



Farm Safety Guide

Protecting you and yours

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**Put safety first on
your farm and get
up to 15% off your
premium**

Put safety first

We are committed to improving safety and helping you to manage your risks. This is an important part of our philosophy. We hope that this guide will help you identify the dangers on your farm and improve safety, so that you, your family and your workers do not become another statistic.

Farming is an extremely dangerous occupation. According to the Health and Safety Authority's accident records, a farmer is seven times more likely to be killed at work compared to other workers in any field or business. The elderly and young children are particularly at risk of being injured or killed.

Prepare a safety statement

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 places a legal obligation on all farmers to prepare and implement a **Safety Statement**. However farms with three or fewer employees may instead complete a Risk Assessment following the guidance provided by the Health & Safety Authority's code of practice **"Preventing injury and occupational ill-health in agriculture"**.

The Safety Statement sets out how safety and health are managed on the farm by:

- Identifying dangerous farming activities and assessing the risks of someone becoming injured.
- Explaining what safety measures have been put into place to protect everyone's safety, including the farmer, the farmer's family members, employees, service providers, trainers, visitors and any other people engaged in the industry.
- Describing how safety will be managed and secured on the farm. For example, the Safety Statement will explain what safety measures are being taken and who is responsible for enforcing them.

You must pass your Safety Statement or Risk Assessment to anyone who works on your farm to make sure they are aware of the safety and health controls on the farm. These include casual workers, contractors and people supplying goods and services to the farm.

Farm hazards change constantly so you must review your Safety Statement or risk assessment annually.

Failure to complete a Safety Statement or risk assessment could result, if indicted, in a Fine being imposed or imprisonment.

**Almost one-third
of all deaths at
work happen on
farms**

Please put safety first on your farm

Public safety

- Make sure that all your fencing and gateways to public roadways are secure and that livestock cannot escape onto public roadways.
- If you are moving livestock or machinery on a public road, you should put warning signs on the edges of the road to show that farm activity is in progress. Vehicles and equipment should comply with requirements of Road Traffic Acts.
- Take extra precautions with livestock and machinery when any member of the public visits your farm, and make sure they leave your farm safely.

Agricultural machinery

- Make sure that the farmyard allows orderly movement of people, livestock and machinery. Gates and fences should facilitate the safe movement of livestock between buildings.
- Identify blind spots or corners where an accident could occur, and put control measures in place.
- Ensure that passageways between buildings are at least 4.8 metres in width. Provide at least 12 metres of space at the front of silage pits to allow adequate room for turning modern equipment.
- Make sure that areas used for parking vehicles and mobile equipment are level, as rolling vehicles are a major cause of farmyard accidents.
- Fit guards on chain and sprocket drives, V-belt and pulley drives to avoid risk of arm becoming entangled.
- Fit guards to PTO shafts, rotating shafts and rotating ancillary equipment such as slip clutches and so on.
- Do not allow operators with loose clothing or long hair near rotating shafts, due to the risk of entanglement.
- Make sure hydraulic systems are used safely and kept in good condition.
- Never work on a hydraulic system until the pressure has been let out and never use a finger to plug a leak in the pipe.

- Make sure that loads are stable and secure
- When driving an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) wear a helmet and undergo formal training especially where ATV is being used to draw loads.
- Check all machinery and equipment regularly to make sure that it is in safe working order.
- Make sure that all power take-off shafts are adequately guarded.
- Make sure all vehicles' mirrors, lights and indicators are in good working order.
- Make sure that all operators are competent, are properly trained and work safely.
- Maintain tractors properly and fit cabs or safety frames to recommended standards. Always remember to have the handbrake on and the cab locked when not in use.
- Always turn off the power take-off shaft and stop the engine before trying to free a blockage.
- Fit chainsaws with a chain brake, safety chain, chain catcher, chain breakage guard and safety throttle.

- 49% of all fatalities are caused by contact with tractors/machinery or vehicles
- 15% involved handling animals
- 10% involved falling from heights

Source: HSA (2000-2009).

Handling & stacking bales

- Use well-maintained mechanical handling equipment for handling bales.
- Make sure tractors are roadworthy and are fitted with safety features like a rollover cage.
- Train staff in safe driving and work practices, including manual handling and lifting and use of machinery.
- Supervise staff.
- Keep children away from bale stacks and handling and stacking work.
- Make sure the load height and weight of trailers is not exceeded and the load is secured during transport.

