

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

Working at Heights

Working at heights is a high-risk activity, and a leading cause of death and serious injury in Australia. Working at heights encompasses any situation where a person may fall from one level to another. Working at heights may refer to working on a ladder, or working beside a vehicle service pit. Both have the potential to result in a fall that is reasonably likely to cause injury. Falls from heights can result in serious injuries or even fatalities.

There are other hazards to consider when working at heights. For example working at heights may bring people into closer proximity to overhead power lines. Working at heights may also mean that access to tools, resources, and first aid is restricted. This Toolbox's primary focus is falls from heights. **Note this Toolbox Talk is not applicable to Construction work¹.*

The Hazards and Risks

Falls

Falling from height is the most significant risk. Even a fall from a relatively low height can result in severe injury or death.

Falling Objects

Objects or tools falling from height can cause severe head injuries or other injuries to bystanders or workers below.

Possible Harm

Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI)

Falls from height can cause severe head injuries, including concussions and traumatic brain injuries, which can lead to long-term cognitive and physical impairments.

Spinal Cord Injuries

Falls can lead to spinal cord injuries, which may cause partial or complete paralysis, affecting mobility and bodily functions.

Fractures and Broken Bones

Falls can result in fractures and broken bones, including arms, legs, wrists, and hips, which can require surgery and lengthy rehabilitation.

Internal Injuries

The impact from a fall can cause internal injuries, such as organ damage or internal bleeding, which may not be immediately apparent but can be life-threatening.

Dislocations

Falls can cause joints to dislocate, requiring medical intervention to put the bones back in place.



Cuts and Abrasions

Workers can suffer cuts and abrasions from sharp objects or uneven surfaces during a fall, which can lead to infections if not properly treated.

Punctures

Falls onto sharp objects can cause puncture wounds, increasing the risk of infection and damage to internal organs.

Haemorrhages

Falls can cause internal bleeding, which may not be immediately visible but can lead to serious complications if not treated.

Psychological Impact

Beyond physical injuries, falls can lead to psychological trauma, including anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and a fear of heights.

Death

In the most severe cases, falls from heights can be fatal, resulting in loss of life.

¹ Construction work is any work, not considered to be minor in nature, and carried out in connection with the: alteration, conversion, fitting-out, commissioning, renovation, repair, maintenance, refurbishment, demolition, decommissioning or dismantling of a structure, building site preparation.

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Reducing the Risk

To reduce the risk of working at heights it may be necessary to implement a combination of controls, tailored to specific tasks and workplace conditions.

Avoid Working at Height

- Whenever possible, redesign tasks or processes to eliminate the need to work at height.
- Design the work (structurally or mechanically) to eliminate the need to work at heights.
- Move the item to a level that is not at a height (e.g., lower things to the ground)
- Use robots, cameras, or drones for cleaning and inspection of equipment that would normally require working at height.
- Assemble or prepare components at ground level where feasible to reduce the need for assembly work at height.



Links and Resources

SafeWork Australia –
Model Code of Practice: Managing
the Risk of Falls at Workplaces
safeworkaustralia.gov.au

SafeWork NSW - Ladders
safework.nsw.gov.au



Use Engineering Solutions, Mechanical Devices or Aids

- Elevated work platforms, scissor lifts, or cherry pickers may be an option to safely perform tasks at height with guardrails and fall protection.
- Barricades can keep people away from fall hazards and away from locations where people are working at height and there is the risk of objects falling from height.
- Covers can prevent falls into holes, pits, or excavations.
- Fixed or suspended scaffolding may be an option for stationary tasks.
- Cages and lifelines can be fitted to permanent or fixed ladder systems.

Use Administrative Controls

- Plan tasks involving heights, including risk assessments and safe work methods.
- Participate in training regarding working at height hazards, safety procedures, and proper use of equipment.
- Erect signs and use painted paths and tracks to alert workers about areas where working at height is taking place.

Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **Work Positioning Systems**
A travel restraint system restricts workers' movements in the fall hazard area by allowing them to reach the edge, but they cannot fall over the edge. Travel restraint is often used for leading-edge work that has an unprotected floor, roof, deck, or other walking or working surface.
- **Fall Arrest Systems**
The fall arrest system is designed to catch the worker in the event of a fall. If the fall arrest system is not appropriately planned, designed, and installed, the worker may be injured during the fall, including the potential to bottom out. Fall arrest systems may include individual fall arrest systems, safety nets, and catch platforms.
- **Helmets**
Workers should wear helmets to protect their heads from falling objects.
- **Gloves**
Wear appropriate gloves for grip and hand protection.
- **Non-Slip Footwear**
Workers should wear non-slip footwear.



Toolbox Talks

A Practical Guide Working at Heights

Portable Ladders

Ladders are versatile tools. They are quick to setup and easy to use but working with ladders at height presents several hazards that can lead to incidents and injuries. Every year, numerous severe incidents occur due to falls from ladders. The majority of these cases result from incorrect or inappropriate usage of ladders.

The Hazards and Risks

Stability Issues

Mobile ladders are inherently unstable. Ladders may wobble or slip, causing the user to lose balance and fall. Overreaching (any action that takes the central mass of the user away from the centre of the ladder) is a common cause of incidents.

Poor Setup and Positioning

Incorrect angle of ladder placement can lead to slipping sideways or falling backward.

Poor Maintenance

Ladders tend to be used until they break. Faulty or damaged ladders may collapse under the user's weight, causing a sudden fall.

Lack of Training

Inadequate training in ladder usage and safety precautions can also contribute to incidents, as users might not be aware of proper techniques for climbing, descending, or maintaining balance.

Inappropriate Equipment Selection

Choosing a ladder that isn't suitable for the task at hand, such as using a short ladder when a higher elevation is needed, increases the risk of falling.



The Harm

Falling from a ladder exposes a person to the same potential harm as any other fall from height.

Reducing the Risk

Portable ladders should only be used for simple access jobs of a short duration. If a ladder is the only option, the following precautions may help to reduce the risk of injury.

Selecting the Right Ladder

- Choose a ladder that meets Australian standards and is capable of bearing the intended load.
- Consider the task to be performed and the location. A platform ladder, A-frame, or extension ladder might be more suitable for specific tasks.
- Ensure the combined weight of the person, tools, and items does not exceed the ladder's working load limit.

Pre-use Inspection

- Before each use, thoroughly inspect the ladder for signs of damage or wear.

Stability Measures

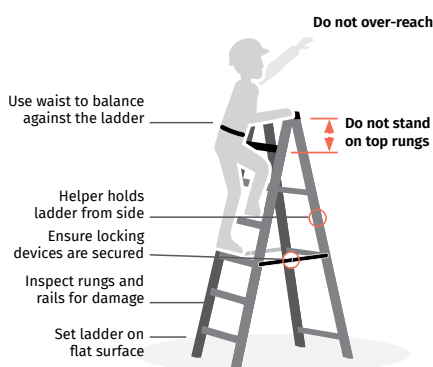
- Place the ladder on a flat, stable surface.
- Angle extension ladders at a ratio of 1:4, positioning the base 1 meter away from the structure for every 4 meters of height.
- For extension ladders, secure them at the top, bottom, or both ends, alternatively, have someone hold the ladder while in use if securing is not possible.
- Use A-frame ladders in the fully open and securely locked position.

Correct Usage Techniques

- Always maintain three points of contact when climbing or descending, utilising two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.
- Do not climb or work beyond the second-last rung of a ladder, and never straddle the top of an A-frame ladder.
- When descending, face the ladder and climb down to the bottom rung before stepping off, ensuring a safe dismounting process.
- Limit items carried on the ladder to small objects; heavy or large items, such as construction materials, should not be transported on ladders.
- Carry only items that allow you to maintain three points of contact at all times for balance and stability.
- Avoid leaning or reaching away from the center of the ladder during use, maintaining a secure and centered position.

