

A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Farms



Partner:



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

The information contained in this booklet is derived from child injury data and consultation with Kidsafe professional advisers.

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KIDSAFE WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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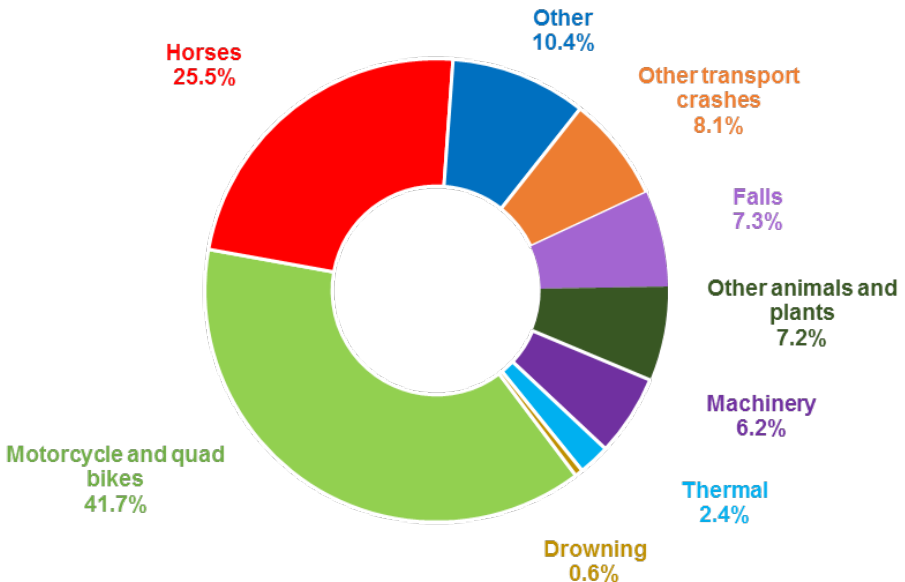
Why make your farm Kidsafe?

A farm provides a happy and healthy environment in which to raise your family. However, a farm can also be a dangerous place for children.

Australian farms remain a high risk setting for injury and fatalities. As a farm is also a workplace, the number of potential hazards can be greater than that found in a typical home.

Between July 2011 and June 2015, over 2,000 hospitalisations¹ from farm related injuries occurred in children aged between zero and 14 years old. Farm related injuries are caused by several different agents which are highlighted in the figure below (see Figure One).

Figure One: Hospitalisations from farm related injuries in children 0 -14 years old¹



The good news is that you can help protect children from injury. There are some simple steps you can take to reduce the risk of farm injuries to children.



Steps to prevent injuries

Injuries don't just happen out of the blue, they are caused by hazards. A hazard can be anything that has the potential to cause an injury.

How do you make your farm Kidsafe?

1 Spot the hazards

The first step in preventing accidents is to be able to spot the hazards. Kidsafe recommends conducting a safety audit of your farm and home. This will help you to identify the hazards for both you and your children.

2 Decide how to deal with the hazard

This step depends on the hazard you are treating. You will have to make a decision about what is the best way to separate the hazard from the child. Each section of this booklet provides tips about different ways of dealing with hazards:

- Try to **remove the hazard**.
- **Guard against the hazard**, if unable to be removed.
- Always **supervise children closely** and keep them within reach.

Ensure you combine any barriers you put in place with appropriate **supervision** and **education**.

3 Make the changes

Act immediately - children are not protected until they are separated from the hazard.

You will feel more relaxed when children are safe and the hazards have been isolated or removed.