- Make sure bales are never stacked higher than lifting capacity of lifting machine and check the bales are kept in good condition.
- Provide handrails on platforms that are over two metres high and make sure ladders are secure.

Farm fires

- Move materials such as hay, straw, fuel, oils and other flammable materials away from livestock buildings and houses.
- Store hay and straw 18 metres or more from other buildings.
- Keep hay and straw storage in livestock buildings to a minimum.
- Store fuels and agrochemicals securely away from other combustible materials.
- Sub-divide buildings into compartments to stop the spread of fire, using non-combustible materials such as solid concrete blocks and fibre cement sheeting.
- Make sure the electrical installation is dustproof and waterproof and maintained by a competent electrician as faulty electrical and faulty lighting installations are a major cause of farm fires.
- Maintain agricultural machinery as fires on tractors, Combine Harvesters and machinery can be caused by loose electrical connections, sparks from engine exhausts, dust build-up on an engine and atomised spray leaking from an engine.
- Park tractors, combines and machinery well away from combustible materials, such as hay or straw, to minimise possible loss and injury.
- To allow access for the fire brigade, make sure entrances and gates are at least 3 metres wide.
- Check that the farm water supply is sufficient for fire fighting purposes; the fire brigade may only have 2000 litres (400 gallons) of water on board.

- Make sure that all emergency phone numbers are in full view at the phone.
- Have suitable fire extinguishers on the farm and in the home.
- Fit smoke alarms in the house.

Health risks

- Asthma or farmer's lung can be caused by working close to spores, moulds and organic dusts. Make sure there is adequate ventilation and wear a dust mask.
- Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) can be caused by contact with stagnant water containing rats' urine. Symptoms are similar to a very bad attack of flu.
- Outbreaks of brucellosis still happen so you should take precautions with infected animals.
- Lyme disease can be transferred to humans by tick bites. Make sure you keep your arms and legs covered where possible, and be alert to irritations and bites.
- Wash your hands after contact with animals. Follow high standards of hygiene and cover all cuts and wounds with waterproof plasters. Keep a first-aid box and do a first-aid course.

Electrical installations

- Do not try to make electrical repairs yourself, as these should only be made by a competent electrician.
- Get the electrical installations on your farm examined regularly, and upgrade if necessary. Be familiar with the standards of electrical installation. Read the ESB (Electricity Supply Board) leaflet 'Farm well, farm safely'.
- Make sure that all plugs are correctly wired and that cables are solid. Only use waterproof fittings in damp locations. All sockets should be protected by a 30-milliamp residual current device (RCD).
- Look out for overhead cables and make sure that there is a safe clearance distance.

Overhead power lines

- Train staff in tasks and hazards.
- Put warning labels on high-reach machines.
- Don't put up fencing alongside overhead power lines.
- Don't build ricks, stacks or buildings, or create dumps, under or near overhead power lines or stay wires.
- Don't store machinery against overhead line towers, poles or stay wires.
- Never work near overhead power lines until the electrical supply has been turned off.

Livestock

- Make sure that all animal handlers are competent and wear protective clothing and equipment.
- Check that your facilities for handling, housing and loading livestock are safe and easy to use.
- Make sure you properly maintain cattle crushes, cattle-handling units and holding pens.
- Regularly check secure fencing around the holding fields of dangerous animals.
- All animals can be dangerous so you should constantly review their mood. In particular, watch out for children when cattle are being herded and make sure that they are aware of the dangers of handling animals.
- Bulls should have a ring and trailing chain attached. Where a bull is present, put a warning sign at the entrances of fields to which the public can have access.

Pesticides and chemicals

- Keep all pesticides and chemicals out of the reach of children and make children aware of the dangers.
- Follow the guidance on the material's safety data sheet.

- Use a safer alternative or provide guidelines to prevent workers from being exposed.
- Train staff in safe practices and emergency procedures and provide washing facilities.
- Provide protective clothing, such as wellington boots, a coverall, pesticide gloves, a face shield, and where necessary, a respirator.
- Store hazardous materials in a chemical cabinet and make sure nearby drains are protected if they become polluted.
- Carry out health surveillance checks to detect early signs of ill health.
- Mark all dangerous pesticides and chemicals clearly and store them in a secure store that is made of non-flammable material. Identify the store with the correct safety warning sign. The store should be isolated from materials that can catch fire, such as hay or straw.

