

Background

The Quick safety scans cover all the key safety hazard areas found on dairy farms:

- › Quads and motorbikes
- › Farm vehicles
- › Tractors and mobile plant
- › Fixed plant
- › Contractors
- › Confined spaces
- › Working at heights
- › Power and electrical
- › Manual handling
- › Working with livestock
- › Farm chemicals
- › Water and effluent
- › Working environment
- › Visitors, children and traffic

These traffic light scans are designed to be done in 30 minutes by any member of the farm team. They can be used initially to set up the farm safety system and then on an ongoing basis to review the system. It is recommended that the Quick safety scans are re-done at least once per year.

How to use the Quick safety scans

1. Pick a hazard area you would like to scan.
2. Use the one page Quick safety scan sheet (see pages 30-43) and allocate a staff member to undertake the scan.
3. Instruct the staff member to take 30 minutes to:
 - a. Answer the questions on the scan sheet
 - b. If a hazard is seen, take a photo if appropriate
 - c. Show the completed sheet and photos to the Farm Manager and discuss the hazards and possible solutions
4. Follow up (by the Farm Manager):
 - d. Add any areas for improvement you identify in the Action Plan at the back of this document
 - e. Organise the actions to be taken

The Farm Safety Manual provides information and templates to assist you to comply with legal requirements and build a positive safety culture in each hazard area.

For more information, visit www.thepeopleindairy.org.au/farmsafetymanual.

Quads and motorbikes

Quick safety scan

Quad bikes are the leading cause of fatalities on farms in Australia with an average of 15 deaths per year. They are also the leading cause of death of children between 5 and 14 years of age on farms. The main causes of death and severe injury are tipping and rollover resulting in crush injury, asphyxia, neck and head injury.

Recent data shows that farmers are increasingly changing to safer vehicles and fitting crush protection devices to quad bikes.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Before a quad bike is used, is there a check of whether it is the safest and most appropriate vehicle for the task?				
2. Are all quad bikes fitted with a crush protective device?				
3. Are all quads and two-wheeled bikes well maintained (including brakes, clutch, lights, tyres, damage to decks, chain and exhaust guards)?				
4. Have all the operators using quads and motorbikes had suitable training?				
5. Are there clear rules that are always followed relating to 'no-one under 16 years of age or passengers' on quad bikes?				
6. Are there clearly designated speed limits and 'no go' zones for quad bikes?				
7. Are motorcycle helmets (rated to the Australian/New Zealand Standard) available and routinely used on quads and motorbikes?				

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Farm vehicles

Quick safety scan

Farm vehicles such as side-by-side vehicles, cars, utes and trucks are major causes of death and serious injury to workers and family members on Australian farms. Operators, passengers and bystanders of all ages are at risk.

Most fatalities and serious injuries involve run overs and collisions or roll overs with ejection of operators and passengers who are not wearing seat belts or are riding in the tray. Young children under five are at most risk of being run over or of falling from vehicles. Loss of concentration due to fatigue of operators increases the risk of vehicle incidents.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Are the farm vehicles fitted with seat belts in working order and used at all times?				
2. Are the farm vehicles well maintained? This includes maintenance of safety devices such as cut-outs, guards, reverse and warning beepers and flashing beacons.				
3. Are there clear rules that are always followed regarding 'no passengers on the back of utes, trucks and trailers while moving'?				
4. Do the drivers of the farm vehicles have the correct licences and competency to operate the vehicles?				
5. Are there established speed limits, 'no go' zones, designated parking areas, visibility aids and warning signs?				

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Tractors and mobile plant

Quick safety scan

Tractors, mobile plant such as front end loaders (FELs) and telehandlers, and attachments such as post-hole diggers, post drivers, slashers, mowers, silage and hay feed-out wagons and carts are all part of dairy farm machinery. Hazards associated with this gear are rollovers, run overs, falling objects, exposure to moving parts and injury whilst undertaking maintenance. Operating around buildings and homes can also put pedestrians, especially children, at risk.