Safe play areas

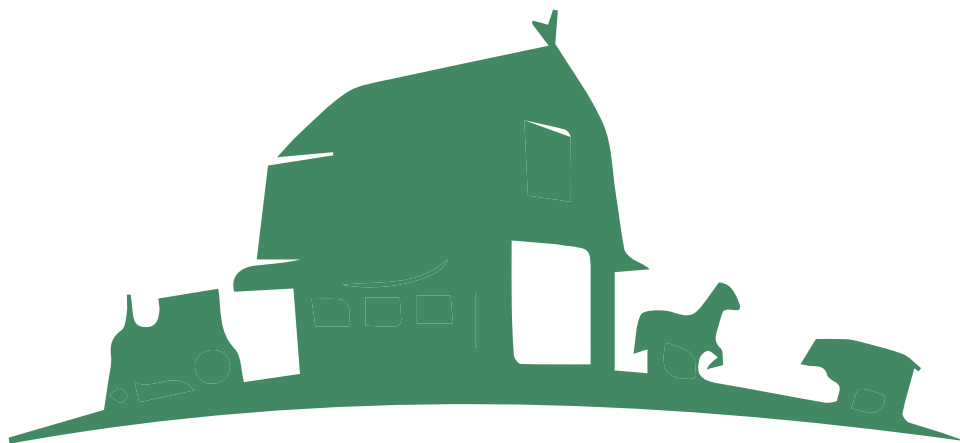
It is not always possible to remove the hazard from a farm, so Kidsafe recommends separating the child from hazardous areas in the farm workplace. Try to keep the child away from the hazard, create a safe play area and make sure family members and visitors are aware of these areas.

Safety steps to create a safe play area:

Fencing

- Provide a fenced off play area for children within the outdoor areas of the home. The fence should be child resistant with a self-closing and self-latching gate.
- Ensure gates are kept closed at all times and never leave them propped open.
- Ensure the fencing is at least 1.2 metres high to reduce the risk of children climbing over the fence.
- There should be at least one metre between horizontal bars so that children cannot obtain a foot and hand hold to climb over. The vertical bars should be a maximum of 100mm apart.
- Pool fencing is ideal material to provide a safe and secure area for your children to play within.
- Separate play areas from driveways.





Play space

- The area should be clearly visible to adults ensuring that children are supervised at all times on the farm.
- The area should be free of hazards including machinery, water, chemicals and vehicles.
- Do not have movable structures within the area, as children could stack these and climb over the fence.
- The area provided should have grass, plants, sand and/or other soft surfaces. Make sure the plants in the play space are child friendly and non-toxic.
- The area should provide interesting play activities such as sandpits, cubbies and swings.

Establish rules

Make sure children know the following rules:

- Work areas are 'out of bounds' for children unless accompanied by an adult.
- Children must stay within the safe play area at all times.
- Children must always tell an adult where they are going on the farm.
- Never play on or near a tractor.
- Never play in the dairy or shearing shed.
- Always wear a helmet and enclosed shoes when riding on bikes.

Tractor safety

Tractors can be a dangerous piece of machinery on farms. In Australia, agricultural machinery including tractors rank as one of the top five causes of death for children under the age of 15 years old, accounting for 6.2 percent of all deaths².

Safety steps to prevent tractor related injuries:

- Remove the starter key from the tractor after each use.
- If possible, lock the cabin to prevent access by children.
- Never allow children to be a passenger on a tractor.
- Before starting the tractor, ensure children are a safe distance away under the supervision of another adult.
- When driving tractors, take care and slow down when near the house and other farm buildings. Remember 'Slow down, Children around'.
- If the motor of the tractor is running, never leave it unattended.
- Always lower the front end loader to the ground when not in use.
- Always park a tractor on level ground to ensure it cannot roll.
- To protect yourself, fit an Australian standards approved roll-over protective structure (AS 1636) to your tractor (where not already provided).
- Wear seatbelts at all times for your safety.
- Explain to children the dangers of playing on and around tractors.



Machinery and vehicles

Depending on the type of farm, there are various vehicles, machinery and specialised equipment that pose a potential hazard to your children. This also includes the family car.