Slurry

- Provide staff with suitable breathing equipment and make sure they wear it as slurry pits produce dangerous gases such as hydrogen sulphide and ammonia.
- Avoid naked lights or flames as they may ignite the highly flammable slurry gas.
- Make sure that covered slurry tanks have enough manholes and a grid that cannot easily be removed or dislodged by children.
- When slats are removed make sure temporary covers or guardrails protect the opening.
- It is very important to make sure you have high levels of ventilation while agitating slurry. Pick a windy day. Evacuate all people and livestock from sheds, and open all doors and outlets.
- Adding silage effluent to slurry greatly increases the level of poisonous hydrogen sulphide gas that is produced.

Child safety on the farm

Play area

Provide a safe and secure play area for young children. Prevent them from getting into dangerous areas by having a play area with childproof fencing.

Vehicles

A young person must be at least 14 years old to operate a tractor on the farm, and over 16 years of age to do so on public roads. (You must provide proper driving instruction, and supervise young drivers and not allow them to drive on dangerous ground.) Children younger than 14 should not ride in a tractor unless they are strapped into a properly-designed seat inside the cab. Make sure that all drivers of tractors take special care when driving in areas where children could be present.

Machinery

Make sure that workers are aware of children and that they stop operating any machinery if a child enters the area.

Water

Keep children away from streams, rivers, barrels, wells and tanks. Make sure these are 'no-go' areas. Provide fencing where possible to close off dangerous areas.

Animals

Supervise all contact between children and animals, particularly animals with their young. Make sure that children wash their hands after all contact with animals so that they do not catch diseases from them.

Supervise young people who are working on your farm

Look out for and get rid of particular dangers to children on your farm

Health risks

You must keep children away from:

- areas where the work conditions may affect their health – for example, where there is a lot of noise or dust;
- silage pits, which should be well fenced off;
- slurry pits, silos, bulk storage hoppers, grain pits and areas where there are stacks of hay or straw bales, pallets, sacks, stacked timber and so on (which may be attractive to them for climbing).

Chemicals

Keep chemicals and medicines well out of the reach of children and make sure they are clearly marked and that children are aware of what the 'danger' markings mean.

Educate your children

– explain the dangers to them and why it is important for them to stay in their play area.

(You can get publications on child safety on farms from the Health and Safety Authority – see www.hsa.ie)

Building work on farms

- Avoid working on fragile roofs by doing the work from inside the building or by using mobile elevated work platforms or scaffolding.
- Use roof ladders or crawling boards when working on a roof and provide edge protection or provide safety harness or netting.
- Put up warning signs on the roof.
- Scaffolds should only be erected, adjusted, dismantled and checked by competent persons.
- All elevated work platforms must be securely fixed in position to the lifting machine and be fitted with guard rails, toe boards, lifting controls and a fail-safe lifting device to prevent collapse.
- Never use loaders with buckets, pallets, or other makeshift equipment as a work platform.
- Fit railings to prevent falls from stairs, lofts, work platforms and walkways.
- Make sure ladders are in good condition, are placed on a firm level surface and secured at the top and at its base to prevent it from slippage.
- Place ladder at a safe angle - 1m out for every 4m in height.
- Position ladders so that workers don't overstretch themselves.
- Make sure any powered hand tools are suitable for outdoor use and connected through a residual current device.
- Inspect tools, leads and plugs frequently and condemn makeshift and improvised portable equipment.
- Tools should be operated by a 110 volt transformer.

Lifting and carrying

- You can prevent back injury by knowing how to lift a load properly. Make sure you are well balanced, bend your knees, keep your back straight and keep the load close to your body.
- If possible, use mechanical methods of lifting such as loaders, hydraulic jacks, trolleys and wheels under heavy farmyard gates.
- Secure heavy weights well in storage areas.

Trips and falls

- Try not to rush jobs where safety might be put at risk, particularly in dangerous areas such as on muddy ground, on ladders and so on.
- Look out for dangers on your walkways and in work areas, and keep these areas free of rubbish and other items that people could trip over.
- Not using ladders properly is the cause of many accidents. Use a solid and properly-secured ladder, positioned at a safe angle, when working at height. Do not risk injury by walking on a fragile roof – use adequately-supported crawler boards or roofing ladders. Make sure that lofts and stairways are stable and have adequate guard rails fitted.
- Fit sliding doors or make sure that doors can be secured. Heavy swinging doors or gates are highly dangerous, especially in windy weather.

