

**Incident:** While cleaning the silo, the worker accidentally loosened a section of encrusted grain, causing a small collapse. The worker was partially buried but managed to use his radio to communicate the situation to the buddy outside.

**Response:** The buddy immediately contacted emergency services and farm management. The rescue team, following established protocols, safely extracted the worker from the silo.

QUESTION	ANSWERS MAY INCLUDE
What factors helped to contribute to the successful rescue of this isolated worker?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having established safety protocols.</li> <li>• Using a buddy system.</li> <li>• Effective communication during isolated work within confined spaces on the farm.</li> <li>• Access to appropriate equipment.</li> <li>• Established emergency response plans.</li> </ul>

### CASE STUDY 3 The Outback Incident

#### Scenario

In the vast, remote outback of an Australian farm, a worker who was responsible for checking and repairing fences that stretched across the property failed to return to the main homestead complex before nightfall. No radio communication had been received to explain the delay as was required by the communication procedures in place. The worker had informed colleagues about the location and estimated duration of the job that was to be performed. The emergency response plan was enacted, and a search party travelled out to the last known location of the worker and his intended route was followed. The missing worker was located several hours later safe and well waiting with his broken-down vehicle.

QUESTION	ANSWERS MAY INCLUDE
What factors helped to contribute to the successful rescue of this isolated worker?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having established emergency response plans.</li> <li>• Having clear communication procedures.</li> <li>• Other people being aware of the location of work to be conducted.</li> <li>• Carrying enough supplies to sustain a person until rescue.</li> </ul>



## On-farm Toolbox Talk Sign-off Sheet

### Toolbox Talks Facilitator Guide

#### INSTRUCTIONS

This sign-off template is available for you to use as part of your training packages. You will need to attach all evidence of all information given to the person that you have spoken with regarding this specific Toolbox Talk. This may include checklists, policies, safe operating procedures or notes about the conversations had, questions asked and other information provided.

Holding Toolbox Talks or safety meetings are not just about checking a box - they need to be tailored to your farming environment, meet the legislative requirements, and designed to support your employee, contractor, family member or visitor throughout the time that they spend living or working on your property. Inductions are only the first step in your WHS journey and it is important that you continue to create a safety culture on your farm by continuing to engage with your employees on any matters that may affect their health, safety and wellbeing.

The employee/contractor/visitor/family member that you have had this conversation with should acknowledge that they have received, discussed and understood all the relevant information that has been presented to them and attached and sign in the relevant space provided. A good practice is to ensure that the employee initials or signs each relevant piece of information that is attached and retains a copy of each for their own information. Records of WHS conversations should be kept alongside records of employment or in your work, health and safety management system and be updated as needed or as required by law.

Please list and/or attach all documents that have been provided including checklists, policies, safe operating procedures, etc.

#### On-farm Toolbox Talk Participants

##### EMPLOYER – DETAILS

I confirm that I have provided a relevant safety meeting to our farming business and that the employee has received, discussed and understood the listed and attached information.

Given Name(s)
Surname
Property Name
Date
Signature

##### 1. EMPLOYEE / CONTRACTOR / VISITOR / FAMILY MEMBER – DETAILS

I confirm that I have received, discussed and understood all information that has been listed and attached to this document.

Given Name(s)
Surname
Property Name
Date
Signature



# Toolbox Talks Facilitator Guide

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Lone and Remote Workers

## On-farm Toolbox Talk Sign-off Sheet

CONTINUED



**Australian Government**  
Department of Agriculture,  
Fisheries and Forestry

This project is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), through funding from the Australian Government's National Farm Safety Education Fund.

### 2. EMPLOYEE / CONTRACTOR / VISITOR / FAMILY MEMBER – DETAILS

I confirm that I have received, discussed and understood all information that has been listed and attached to this document.

Given Name(s)

Surname

Property Name

Date

Signature

### 3. EMPLOYEE / CONTRACTOR / VISITOR / FAMILY MEMBER – DETAILS

I confirm that I have received, discussed and understood all information that has been listed and attached to this document.

Given Name(s)

Surname

Property Name

Date

Signature

### 4. EMPLOYEE / CONTRACTOR / VISITOR / FAMILY MEMBER – DETAILS

I confirm that I have received, discussed and understood all information that has been listed and attached to this document.

Given Name(s)

Surname

Property Name

Date

Signature

### 5. EMPLOYEE / CONTRACTOR / VISITOR / FAMILY MEMBER – DETAILS

I confirm that I have received, discussed and understood all information that has been listed and attached to this document.

Given Name(s)

Surname

Property Name

Date

Signature