Safety steps to prevent injuries:

- Always supervise children around vehicles. Do not let children of any age drive vehicles on the farm.
- Never allow children to climb or play on any vehicles or farming equipment.
- Make sure that all vehicles and self-propelled farm machines are safely parked and securely locked to prevent access by your children.
- Remove ignition keys whenever possible and store the keys out of reach of children.
- Ensure all generators and pumps are inaccessible to children.
- Cover all power take-off shafts, belt drives, grain augers and other machinery with Australian standards approved safety guards.
- Consider whether guards have perforations small enough to prevent children's hands from accessing any part of the machine.
- Ensure safety guards remain on machinery even during times of maintenance.
- Immediately replace damaged or missing guards with new ones.
- Explain to older children the danger of large machinery, motors, power take-off shafts, belt drives, grain augers and other moving parts of any machine.
- Ensure all children are appropriately and correctly restrained when travelling in vehicles on the farm. Do not let them ride in trailers or in the back of utes.

For more information on road safety see '[A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Roads](#)'.

Water safety

Drowning is the leading cause of death for children under 5 years of age. In Australia between July 2016 and June 2017, there were 29 recorded drowning deaths in children aged between 0 and 4 years. This is a 4 percent increase based on the 10 year average for this age group³.

Drowning hazards found on farms include dams, rivers, creeks, wells, open tanks, post holes, animal drinking troughs, irrigation channels, effluent ponds and sheep dips.

Safety steps to prevent drowning:

Remove the hazard

- Fill in any unused wells, dams and post holes on farms.
- Use smaller drinking troughs for animals.
- Ensure all containers around the farm are emptied after heavy rain.



Guard the hazard

- Place a safety barrier/fence around your pool or spa ensuring it meets Australian Standards. Kidsafe recommends that the pool or spa is fenced off entirely to separate it from the house and garden (contact your local council for fencing regulations).
- Ensure tanks and wells have child resistant covers. Remove or raise ladders making sure they are inaccessible to children.





Practice safety

- As it can be difficult to restrict access to water hazards on farms, it is a good idea to create a safe zone around the farmhouse.
- Always supervise children and never make older children responsible for supervising younger children around water.
- Children should be taught water awareness skills and how to swim.
- Ensure older children are aware of the rules regarding playing near water.
- Explain to children the dangers of becoming stuck in mud around dams and diving into murky water.
- Check dams and creeks for change in conditions such as higher water levels and debris.
- Dress your children in brightly coloured clothing so they can be clearly seen at all times.
- Learn CPR and update it regularly.

For more information on water safety visit <https://royallifesavingwa.com.au/>.

Animal safety

All animals can be unpredictable especially when startled, frightened or protecting their young. Due to the size of farm animals children are at an added risk of injury in comparison to other animals.

Safety steps to prevent injury from animals:

- Always supervise children around any animal.
- Encourage children to respect animals and learn how to care and interact safely with them.
- Ensure children wear safety gear when horse riding, including an Australian Standards approved riding helmet (AS/NZS 3838) and sturdy boots with a smooth sole, heel and elastic sides.
- When children are learning to ride, use an older quieter pony rather than an unruly horse.
- Teach children to wash their hands after touching animals.
- Ensure that all animal pens are inaccessible to small children.
- Ensure that aggressive animals such as bulls and stallions are in secure paddocks away from the house.
- When giving children a farm chore, make sure it matches their age and developmental stage.



Workshop safety

There are many hazards which can be found in farm workshops, including electrical tools, guns, sharp or heavy objects and matches.

Safety steps to prevent injuries in the workshop:

- Keep a fire extinguisher in the workshop.
- Install an electrical safety switch on your mains power supply to prevent electrocution.
- Do not overload power boards.
- Do not leave electrical cords dangling from the work bench.
- Install all weather covers on power points in wet areas.
- Ensure all power tools are all properly grounded.
- Always lock the workshop after use.
- Never allow children to play in the workshop.
- Explain the dangers of electricity to children.
- Always turn off appliances and electrical tools and disconnect them from the power source when not in use.
- If demonstrating the use of power tools or motorised equipment to children, ensure that appropriate eye and hearing protection is available.



Farm bike safety

Motorbikes and quad bikes are responsible for many injuries. In Australia, quad bikes are the leading cause of death and serious injury on farms⁴. Injuries involving motorcycles and quad bikes accounted for 42 percent of farm-related hospitalisations for children aged 0 to 14 between 2010/11 and 2014/15¹.