Roll Over Protective Structures (ROPS) on tractors have significantly reduced fatalities from roll overs in the last 20 years. For tractors and mobile plant safety considerations must be part of design, use and maintenance.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Are all tractors and other mobile plant fitted with Roll Over Protective Structures (ROPS) and Falling Object Protective Structures?				
2. Are there guards in good working condition fitted to all belts, pulleys, fly wheels, moving parts (including PTO shafts) and exhausts on mobile machinery and their attachments?				
3. Do cabins and machinery have safe access fitted and in good condition, to prevent slips and falls?				
4. Are all tractors and mobile plant and attachments maintained to manufacturer's recommendations?				
5. Do operators have the required licences and competency for the mobile plant?				
6. Are there clear rules that are always followed relating to 'no children or passengers on the mobile plant or attachments'?				
7. Are keys removed when tractors or plant are not in operation?				
8. Is the relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available and used by all operators?				

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Fixed plant

Quick safety scan

Fixed plant on dairy farms includes the rotary or herringbone dairy, milk vats, vacuum and milk pumps, feed augers, and pumps for effluent, water and irrigation.

There are many hazards associated with this plant including moving parts, electrical hazards, chemical exposure, hot or high pressure fluids, working at heights, confined spaces, animal movement, manual handling, dust and noise. Exposure to these hazards has resulted in fatalities and serious, long-term injury.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Are all moving parts on pumps, motors and small engines guarded, and barriers fitted to prevent access to moving parts (eg rotary roller skirt, banana rails, rapid exits)?				
2. Are functioning Emergency Stop devices fitted?				
3. Is plant that starts automatically clearly signed?				
4. Is a lockout system established when undertaking maintenance?				
5. Are safe operating procedures established and training provided for use of all plant?				
6. Is relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplied and used?				

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Contractors

Quick safety scan

Under Work Health and Safety Regulations it is your responsibility to ensure that the contractors who provide services on your farm do so in a safe manner.

Having a standard induction procedure to go through with each one makes it easy and quick to ensure they have all the information they need and understand the safety requirements on your farm. This contributes to your safety management and assists them to do their tasks effectively.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Do you brief all contractors on the safety requirements of your farm?				
2. Do you ensure they have the relevant licences / certificates and insurance?				
3. Do they have appropriate safety plans for the work they will do?				
4. Do they induct and supervise their workers around safety?				
5. Do they use equipment that is well maintained and fitted with relevant safety features such as guards, emergency stops, carbon filters and electrical equipment tested and tagged?				
6. Do contractors supply and use the relevant Personal Protective Equipment/Clothing (PPE)?				
7. Do you take appropriate action if contractors are not working safely?				

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Confined spaces

Quick safety scan

Confined spaces occur in circumstances where there is:

- › Restricted entry or exit, or
- › Hazardous atmosphere - e.g. harmful level of chemical or contaminant or unsafe oxygen level, or
- › Risk of engulfment - e.g. by grain or pellets or liquid

These can be life-threatening hazards.

More than any other area of safety on dairy farms, confined spaces require the owner or person conducting the business to comply with legal regulations. All of the factors in this Quick scan are required by law.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Have all structures or areas that could be confined spaces on the farm been identified?				
2. Is warning signage fitted to all confined spaces?				
3. Is there always an Entry Permit issued prior to anyone (staff or contractor) entering a confined space?				
4. If someone is working in a confined space, is there always a responsible second (standby) person able to see them and implement emergency procedures if required?				
5. Have emergency response procedures for rescue from each confined space been established and practised?				

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Working at heights

Quick safety scan

Falls can occur wherever there is more than one level – for example when someone is on a structure, piece of machinery, set of rails or ladder above ground, or working at ground level beside an exposed edge such as a pit. Falls from heights can cause serious injuries, even when they are from less than 2 metres.

Legal regulations require that any work undertaken where a fall from one level to another is a possibility must have the risks controlled.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Have all locations been identified where falls could occur when working at heights?				
2. Are unauthorised persons (including children) prevented from entering these locations?				
3. Has the need to work from heights been eliminated or minimised wherever possible?				
4. When working at heights, is fall protection used e.g. elevated work platforms, ladder cages, hand rails on steps?				
5. If portable ladders or fall harnesses must be used, has instruction/training in correct use been provided?				