Useful contacts

Health and Safety Authority

The Metropolitan Building
James Joyce Street, Dublin 1
Phone: 1890 289 389 www.hsa.ie

Teagasc

Oak Park, Carlow.
Phone: 059 917 0200 www.teagasc.ie

Put safety first on your farm and get up to 15% off your premium

Most accidents can be avoided by taking simple safety measures. You need to identify the dangers on your farm, assess the risks of loss or injury, and put in place proper controls to prevent accidents from happening.

To encourage you to focus on safety, we are offering you up to 15% off your farm insurance premium if you have safe working practices on your farm. All you need to do is tell us what safety measures you have in place by answering the following questions.

Safe farming checklist

Once you have answered all the questions, please sign the 'statement of fact'. Then detach this checklist and return it to your Aviva branch or insurance broker. We will tell you what level of discount we have given you. This discount will take effect at your renewal date (or the start date of your policy if it is a new policy).

Questions 1 to 10 – 5% or 10% discount available

1 Tractors, machinery and equipment

Are all your tractors and farm machinery safe to operate? Yes No

- Are your machinery controls and safety guards in good working order?
- Are the PTO (power take-off) shafts on your tractors properly guarded?

2 Safety with livestock

Do you have proper handling facilities for livestock? Yes No

- Do you have enough animal pens?
- Are these properly enclosed and fenced?
- If you have bulls on your farm, do they have a ring and chain?

3 Housekeeping, trips and falls

Are your work areas tidy and properly maintained? Yes No

- Do you take measures to reduce tripping hazards?
- Are your ladders in good order and safe to use?

4 Child safety

Are children properly controlled and supervised on your farm? Yes No

- Do you forbid children under 14 from driving a tractor?
- Are children supervised in and around your work areas?

5 Slurry (hydrogen sulphide gas)

Do you take safety precautions when agitating slurry? Yes No

- Are all slurry tanks fenced or covered?
- Do you make sure you have proper ventilation when agitating?

6 Lifting and carrying

Do you have adequate and proper mechanical lifting aids? Yes No

- Do you use proper loading techniques?
- Do you assess loads before lifting and use mechanical aids where possible?

7	Electrical installation Are your electrical installations in good condition? • Do you have well-maintained, modern wiring? • Are trip switches or electrical circuit breakers fitted? • Are your electrical cables and leads well maintained?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
8	Chemicals and pesticides Do you store your farm chemicals and pesticides safely? • Do you use personal protective equipment when dealing with chemicals? • Do you keep chemicals and pesticides in suitable secure containers? • Do you follow the safety instructions as detailed in the safety data sheets?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
9	Fires Do you manage the risks of fire on your farm? • Do you store combustibles (hay, diesel, oils and so on) away from livestock and property? • Do you have a suitable water supply available to fight a fire?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Public safety Do you make sure you properly manage dangers to the general public on your farm? • Do you have good visibility and safe access and entry points onto the public highway? • Do you have proper livestock fencing and gateways along public roadways and the edge of your farm? • When moving livestock across or on public highways, do you reduce the risks with 'warning signs' and proper supervision?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Question 11 - 5% discount available

11	Safety Statement Do you have a current and operational Safety Statement or farm safety self-assessment document in use?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
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What discount will be awarded?

- Questions 1 to 10** **0% discount** – if you answer 'Yes' to fewer than four questions.
5% discount – if you answer 'Yes' to between four and six questions.
10% discount – if you answer 'Yes' to between seven and ten questions.

Question 11 You will get another **5%** if you have answered 'Yes' to question 11.

For example, if you answered 'Yes' to questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 11, you get a 10% premium discount (5% for 'Yes' to six questions and 5% for 'Yes' to question 11).

Statement of fact

Please sign this statement if you want to use the premium discount.

I confirm that, as far as I know, the answers I have given above are true and accurate.

I will take all reasonable steps to make sure that the safety measures currently in place on my farm stay in place while my farm is insured with you. If, at any time, I am aware that these facts are no longer true, I will tell you so that you can review my premium discount.

Policy number

Your signature (policyholder) Date

Name (CAPITAL LETTERS)



*For our joint protection, we may record and
monitor phone calls.*

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