

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

Hazardous Substance and Chemical Awareness

On farms, chemicals are essential tools for enhancing agricultural production. It's crucial to know how to work safely around them to protect yourself and those around you. This toolbox talk will guide you through the basics of farm chemicals, their potential hazards, and practical steps to ensure safety.

What are Chemicals?

Chemicals are substances that come in various forms—solid, liquid, or gas. Common agricultural chemicals include fuels, solvents, insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, fertilisers and veterinary chemicals.

The Hazards and Risks

Farm chemicals can pose risks when not handled with care. Harm can occur through:

- **Ingestion:** Swallowing a chemical accidentally.
- **Absorption:** Skin or eye contact with a chemical.
- **Inhalation:** Breathing in chemicals.
- **Injection:** Entering the body through high-pressure devices or syringes.

Immediate effects depend on the chemical and may include symptoms of poisoning, such as nausea, headaches, rashes, burns, or respiratory issues.

Long-term exposures to certain chemicals could lead to more serious conditions like cancers, birth defects, and organ diseases.

Who is at Risk?

Anybody who lives or works on a farm, or in the vicinity of where chemicals are used, is at risk of being exposed.



Reducing the Risk

Always take precautions when working with chemicals.

1. **Ask for training:** If using chemicals is part of your job then appropriate training should be provided to you. Training should be suitable to the level of risk posed by the products being used and may be provided internally by a competent person or externally by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).
2. **Know your product:** Read the label carefully and refer to the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for safety and first aid information BEFORE you start using the product.
3. **Use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Identify the types of PPE required for specific tasks involving chemicals. Make sure to wear gloves, goggles, respirators, coveralls, or other protective gear as recommended.
4. **Follow safety and use guidelines:** Mixing, applying, and storing guidelines are there to help keep you safe.
5. **Avoid cross-contamination:** Some chemicals can become more dangerous and volatile if mixed with an incompatible chemical or substance. Use dedicated containers and equipment to prevent cross-contamination.
6. **Avoid Spills:** If trained in spill procedures, use spill kits to clean up. If not trained remove yourself and anyone else from immediate harm and report the incident straight away.
7. **Practice good hygiene:** Avoid touching your face, eyes, or mouth during chemical handling tasks. After handling chemicals, and especially before eating or drinking, thoroughly wash your hands, arms, and face and remove any contaminated clothing or PPE.
8. **Emergency equipment:** Know the location of emergency equipment such as eyewash stations and safety showers in case of accidental exposure.

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Reducing the Risk

Keep Others Safe from Chemicals

- **Use Suitable Containers:** Keep chemicals in original, labelled containers. Avoid decanting chemicals into containers that resemble food and storage containers in any way.
- **Monitor Chemicals:** Keep chemicals that you are using within your sight.
- **Dispose Carefully:** Dispose of any unused chemical mixes or empty containers safely according to product instructions.
- **Store Securely:** Securely store chemicals in a well-ventilated and locked location where children and unauthorised people are unable to access them. Regularly inspect chemical storage areas to ensure containers are tightly sealed, correctly labelled, and stored away from incompatible substances.
- **Maintain Proximity Awareness:** Maintain a safe distance from people and animals when applying chemicals. Be mindful of wind direction and weather conditions, which can affect chemical drift and exposure risks.
- **Communicate:** Keep open lines of communication with coworkers and supervisors about chemical use and potential exposure risks. If necessary use signs to advertise chemical use and appropriate re-entry periods.

By following these safety precautions, you contribute to a safer working environment on the farm, protecting yourself and others from harm.

Remember, knowledge and awareness are your best allies in working safely with farm chemicals.

Links and Resources

Understanding Pesticide Chemical Labels
apvma.gov.au










auschemtraining.com.au/resources

DrumMuster
drummuster.org.au

ChemClear
chemclear.org.au

Chemical Symbols and Meanings

If you see any of the following symbols on a sign or label then **take care** there are potentially dangerous chemicals about.