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Power and electrical

Quick safety scan

Electrical hazards are common on dairy farms because electrical equipment is often used in hostile operating environments (where there is moisture, vibration, dust, heat, corrosive chemicals or physical damage) and because powerlines are likely to be located near busy dairy and feed storage areas.

Electrocution often results in death or serious injury. Electric shocks may also cause injuries or illnesses such as falls (e.g. from ladders or platforms), muscle spasms, palpitations, nausea, vomiting, collapse and unconsciousness. Arcing, explosion or fire due to electric faults can cause burns and illness or death from release of toxic gases.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Is all electrical work carried out by a licensed and registered electrician?				
2. Are RCDs (Residual Current Devices or Safety Switch) fitted to cover all power outlets?				
3. Are all electrical leads (including power tools, on fixed machinery and extension leads) in good condition and do they all have a current test tag?				
4. Are electrical fittings and power outlets in wet areas protected with waterproof covers?				
5. Have overhead and underground powerlines been identified on and adjacent to the farm?				
6. Have structures and work practices been relocated away from overhead powerlines?				
6. Are emergency plans in place for electrical incidents?				

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Manual handling

Quick safety scan

Making life easier and more productive involves thinking about the many dairy farming tasks that involve lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, holding or restraining things or animals. These tasks have the potential to be hazardous if they involve postures that are awkward or sustained, forces that are high, sudden or repeated, movements that are repetitive, or exposure to vibration. Hazardous tasks can lead to back injuries, sprains and strains, joint and bone injuries or degeneration, nerve injuries or compression, hernias and chronic pain. Health and quality of life improve when manual handling hazards are controlled.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Are mechanical aids (e.g. hand trolleys, front-end loader, fork lift, hoists) used for moving and lifting heavy or awkward objects?				
2. Are there arrangements in place to minimise the need to handle buckets that hold over 15 litres?				
3. Is bulk handling used to minimise the amount of manual handling on the farm?				
4. Is the platform height or pit depth right for milkers at cups on and cups off positions to minimise bending, reaching or stretching?				
5. Are clusters mounted between hip and shoulder level?				
6. Do gates move freely without lifting and dragging?				
7. Is basic instruction provided in manual handling, including use of aids, balancing loads, getting assistance, adjusting and setting up work areas and managing your body?				
8. Are workers consulted about any discomfort they experience after doing tasks?				

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Working with livestock

Quick safety scan

Cattle are large and sometimes unpredictable animals and dairy workers can be injured from being kicked, stood on or crushed. More serious injuries can be fatal. The risk of injury increases when working with bulls or using poor facilities, and outcomes may be worse when working alone. Workers with good knowledge of animal behaviour are much better equipped to avoid injuries.

Cattle can also transfer certain diseases to people with sometimes long-term and debilitating effects.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Are the dairy and yards designed to reduce injury from kicking and crushing by cattle?				
2. Are separate veterinary facilities provided, including crushes, pregnancy testing and AI facilities?				
3. Are barriers in place to prevent cattle getting into the pit or falling off the rotary?				
4. Are surfaces maintained to prevent cattle and workers slipping?				
5. Are workers on the farm provided with instruction and training in handling livestock (including bulls if used)?				
6. Is working with cattle alone kept to a minimum and are new or inexperienced workers supervised?				
7. Are all cattle vaccinated against leptospirosis?				
8. Are workers tested for Q fever?				
9. Are workers encouraged to report damage to cattle handling facilities, incidents and 'near misses' that occur?				

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Farm chemicals

Quick safety scan

Chemicals are used on dairy farms for cleaning, pest control, animal treatments, feed additives, fertilisers and as fuels. They are important management tools but many also have the potential to cause harm to human health and safety. Health effects include headaches, nausea or vomiting, asthma, dermatitis, nerve damage and cancer. Chemicals that are flammable, corrosive, explosive, chemically reactive or oxidising may also harm workers with more immediate effects such as burns.