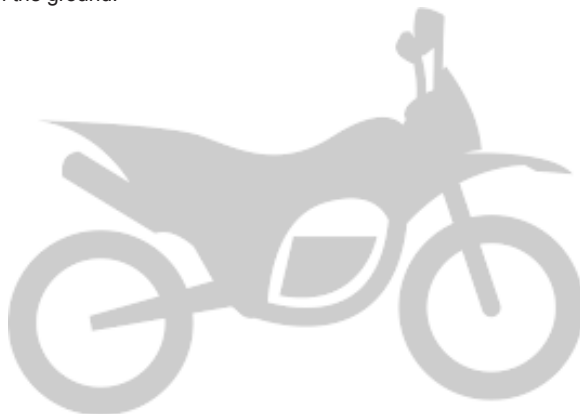
Inexperience and riding a machine unsuited to the size, physique and coordination of the rider are the main causes of unintentional injury.

Safety steps to prevent injuries from farm bikes:

Always explain to children the dangers of speeding and riding on rough ground or gravel, even before they are old enough to ride farm bikes. Once children are old enough to use farm bikes, make sure they use safety equipment including a helmet, eye protection, gloves, long trousers, long sleeves, and sturdy boots.

Motorbikes (Two-wheeled motorbikes)

- When your child is old enough to learn to ride a motorbike, purchase a small one on which they can learn, and teach them the skills to ride safely.
- Children should not ride motorbikes until they can place their feet firmly onto the ground on either side while seated astride the bike. They should also be able to lift up the bike on their own when it is laying on the ground.
- Adjust the child's motorbike to limit the maximum speed.
- Always check the brakes and tyres before each use to ensure they work properly.
- Always supervise children when using a motorbike. This can be achieved by constructing an area specifically for motorbike riding.



Quad bikes (Four-wheeled motorbikes)

- Kidsafe does not recommend that children under 16 years old ride quad bikes or be a passenger on a quad bike.
- Once children are old enough to ride a quad bike, make sure they wear an approved helmet, clothing with long sleeves and long pants, eye protection and gloves.
- Develop a set of rules specific to your farm regarding the riding of quad bikes.
- A number of devices are being investigated and designed for quad bikes. This aims at reducing the risk of a person being crushed between the vehicle and ground in the event of a rollover. Make sure to do your research and keep up to date with the safety devices available for quad bikes.
- Ensure the quad bike is well maintained.
- Adequate training should be undertaken before riding a quad bike.

For more information on quad bikes visit www.commerce.wa.gov.au/worksafe.



Farm chemical safety

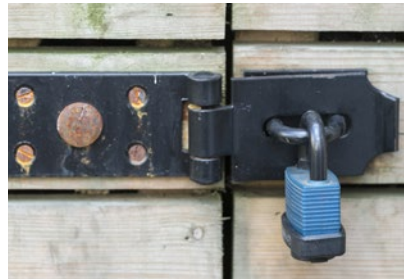
Chemicals used on farms are very dangerous and must be stored and handled correctly. Due to the small body weight of young children, chemicals may be more toxic for them therefore they are more vulnerable to poisoning.

Hazardous substances include pesticides, herbicides, fertilisers, fuels, oils, gases and animal pharmaceuticals.

As children may not be able to identify which substances are dangerous on your farm, it is important that you follow safety steps to prevent poisoning.

Poisoning can occur through:

- Accidental swallowing of poisonous substances.
- Accidental consumption of contaminated food and water.
- Inhalation of fumes, vapours and dusts.
- Skin contact with a poisonous substance.
- Eye contact with a poisonous substance.



