

> Safety for Seasonal Workers in Horticulture



Our Vision:
Healthy, safe and
productive lives
and enterprises

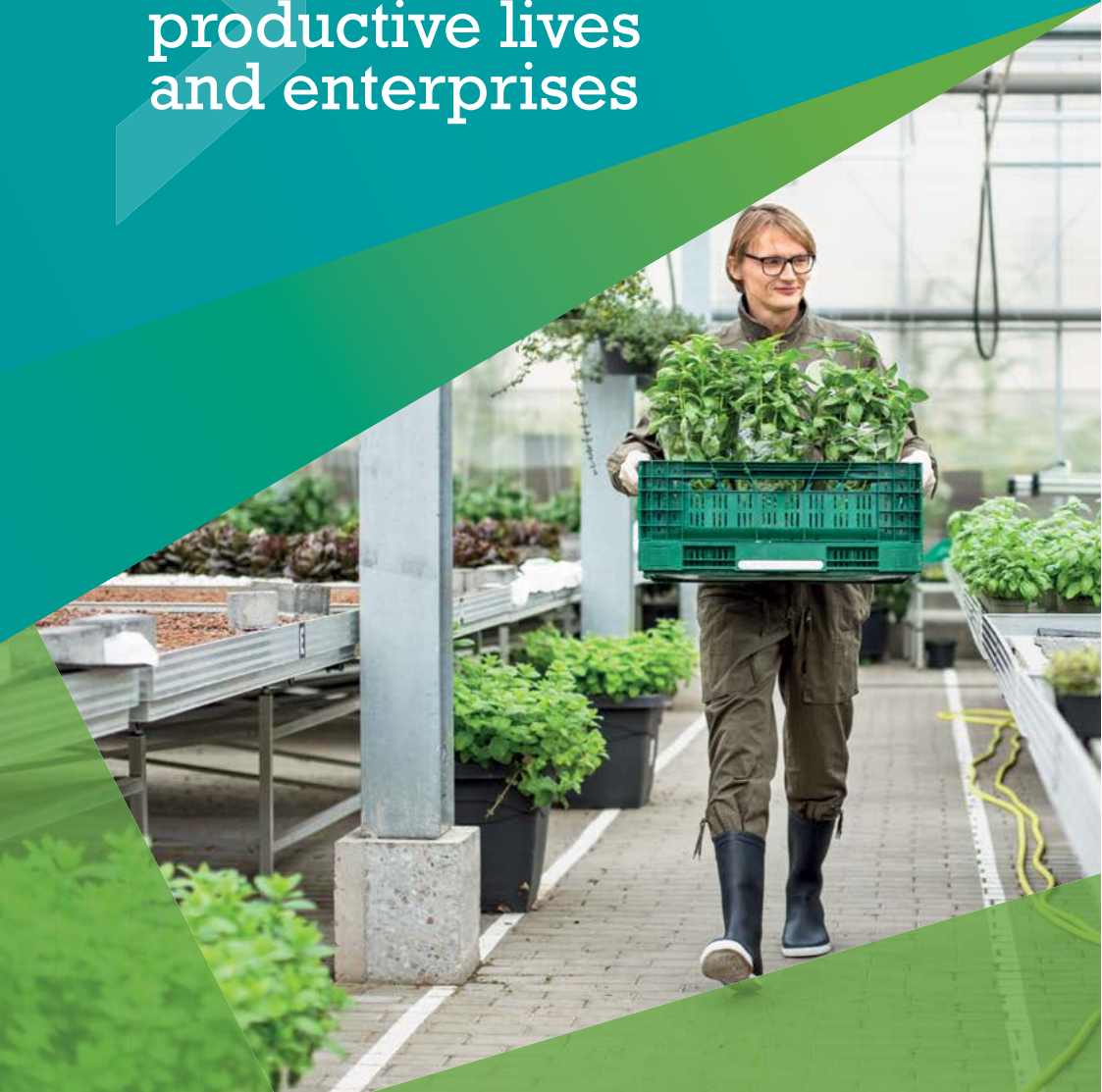


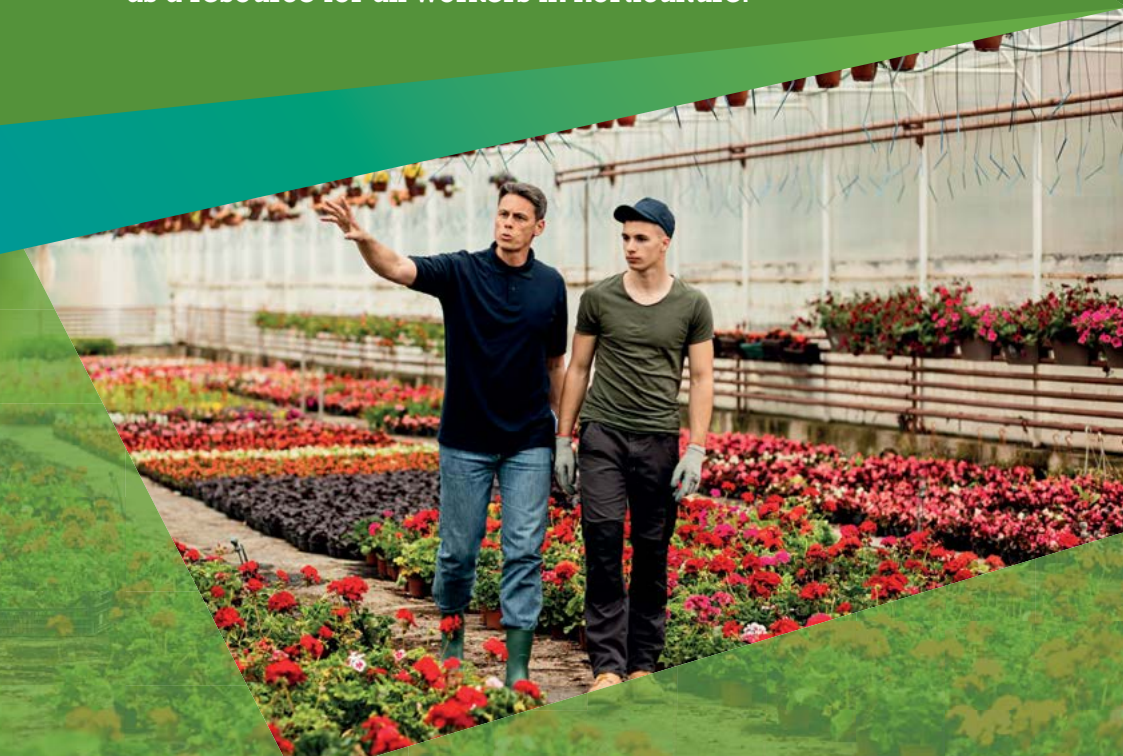


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Working on the land is recognised as work that gives rise to a high level of workplace injuries and ill health, and horticulture is no exception. A recent labour force survey found that 75% of employees working in horticulture businesses in Ireland were non-Irish nationals. These guidelines will serve as a useful resource for those non-Irish national employees, but also for everyone in the industry, whether self-employed, an employer or an employee.

The Health and Safety Authority is the national competent authority for occupational safety and health in Ireland and recognises the multicultural nature of the horticultural workforce. We aim to ensure that all workers in horticulture have a clear understanding of the risks in their workplace and the actions required to avoid workplace injury and ill health. This guide is available in several different languages as a resource for all workers in horticulture.



1 Causes of workplace injury and ill health

There are a range of causes of injury and ill health to seasonal workers in horticulture:

- Lack of information, instruction, training and supervision
- Unnecessary risk taking
- Unsafe systems of work
- Poorly maintained tractors, vehicles and machinery (for example brakes, mirrors and steps)
- Untrained/unauthorised drivers
- Incorrect manual handling techniques
- Unsafe work at heights
- Slips, trips and falls
- Working when tired and exhausted

Most workplace injuries and ill health are foreseeable and preventable. These guidelines will help you identify hazards in horticultural workplaces and how to reduce the associated risks.



