



# Child Safety on Rural Properties

## Make your farm or rural property safer for children.

Rural properties can be wonderful places for children, where independence and responsibility is fostered, where family relationships are strengthened, and where children are exposed to unique experiences. However farms and rural properties are both a home and a workplace, and children may be placed at great risk when playing or helping out.

Every year, around 20-30 children die on Australian farms. Many more are injured seriously enough in farm related incidents to require hospitalisation. The greatest risk for toddlers (0-4 yrs) is drowning - most commonly in dams - but rivers, pools, troughs and dips are also drowning hazards. For older children (5-14 yrs), working farm machinery, farm vehicles, motorcycles and horses are the biggest risks.

Complete the checklist to determine how well you are managing these child safety risks on your farm.



### A Safe Place to Play

- Is there a **safe play area** (eg. a fenced houseyard) for small children which is securely separated from farm machinery, vehicles, work activities and other hazards?
- Does the **safe play area** have shade and interesting things for children to do?
- Are there '**out-of-bounds**' rules, for children who are not with a supervising adult, which are regularly reinforced?
- Do '**out-of-bounds**' areas include all hazardous places (eg. water storages, machinery and vehicles, silos, workshops and areas where stock are yarded)?



### Water

- Are swimming pools, effluent ponds, channels or dams near the house securely fenced?
- Are tanks, wells and troughs near the house fitted with lids/mesh and are unused dips and ditches filled in?
- Have those who look after children been alerted to 'keep watch' when children are around or could wander off into water?
- Do you know how to resuscitate a drowning child?



### Farm Motorcycles

- Are children appropriately trained and supervised when learning to ride two-wheeled motorcycles?
- Do all riders **always** wear a correctly fitted motorcycle **helmet**, long pants, and sturdy footwear when riding farm motorbikes?

### Does the farm adopt manufacturers' recommendations and:

- Prevent children under 16 from riding quadrunners (ATVs)?
- Prevent passengers riding on quadrunners (ATVs)?

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### Horses

- Are children only allowed to ride horses suited to their age and riding ability?
- Are children appropriately instructed and supervised on your farm when learning to ride horses?
- Do children on the farm **always** wear well fitting riding **helmets** and smooth-soled riding **boots** when riding horses?



### Tractors and Machinery

- Do you prevent children from riding as passengers on tractors and mobile plant?
- Are children encouraged to keep away from tractors and machinery on your farm or rural property?

***'Tractors, machinery and children do not mix!'***



### Farm Vehicles

- Do children **always** use seatbelts and proper restraints and **never** ride in the back of utilities?
- Are drivers careful when moving vehicles near the house in case children are present?

***'Watch out – children about'***

- Are keys kept out of reach of children when vehicles are not in use?

### Other hazards

- Have other hazards (eg. firearms, chemicals, electrical, noise, silos) that children could access on your farm or rural property, been identified and addressed?

Copies of this checklist can be downloaded from Farmsafe Australia's website at [www.farmsafe.org.au](http://www.farmsafe.org.au). The website also contains more information on these risks and their control. Please note that the checklist is not a substitute for a comprehensive 'on farm' safety inspection and occupational health and safety management program. More information on this and "Managing Farm Safety" courses for farm owners and managers is available from Farmsafe Australia and your State Farm Safety Organisation.

**For more information about managing farm safety risk contact your State Farm Safety Organisation**

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