Safety steps to prevent poisoning:

- Ensure all chemicals are locked away in the shed and make sure they are in their original containers. Never use food containers or drink bottles to store chemicals, as this could cause confusion for both children and adults.
- Never use chemicals near children.
- When using chemicals make sure everyone around is aware and they remain at a safe distance from the area.
- Consider pest control alternatives or select a chemical which is less hazardous.
- Choose appropriate child resistant containers for storage of chemicals and poisons.
- Make sure the equipment used for chemical mixing is also stored and locked away.
- All adults using chemicals should be adequately trained and should use the appropriate safety equipment.
- Read the labels of chemicals and the safety brochures provided to educate yourself.
- To prepare for a suspected poisoning, develop and practice an emergency protocol.
- Make sure you explain to children the potential dangers of touching, smelling or drinking chemicals.

For more information about safe handling of chemicals, visit www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/.

FIRST AID FOR POISONING

- If you think a child may have swallowed something poisonous, make sure you have the container and child within sight and call the **Poisons Information Centre: 13 11 26.**
- Help is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day Australia wide.

Grain stores and silos

The design of a silo makes it very difficult for anyone who falls in to escape and therefore presents a potential suffocation hazard.

Safety steps to prevent grain and silo injuries:

- Make these inaccessible to young children by removing the lower steps or placing child resistant guards over access points of grain storage bins, silos and grain cartage trucks.
- Make the rule that children are not allowed to play near or in grain handling areas.
- Never start grain augers until you have checked that there are no unauthorised people around, especially children.
- Keep people clear of the area when filling or emptying a silo, especially children.
- To ensure structural stability of the silo, make sure you consult an engineer before making any changes.
- Silos should be inspected regularly to ensure there are no structural failures.



Hay bales and stacks

While hay stacks may appear to be fun, they can pose a serious risk to children. Large hay bales may weigh up to 1500kg depending on the type, size, density and moisture content found in the hay. Falling hay bales could cause a serious, even fatal, injury to both adults and children⁵.

Safety steps to prevent hay bale/stack related injuries:

- Make sure children are a safe distance away from the area where hay is being cut, baled and stacked.
- Install lockable gates to ensure children cannot access undercover hay stacks.
- Ensure the hay stacks in the paddock are guarded by a secure perimeter fence.
- Set rules so that children do not play around hay stacks or bales.
- Make sure the ground is even where hay stacks and bales are loaded.
- Inspect bales regularly to ensure that bales at the base of the stack are not damaged, which could make the stack unsteady and dangerous.
- Always supervise children when the hay is being stacked or unstacked.



⁵ WorkSafe Victoria. Moving hay bales safely. 2010. Available from https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/210757/ISBN-Moving-hay-bales-safely-2010-10.pdf

Other farm hazards

There are many other hazards around the farm which you need to watch out for and protect your children from. These include firearms, respiratory diseases and noise hazards.

Firearms

Firearms are often found and used on farms for multiple reasons and have been responsible for fatal injuries to both children and adults.

Safety steps to prevent injuries from firearms:

- Always store firearms appropriately and as correctly specified by law. Store the ammunition in a different area to the firearm. For more information contact your local police.
- Never leave a loaded firearm unattended.
- Never allow children to use firearms.
- Ensure the firearm is not loaded until you are ready to use it.
- Never have a loaded firearm in a vehicle with children.
- If firearms are being used, ensure children are at a safe distance from the area.
- Only licensed users should be using firearms.
- Alternatively, employ a professional shooter for vermin control.



Respiratory diseases and allergies

Lung conditions such as asthma are aggravated by dusty environments and polluted air.

Safety steps to prevent respiratory diseases and allergies:

- Keep children away from areas where excess dust or pollution is created, for example when harvesting or transferring grain.
- When working in polluted or dusty conditions, always wear face masks/respirators.



Noise hazards

Noise hazards are also an issue on farms. This can be created by firearms and machinery and can permanently damage hearing. There are many types of machinery on the farm which can have devastating effects on hearing. For example, using a tractor for only two hours without adequate hearing protection can result in permanent hearing loss⁶.

Safety steps to prevent injuries from noise hazards:

- Ensure small children are at a safe distance from noise hazards including firearms and machinery.
- Always use hearing protection such as earmuffs or ear plugs when using, or near noisy machinery.