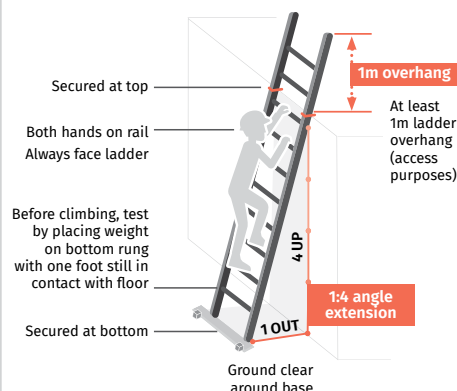
Ladder Safety

A-Frame Ladder



Falls are often due to standing on the top two steps or over-reaching

Extension Ladder



Falls are often due to the ladder slipping sideways or outwards or when getting on/off the landing space.

Source safework.nsw.gov.au/hazards-a-z/ladders

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

Working at Heights

Introduction

- Welcome and introduction to the session.
- Briefly outline the importance of working safely at heights and the potential risks involved.

Icebreaker

Consider starting with a brief question or scenario related to working at heights to engage participants.

For example, "Have you ever had a close call when working at heights, or do you know someone who has?"

Distribution of Resources

Handout printed Toolbox Information Sheets and any other resources related to working at heights.

Key Points

Hazards and Risks

- Discuss the various hazards and risks associated with working at heights.
- Explain the potential injuries and consequences of falls.

Safe Practices

- Present safe practices, including elimination, engineering controls, substitution, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Focus on ladder safety, emphasising proper selection, inspection, setup, and usage.

Demonstration and Practical Tips

- Conduct a live demonstration of ladder setup and safe usage.
- Provide practical tips and techniques for maintaining balance, proper climbing, and descent.
- Conduct a live demonstration of any other tools and equipment used to prevent falls from height.

Interactive Discussion and Case Studies

Encourage participants to share their experiences, challenges, or questions related to working at heights.

Use visual aids or diagrams if available to illustrate key points.

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 how you want workers to stay safe.

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

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

Choosing the Right Tool for the Job

Scenario

Jane, a farm worker, needed to remove a tree limb hanging dangerously close to the barn roof. The limb is about two meters above the ground. She decided to use a chainsaw to cut the limb but was unsure about the best way to reach it. Her initial thought was to use a ladder.

QUESTION	ANSWERS
Should Jane use a ladder for this task?	No, ladders and chainsaws should never be used together.
How could Jane perform this task safely?	Answers may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a pole saw Using a scissor lift or elevated work platform.

CASE STUDY 2

Improvisation Failure

Scenario

The pole saw wouldn't start and there was no scissor lift or elevated work platform available. Jane and her coworkers brainstormed and decided to use a pallet placed on the forks of a forklift as an improvised elevated work platform.

QUESTION	ANSWER
What could go wrong with this scenario?	Many things could go wrong in this scenario. Allow for discussion. Using a forklift without a compliant platform (or other item of plant that is not designed specifically to lift people) is an unsafe and unacceptable practice. Jane and her coworkers should speak to their supervisor about accessing appropriate equipment so the job can be completed safely.

CASE STUDY 3

Hidden Hazard

Scenario

Tom, a farm worker, was repairing a set of cattle yards. Part of his work involved replacing the fence around the empty cattle dip.

QUESTION	ANSWERS
While Tom is working near the empty cattle dip would this constitute working at height?	Yes, working at heights encompasses any situation where a person may fall from one level to and where that fall is reasonably likely to cause injury.
What strategies could Tom use to reduce the risk of falling into the dip?	Answers may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a barricade Covering the dip with a suitable cover or mesh. Using a fall arrest system. Prebuilding as much of the fence as possible away from the dip to reduce the amount of time require to be spent working in the dip's proximity.

On-farm Toolbox Talk Sign-off Sheet

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



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On-farm Toolbox Talk Sign-off Sheet

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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