

RIDING HORSES ON FARMS



KEEP SAFE, KEEP FARMING

INFORMATION SHEET

Accidents involving horses are often serious. Spinal injuries and serious head injuries can result from falls from horses and they can kick with such force that they can easily break bones and sometimes kill. You need a combination of common sense and caution when dealing with horses.

KEY POINTS

Only trained and experienced people should ride horses for farm work

Match riders to horses within their handling abilities

Always wear a helmet when riding a horse

Always supervise children on/and around horses

To assess the major hazards and how to control them view page 2

This information sheet outlines the main hazards of riding and working with horses and provides recommendations on how to eliminate, isolate and minimise them. WorkSafe NZ accepts these recommendations in this guide as current industry good practice. They will help you comply with the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (the HSE Act).

See the full guide at www.saferfarms.org.nz/guides

Accepted Good Practice: Always work with calm, deliberate movements around horses. Nervous handlers make horses nervous, creating unsafe situations. When handling your horse, use physical contact and your voice, so it always knows where you are. Always understand the significance of the horse's movements and its position in relation to you and its surroundings. Always supervise children on and around horses and make use of Personal Protective Equipment and ensure that it is well maintained and fit-for-purpose.



The Law: There is little specific law regarding the use of horses on farms, however, under the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (Act), employers must take all practicable steps to:

- > Provide and keep a safe work environment. This includes ensuring that employees are safe when working on or around horses.
- > Ensure the provision and use of personal protective equipment (PPE), including saddles, helmets and boots.

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Health & Safety legal requirements: Employers: must take all practicable steps to provide and keep a safe work environment. This includes making sure machinery and systems are safe for employees to use and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).) Employers must provide training and supervision of employees.

Employees: must keep safe when they work, and make sure they don't cause to harm anyone around them, including using protective equipment and wearing employer-provided protective clothing. Employees must understand and follow the farm's health and safety practices and procedures.

MAJOR HAZARDS TABLE

Hazard	Control
RIDING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Always wear a helmet when riding a horse. This will reduce the risk of head injury if you fall or a horse kicks you, because it protects your brain. Properly fit the helmet so it sits one inch above your eyebrows. > Do not ride horses that regularly buck or behave unpredictably. > Match riders to horses within their handling abilities. > Only one person should ride a horse at a time. > Never ride a horse while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Reassess tasks and find alternatives if the worker is stressed or fatigued. > If riders need help with mounting, if possible, use a mounting block.
WORKING WITH/ TRAINING HORSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Never lunge a horse with a rider on its back > If the horse has a history of biting, tie it with a very short lead rope to the halter to restrict movement. It won't be able to bite. > Only tolerate a bucking or bolting horse during breaking-in and the early stages of training. > When handling your horse, use physical contact and your voice, so it always knows where you are. Always understand the significance of the horse's movements and its position in relation to you and its surroundings. > Always use a lead line so you have a "safety zone" and so you don't catch your hand in the halter. Hold the lead line with your right hand, eight to 10 inches away from the horse's head, holding the end of the line with your left hand.
TRANSPORTING HORSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > When loading and unloading horses for transport, use anti-slip loading ramps with shallow inclines. Do not stand directly under the ramp when lowering or raising it. > Only horses used to traffic should be allowed on the road, especially if being ridden by an inexperienced rider.
RIDING ALONE AND IN ISOLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Tell someone where you are working and when you plan to return. > Carry a mobile phone, radio or emergency locator device. > Have regular check-in times. This helps make sure there is a quick response if you do not return.
ZOOZOSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Manage zoonoses through vaccination and parasite control programmes, and by thorough washing and drying of hands.