There are clear guidelines available for transport, storage, use and disposal of every hazardous chemical and WHS law sets out your obligations in management of them.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Have all hazardous chemicals been identified on the farm and a register established?				
2. Are all chemicals used on the farm stored securely and spills contained?				
3. Are there current Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) available for all hazardous chemicals and fuels stored on the farm?				
4. Are all chemicals transported, stored, labelled, used and disposed of as per their SDS and regulations?				
5. Are chemicals that require refrigeration stored separately from food and drink?				
6. Have chemical users undergone relevant training and instruction?				
7. Is the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) recommended by the SDS available and used?				
8. Is there a functioning emergency deluge shower and eye wash station?				
9. Are tractors that are used for spray application fitted with a cabin and charcoal air filter?				
10. Have you had an asbestos audit and management plan prepared?				

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Water and effluent

Quick safety scan

Safety is an important factor when anyone is near water. Water and effluent are significant hazards on farms with drownings occurring every year. Young children are at greatest risk. Adults drown when they are working with machinery near dams, ponds and channels or maintaining infrastructure that is under or above water.

Water use and effluent infrastructure can also present risks other than drowning such as:

- › entanglement and manual handling injuries associated with pumps and agitators
- › physical injury from pressure washers and flexible hydrants when cleaning
- › water contact with exposed power in the dairy or overhead power by irrigators
- › contact with harmful gases produced by effluent.

Quick safety scan – Start here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Are effluent ponds, solids traps, sumps, tanks, wells, channels and dams that are close to houses fenced off or covered to prevent child access?				
2. Is there a safe play area for young children if they are present on the farm?				
3. Are children constantly supervised by an adult when in, on or around water?				
4. Are there guards on the moving parts of all pumps, irrigators, agitators and effluent pumps?				
5. Are pumps and agitators able to be maintained on dry ground?				
6. Are pumps, agitators and irrigators isolated and locked out during maintenance?				
7. Have emergency procedures been established to respond to water or effluent related incidents, including drowning?				

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Working environment

Quick safety scan

A good working environment enhances productivity and safety. The farm work setting can have physical hazards such as noise, dust, heat, cold and UV exposure. If psycho-social hazards such as workplace harassment, bullying or violence occur, they can contribute to workplace stress and fatigue.

The working environment includes the farm's plans and processes for emergency response. Without these in place it is very difficult to adequately respond if things go wrong, especially when time is critical.

Quick safety scan – Start Here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Is lighting adequate in all working areas (particularly in the dairy, feed shed and workshop)?				
2. Are there any slip, fall and trip hazards present in main work areas and walkways?				
3. Is the milking shed well set up for the people working in it? e.g. protection from sun, rain and wind, heat, cold, noise and dust.				
4. Are there well maintained facilities for workers including designated eating area, toilets, hand washing and clean drinking water?				
5. Are there clear farm policies that are enforced around workplace bullying, harassment and violence?				
6. Are emergency response plans and equipment established, including first aid kits, training, fire extinguishers, assembly areas, communications, supported with practice and instruction and directional signage?				

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Visitors, children and traffic

Quick safety scan

Vehicles of all sizes including trucks, cars, 4-wheel drives, quads, tractors and other heavy machinery are common around the farm and their access and use is often near buildings and houses where pedestrians and children are present. With larger trucks and machinery the ability of the operator to see bystanders is diminished, braking distances are greater and manoeuvrability is reduced. The outcomes of being hit or run over by these vehicles can be fatal.

Every area of the farm poses risks for children – those who live on the farm, including tenant’s children, and visiting children (approximately 30% of children killed on farms are visitors). Chemicals, water, heights, vehicles, workshops and livestock are all hazards that can cause serious injuries for kids.

Quick safety scan – Start Here	No	Some	Yes	Comments
1. Is there clear direction and signage for visitors to follow, and are people and traffic separated or protected?				
2. Are relevant safety rules of the farm clearly explained to visitors?				
3. Are there clearly identified ‘no go’ zones for visitors, children and unauthorised people?				
4. Is there a secure children's play area to restrict their access to machinery, traffic, livestock and water?				
5. Are children supervised when on the farm?				
6. Are hazardous areas such as chemicals, water, effluent ponds, workshops, ladders, secured to prevent access by children and others?				
7. Are keys removed from vehicles, tractors and quad bikes when not in use?				
8. Do children who live on the farm participate in water familiarisation sessions and learn to swim at an early age?				

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