SYMBOL	RISK / DANGER	PRECAUTIONS
	<p>RISK Accidental detonation during handling or storage.</p> <p>DANGER Explosion, fire, blast or projection hazard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Storage: Store explosive materials in designated, secure areas away from heat, sparks, and open flames. • Proper Handling: Handle explosives with extreme care, follow procedures, and use specialised tools. • No Smoking: Strictly no smoking in areas where explosives are stored or used.
	<p>RISK Ignition of flammable substances.</p> <p>DANGER Flammable liquids, vapour, solids and gases; including self-heating and self-igniting substances.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid Ignition Sources: Keep flammable materials away from open flames, sparks, and sources of heat. • Proper Storage: Store flammable substances in approved containers and cabinets designed for this purpose. • Static Electricity: Ground equipment and use anti-static measures in flammable areas to prevent sparks. • Fire Extinguishers: Know the location of fire extinguishers.
	<p>RISK Chemical reactions with other substances.</p> <p>DANGER Oxidising liquids, solids and gases, may cause or intensify fire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate Storage: Store oxidising agents separately from flammable materials to prevent chemical reactions. • Avoid Contamination: Prevent contamination of oxidising substances with organic materials or flammable chemicals. • Proper Ventilation: Ensure good ventilation in areas where oxidising agents are used to disperse potential hazards.
	<p>RISK Leaks or ruptures of pressurised gas.</p> <p>DANGER Leaks or ruptures of pressurised gas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Storage: Store gas cylinders upright and secure them to prevent falling or tipping. • Handling: Handle carefully to prevent damage or leakage. • Leaks: Report any suspected leaks immediately. • Emergency Procedures: Know the emergency procedures for gas leaks, including how to shut off the gas supply.
	<p>RISK Skin and eye contact or inhalation.</p> <p>DANGER Corrosive chemicals, may cause severe skin and eye damage and may be corrosive to metals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear Protective Gear: Use appropriate PPE such as gloves and eye protection. • Well-ventilated Area: Work in well-ventilated spaces or under a fume hood to minimise inhalation exposure. • Containers and Equipment: Use containers and equipment made of materials resistant to corrosion. • Spill Cleanup: Only attempt to clean up if specifically trained in corrosive chemical handling.
	<p>RISK Inhalation, skin contact, or ingestion.</p> <p>DANGER Can quickly harm or even be fatal in small amounts if swallowed, inhaled or in contact with skin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use PPE: Wear appropriate PPE such as gloves, safety goggles, overalls. • Ventilation: Work in well-ventilated areas or use a fume hood to minimize inhalation exposure. • Avoid Ingestion: Never eat, drink, or smoke in areas near where toxic chemicals are being used or stored. • Emergency Response: Know the location of eyewash stations and safety showers.
	<p>RISK Inhalation or skin contact.</p> <p>DANGER Can cause health issues including skin, eye, and respiratory irritation, allergic skin reactions, drowsiness and dizziness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise Exposure: Limit exposure to hazardous substances by using engineering controls and PPE. • Use Alternatives: Consider using less harmful alternatives when available.
	<p>RISK Inhalation, skin contact, or ingestion.</p> <p>DANGER Can cause severe or life-threatening health problems.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE: Wear the necessary PPE to protect against specific health hazards, including respirators if required. • Training: Only use if adequately trained in handling and responding to serious health hazards.
	<p>RISK Spills or improper disposal.</p> <p>DANGER Can harm ecosystems and wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storage: Store hazardous materials in designated areas with containment measures to prevent spills. • Spill Response: Have spill kits and appropriate cleanup materials readily available and know how to use them. • Proper Disposal: Follow environmentally responsible disposal methods for hazardous waste, following local regulations.

Please note that these are general safety precautions, and it's essential to follow specific safety guidelines and regulations for the particular chemicals used on your farm.

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

Hazardous Substance and Chemical Awareness

Introduction

- Welcome everyone.
- Emphasise the importance of staying safe around chemicals.
- Mention the objective: to raise awareness and provide practical tips for safe chemical handling.

