

A Practical Guide Working Near Water

Water is the lifeblood of Australian farms. However, it also carries with it high risks and hidden dangers for employees and families on farms.

Determine the most appropriate work methods to minimise the risk of falling into water, becoming submerged and drowning or causing serious injury.

Safer Farms, Safer Farmers™

Toolbox Talks

MANAGER'S INSTRUCTIONS

- Ensure all participants have a copy to refer to and make notes
- Ensure you write the name of your farm, record the date and have all participants sign the master copy (*which should be kept as part of your farm's WH&S records*)
- Ensure your *Toolbox Talk* is done in a location suitable for the topic
- **Engage** with each other, ask questions and give everyday examples.



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.**



A MUST

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 the risks.

BEFORE YOU START WORK

- If your work needs to be carried out in or near water, **plan** how you will enter and exit the water body and select fit for purpose equipment.
- Entering water fully clothed increases your weight and resistance exponentially, making swimming much more difficult. Take this into consideration when making plans and assessing risks for working near or in water.
- Undertake regular inspections of pumps and equipment used for completing necessary **repairs and maintenance** before you leave the workshop.
- If working alone or remotely, always carry a charged mobile phone, 2 Way radio, CB radio or satellite phone or a global positioning system (GPS) such as the *Emergency Plus App*.
- Check if you need any licences if the job to be done involves high-risk activities.
- Check for contamination before working near water.
- **Plan** your travel route, departure and return times when working near and with water and make sure someone else on the property is aware that you are working near water.
- Ensure a plan is in place in case of emergency and that all who live and work on farm are aware of the plan.

ON THE JOB

Equipment

- Maintain, repair and test equipment used for working with water prior to use.
- Always use machinery and equipment according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure all troughs, tanks and wells have fitted with lids or mesh and ladders on tanks are secure.
- **Electricity and water don't mix!**
- Always use a licensed electrician to fix submersible pumps.
- Turn off water pumps before entering the water and checking or touching equipment.

Resources

- **Be clear** on the jobs that need to be done and the time frame required.
- **Maintain** your own safety.
- **DO NOT become a casualty yourself.** Call for assistance and always use a flotation aid if you need to get into the water.



Farmsafe
AUSTRALIA

P. +61 2 6269 5622 / E. info@farmsafe.org.au /

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.



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.

POLICE

AMBULANCE

FIRE

POISONS 13 11 26
Poisons Information Centre

Some people might have worked on a farm before, but...

- Have they worked on your farm?
- Do they know how you run your business?

OTHER RESOURCES

- **Are you aware of your legislative responsibilities?** Legislation may differ from state to state and it is your responsibility to be aware of what is required by law.
- **Keep Watch @ The Farm**
- **Child Safe Play Areas**

- Use fit-for-purpose personal protective equipment (PPE), fall restraint and fall arrest equipment as required.
- **Know** the GPS co-ordinates of the location of where you are working near water. Apps such as the **Emergency Plus App** could save your life by helping you identify your locations correctly.
- Consider the speed and force of moving water and dangers to changes in river and levy banks during flood events.
- Drinking alcohol or using drugs around water increases the likelihood of drowning events. *Royal Life Saving Australia* statistics show that **at least 20% of adult drowning deaths** each year list alcohol as a contributing factor.
- Safety is **your** responsibility. Ask for more training if you are unsure about anything.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- **Learn how to save a life!** Complete **First Aid** training and follow your farm's Emergency Action Plan. Learn about DRABC (Danger Response Airway Breathing Circulation).
- **Practice emergency** response procedures.
- Swimming lessons are highly recommended for all ages. If you are not a strong swimmer, tell someone – make sure that your employer knows this about you.
- Be aware that non-fatal water related incidents can result in long term effects including permanent disability such as brain damage and spinal injuries.
- Cold water or swimming at low temperatures can cause shock and hypothermia for even the most fit people. Assess the conditions of the day and know your limits.
- Inland waterways have currents, debris and other hidden dangers. **Be aware.**
- Use laminated maps of all water bodies on the farm – including dams, creeks, rivers, pools, soaks, and troughs.

CHILDREN

According to Royal Life Saving Australia, two children under the age of five drown in farm dams each year on average.

- Dams and soaks used for livestock can't always be isolated. Have a safe play area for children to prevent them from wandering – this applies to neighbouring properties, creeks or rivers, if they are close by. Refer to **Child Safety on Farms.**
- Familiarise children with water and the risks. Young children don't always understand danger or they may not associate danger with places that they enjoy, such as the family pool.
- **ALWAYS actively supervise children (give them your undivided attention!)** as they are curious and can change their behaviour without any warning. Be within an arm length and be ready to enter the water in case of an emergency.
- Securely fence swimming pools to Australian Standards with a well maintained, self-locking gate.

Comments / Suggestions

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Toolbox Talks

OPERATION NAME: MEETING LEADER:

LOCATION: DATE:

PARTICIPANTS

1. NAME: 4. NAME:

SIGNATURE: SIGNATURE:

2. NAME: 5. NAME:

SIGNATURE: SIGNATURE:

3. NAME: 6. NAME:

SIGNATURE: SIGNATURE:



Australian Government
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