

TAKE FIVE

Your guide to
farm safety



THRINGS

SOLICITORS

TAKE FIVE | FARM SAFETY IN FIVE STEPS.

Your guide to farm safety in five steps.

In all businesses, the safety and wellbeing of employees must come at the top of the priority list. In Agriculture this is especially important, given the grim fact that it has by far the worst record for accidental fatalities of any major sector. Here's an overview of how to keep employees safe.

1. Identify the potential dangers

Farms and rural businesses are especially vulnerable to incidents because of the presence of heavy machinery and livestock, and the manual nature of much of the work.

The [Health and Safety Executive](#) has published advice which lists the top fatality risks as: being struck by moving vehicles; being struck by moving or falling objects such as trees; and falls from height. Non-fatal accidents are most commonly caused by handling, lifting or carrying; slips, trips and falls on the same level; and being struck by moving objects.

Thinking about the dangers present in every area of your farm or rural business, and at every stage of your processes, will help identify risks so you can minimise them.

2. Draw up a Health and Safety Policy

Knowing the risks will help you set out a health and safety policy. Every farm or business is different, and so every policy should be unique - it's not a one-size-fits-all problem. The policy should outline the responsibilities of the people who work with you, describe the procedures in place for ensuring the health and safety of your teams, and let people know how they should act if they see a problem on site. It should also acknowledge that ultimate responsibility for health and safety lies with you as the employer.

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3. Communicate with your employees

A policy is only effective if it is communicated - so make sure it is distributed to employees and that they have an opportunity to discuss it with you. For new employees, this should be part of the onboarding process, and all staff should be regularly reminded of the policy, especially when it is updated to reflect changes such as new potential hazards or working practices.

Don't forget to listen as well as talk - people who are on the front line may be able to report potential dangers back to you or suggest improvements to working practices that could protect their safety.

4. Plan carefully

Regular risk assessments, especially when introducing new processes, are vital. Ensure that objectives and standards are regularly communicated and that managers and those who are responsible for delivering them understand why they are being set. As teams change, make sure everybody is appropriately trained for the work they are being asked to do - and that each day, it is clear who is supposed to be doing what, when and with what result.

5. Review regularly and seek advice

You should constantly monitor activities, including incidents and near misses, to assess whether your policies and systems are delivering positive outcomes. If mistakes are made, learn from them and retrain staff or update policies in response.

It's important to remember, too, that standards and legislation around health and safety are constantly evolving. If in doubt, always take advice from a specialist.



Would you like to know more?

The Thrings Agriculture team specialises in supporting rural businesses and is appointed by the National Farmers union to advise its members in more counties than any other firm. For more information about how we support farmers, [click here](#).