Icebreaker Consider starting with a brief question or scenario related to chemical

handling to engage participants. For example, "Have you ever had a close call when handling farm chemicals, or do you know someone who has?"

Distribution of Resources

Handout printed Toolbox Talk Information Sheets and any other resources related to farm chemical safety.

Key Points

Chemical Awareness

- Define what farm chemicals are.
- Explain their various forms (solid, liquid, gas).
- Mention their essential uses in farming (pesticides, fertilizers, cleaning products, veterinary products, fuels).

Chemical Exposure

- **Discuss how chemicals can harm workers:**
 - Through skin contact
 - Via inhalation
 - By ingestion
 - By injection
- Provide examples of immediate and long-term effects of chemical exposure.

Safe Practices

- **Emphasise the importance of:**
 - Proper storage.
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Avoiding chemical mixing without guidance.
 - Working in well-ventilated areas.
 - Responding to spills immediately.
 - Practicing good hygiene.
 - Knowing the location of emergency equipment.

Emergency Response

- Explain the need for an emergency plan, including the location of emergency equipment and first aid supplies.
- Discuss what to do in case of spills, accidents, or exposure incidents.



Interactive Discussion and Case Studies

Encourage participants to share their experiences, challenges, or questions related to farm chemicals.

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: keeping safe, keeping other safe, and emergency response.

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.

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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

P. +61 2 6269 5622 | E. 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 The Importance of Training

Scenario


Meet Darren, a new farm worker with a background in office administration but little experience on a farm. Darren was excited to learn about farming but had received minimal training on handling farm chemicals. One morning Darren noticed that something had leaked in the chemical storage shed. Eager to please Darren grabbed some old rags and wiped up the spill, unintentionally getting some of the chemical on his hands and arms. Shortly afterwards Darren noticed a burning sensation and areas of his hands and arms started turning red. Darren was taken to hospital and treated for chemical burns.

QUESTION	ANSWERS MAY INCLUDE
What steps could have been taken to keep Darren safe?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide Darren with an induction that includes chemical safety. • Warn others in the area of the spill. • Isolate the area concerned (if appropriate) • Darren should have reported the spill to a supervisor.

CASE STUDY 2 Chemical Spill During Mixing

Scenario

Luke was tasked with continuing to clean up the spill in the chemical shed after Darren was taken to hospital. Luke decided that the quickest way to clean up the chemical was to use the water hose. Luke hosed out the chemical shed and directed all of the water into a nearby drain.

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>What should Luke have done before cleaning up the spill?</p>  <p>The chemical that was leaking had the following pictogram on it. Was hosing the chemical into the drain safe?</p> <p><i>Point this pictogram out to attendees.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checked for the source of the leak and observed the pictogram for more information (if safe to do so). • Followed spill procedures for the type of chemical involved. <p>This pictogram indicates that this chemical may be harmful to ecosystems and wildlife. Spill response procedures for this type of chemical should be followed.</p>

CASE STUDY 3 Combining Chemicals

Scenario

The chemical container that first caused the leak is cracked and continuing to leak.

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>What should Luke do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ignore it. It is someone else's problem. Empty the leaking container into any other container in the storage shed. Report it to their supervisor and ask for guidance. 	<p>C - The correct way to manage a chemical spill or leaking container will depend on the chemical concerned. A suitably qualified and experienced person should be consulted.</p>
<p>What could happen if Luke ignored the still leaking container?</p>	<p>Discussion could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other people being exposed. • Potential to damage other containers and cause a bigger problem. • Harm to animals and the environment. • Potential to combine with another incompatible chemical.
<p>What could happen if Luke emptied the leaking container into any other chemical container in the shed?</p>	<p>Discuss the dangers of mixing chemicals and how chemicals can react with each other.</p>
<p>What could happen if Luke emptied the leaking container into an old water bottle?</p>	<p>Discuss the dangers of unlabelled containers and how using drink or food containers could result in accidental ingestion of the chemical.</p>

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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.

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Hazardous Substance and Chemical Awareness

On-farm Toolbox Talk Sign-off Sheet

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

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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



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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