Children visiting farms

Children visiting farms need special protection, particularly those visiting from the city as they may not be familiar with the farm environment and the surrounding hazards. To make sure your farm is Kidsafe, complete the farm safety checklist at the end of this guide prior to children visiting your farm.

Safety steps to avoid injuries to children visiting the farm:

- Always supervise small children, particularly outside the farm house and near farming activities.
- Do not make older children responsible for supervising younger children.
- Never leave any children alone with an animal. Although your child may be familiar with the animal, sometimes animals can be unpredictable.
- Ensure children always wear safety gear when riding wheeled devices and horses.
- Make sure children know they should not approach any unfamiliar dogs without asking the owner.
- Teach children to be careful around vehicles, machinery and animals on the farm.
- To ensure safe practices continue among children, reward them for sensible and safe behaviour.



Safety around the home

Another thing to consider when making your farm Kidsafe is the safety issues inside and around the home. The most common place for unintentional injuries in children under five years old is the home, and half of the unintentional injuries in older children also occur in the home. It is important to ensure your home is Kidsafe to prevent these injuries.

Safety steps to make your home as safe as possible:

- Use furniture straps on TV's, chest of drawers and other top heavy furniture to prevent these from falling over.
- Guard hazards such as stairs and heaters.
- Use harnesses on high chairs to prevent falls.
- Always store poisons in lockable cupboards out of children's reach. You can also use a lockable container if you have medications which need to be stored in the fridge.
- Make sure the water delivery temperature is set to a maximum of 50°C to avoid serious burns and scalds from hot water.



The most common place for childhood injury is in and around the home

- Never leave your child alone in a bath. ALWAYS take babies and young children with you if you need to leave the bathroom.
- Always put your child down when you are eating or drinking something hot.
- Select age appropriate toys for your child and keep older children's toys separate.
- Keep small objects out of reach from young children, for example coins, beads and small toys, as these are choking hazards.
- Electrical safety switches and smoke alarms are required by law. Check that you have them and that they work.
- Never leave your child alone with an animal, even if it is your family pet, as animals can be unpredictable.
- Make sure the driveway is not used as a play area for children and always hold your child's hand when near a moving vehicle.
- Avoid drive way run overs by ensuring you supervise, separate and see.

For more information see 'A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Roads' and 'A Parent's Guide to Kidsafe Homes'.

In case of emergency

Safety steps to ensure you are prepared for an emergency:

- Make sure you have several first aid kits located around the farm for use.
- Always keep a fire extinguisher in the house, workshop and on the tractor.
- Have an Emergency Services Card that includes details such as your property name, emergency services address, phone number, UHF channel, coordinates and length of yours and your neighbour's airstrips, neighbour's contact details and emergency contact numbers.
- Ensure you have an evacuation plan developed to use in the event of an emergency and practice this with your family. This will ensure that all adults and children are aware of what they need to do in the event of a serious farm injury.
- Ensure emergency numbers are kept near each telephone and teach your children how to call for help in an emergency.
- Learn first aid. Below are a list of organisations who offer first aid courses:

St. John Ambulance www.ambulance.net.au

Australian Red Cross www.redcross.org.au

Royal Lifesaving Society www.royallifesaving.com.au

For further information on any of the topics covered in this booklet or for additional publications contact your local Kidsafe office (see page 28).

Farm safety checklist

Consider making changes to items that received a NO response for a safer farm! If you are still unsure, conduct a safety audit of your farm to identify the safety hazards for both you and your children.

Safe play area

	Yes	No
Is the play area visible from the main area of the house?	_____	_____
Is the area free from hazards including water, vehicles, machinery and poisons?	_____	_____
Does the area provide adequate shade and interesting things for children to do?	_____	_____
Do you have “out of bounds” rules so children know where they should not be playing?	_____	_____

Tractor safety

Is there a rule where children are not allowed to be a passenger on a tractor?	_____	_____
Are children taught to keep away from tractors?	_____	_____
Is the tractor ignition turned off and the key always removed when the tractor is not in use or unattended?	_____	_____
Is the front end loader and/or the three point linkage equipment lowered to the ground when not in use or unattended?	_____	_____
Does the tractor have an Australian Standards approved roll-over protective structure fitted?	_____	_____

Water safety

Is there a safety barrier/fencing around the backyard swimming pool or spa?	_____	_____
Are wells, tanks, post holes, dams, ponds and sheep dips securely covered or fenced to prevent unsupervised child access?	_____	_____
Have children been familiarised with water and taught to swim?	_____	_____
Is there a set of rules for children about going near water unsupervised?	_____	_____
Do those supervising the children know to always supervise them when near water?	_____	_____

Animal safety

Yes **No**

- Are aggressive animals such as stallions and bulls kept in secure paddocks well away from the house? _____
- Are animal pens and stock yards inaccessible to children? _____
- Are those children who are allowed to ride horses using horses suitable for their age and riding ability? _____
- Do children wear the appropriate safety gear for horse riding including a well-fitted riding helmet and riding boots? _____
- Are children instructed and supervised whilst learning to ride a horse on your farm? _____

Farm bike safety

- Are children over 16, who are allowed to use motorbikes, properly trained? _____
- Do motorcyclists and quad bike riders always wear fitted riding helmets, long pants and sturdy footwear when riding? _____
- Is there a rule that children under 16 cannot ride quad bikes on your farm? _____
- Is there a rule that passengers are not allowed on quad bikes? _____

Safety around farm vehicles

- Do children always use seatbelts and appropriate restraints? _____
- Is there a rule that children are not allowed to ride in the back of a ute or trailer? _____
- Are drivers careful when driving near the house where children might be? _____
- When vehicles are not in use, are keys kept out of children's reach? _____

Safety around other machinery

- Are all vehicles and self-propelled farm machinery safely parked and securely locked when not in use? _____
- Are all power take-off shafts, belt drives, grain augers and other machinery covered with approved safety guards? _____
- Are all generators and pumps inaccessible to children? _____

Safety in the workshop

Yes **No**

Is an electrical safety switch attached to the mains power supply? _____

Is the workshop always locked after use? _____

Farm chemical safety

Are all farm chemicals, fertilisers and veterinary products stored in a locked shed? _____

Are all farm chemicals, fertilisers and veterinary products stored in their original containers? _____

Silos and safety

Are silos, grain storage bins and trucks inaccessible to children? _____

Safety around hay bales and stacks

Is hay stacked either in a shed with lockable gates or in a paddock guarded by a secure fence? _____

Is there a rule that children are forbidden to play in and around hay bales and stacks? _____

Are children supervised at a safe distance from where hay is being cut, baled or stacked? _____

Respiratory diseases and allergies

Are children kept away from areas where dust is being created? _____

Do adults and older children who are working in dusty conditions wear a face mask/respirator? _____

Firearms and hearing protection

Are firearms locked away separately from ammunition? _____

Are small children supervised at a safe distance from noisy machinery and firearms? _____

Do adults and older children wear approved hearing protection when using or near noisy machinery and firearms? _____



Further information

Contact the Kidsafe (Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia) office in your State or Territory:

Kidsafe ACT

Building 2, Pearce Centre
Collett Place
Pearce ACT 2607
Telephone: (02) 6290 2244
Fax: (02) 6290 2241
Email: info@kidsafeact.com.au

Kidsafe NEW SOUTH WALES

Kidsafe House
C/- The Children's Hospital at Westmead
Locked Bag 4001, Westmead NSW 2145
Telephone: (02) 9845 0890
Fax: (02) 9845 0895
Email: schn-kidsafe@health.nsw.gov.au

Kidsafe NORTHERN TERRITORY

1/9 Charlton Court
Woolner NT 0820
Telephone: (08) 9941 8234
Email: NT@kidsafent.com.au

Kidsafe QUEENSLAND

Kidsafe House
50 Bramston Terrace
Herston Qld 4029
Telephone: (07) 3854 1829
Fax: (07) 3252 7900
Email: qld@kidsafeqld.com.au

Kidsafe SOUTH AUSTRALIA

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72 King William Road
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