2 Consequences of workplace injury and ill health

Consequences can often be serious and the injured person may experience the following:

- Significant pain, suffering and trauma
- Hospital and medical expenses
- Inability to work – possibly for a long period
- Financial pressure on the victim to support self and family
- Long-term injury or death
- A change of job or retraining for another role
- Low morale.

The employer can also be seriously affected:

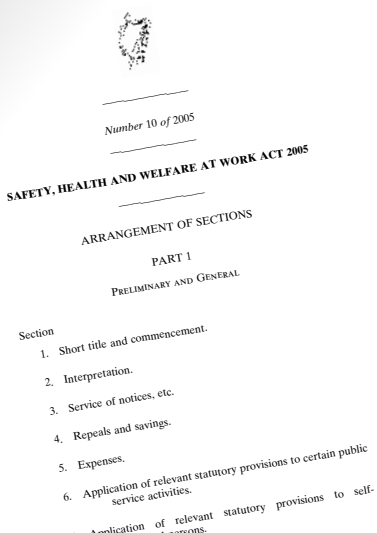
- Increased costs in terms of recruitment and training of replacement employees
- Increase in insurance costs and medical fees
- Possible legal costs involving civil actions or criminal proceedings
- Time taken for workplace injury and ill health investigation
- Resultant damage to machinery, equipment and buildings
- Adverse publicity – loss of reputation
- Loss of output



3 General duties of employers and induction training

Your employer must provide essential health and safety arrangements focusing mainly on the following:

- Implementing the general duties of employers
- Information to employees
- Instruction, training and supervision of employees
- Emergencies and serious and imminent dangers
- Protective and preventive measures
- Hazard identification and risk assessment
- The Safety Statement
- Co-operation of employees
- Health surveillance and medical fitness to work
- Safety representatives
- Employee consultation
- Disciplinary actions



Induction training

Initial induction training should include:

- an overview of the industry in which you are employed,
- the Health and Safety Rules, Controls and Procedures in place to prevent injury and ill health and the importance of observing them,
- the importance of co-operating with your employer on the Safety Management System,
- the Safety Statement as the core health and safety management document to prevent injury and ill health, and
- a clear explanation of the disciplinary actions that will follow in the event of deliberate breaches of Health and Safety rules, controls and procedures.

The training should also include information on the safe use of any vehicles and machinery, work at heights, traffic management, maintenance, construction work and any work employees undertake at the place of work.



4 General duties of employees

Employees also have duties, including the following:

- Comply with all relevant law
- Take reasonable care to protect the safety of themselves and others who might be affected by their acts and omissions
- Ensure they are not under the influence of an intoxicant, drug or prescription medication that might create a danger to themselves or others
- Submit to reasonable, appropriate testing, required by the employer. The employer may prevent an employee from working if it is apparent that he or she would be a danger to themselves or others
- Co-operate with the employer
- Not engage in any improper conduct or dangerous behaviour.
- Attend training and undergo any necessary assessment
- Make correct use of any article or substance provided for use or for the protection of the employee, including protective clothing and equipment

Report to their employer as soon as practicable:

- Any work being carried out which might endanger themselves or others
- Any defects in the place of work, the system of work, any article or substance which might endanger themselves or others
- Any contravention of the regulations of which he/she is aware, such as any breach of safety rules, controls and procedures
- Notify the employer or the employer's nominated registered practitioner if they become aware that they are suffering from any disease or physical/ mental impairment which affects their performance of work activities which could give rise to risks to the safety, health and welfare of persons at work. The duty is on the employee to protect themselves and others

An employee may not:

- misrepresent himself or herself to an employer with regard to their level of training,
- interfere, misuse or damage anything provided for the safety, health and welfare of employees, or
- place at risk the safety, health and welfare of persons in connection with work activities.

The training should also include reference to the safe use of any vehicles and machinery, work at heights, traffic management, maintenance, construction work and any work employees undertake at the place of work.



5 Safety statement and safety representatives

An employer must, by law, prepare and review at least annually a written safety management document called a “Safety Statement”, which must be signed and dated by the employer.

The Safety Statement must be communicated and explained to all employees, contractors and visitors in a format that uses easily understood, relevant language. Placing a copy of the company’s safety statement in an area where it can be consulted is good practice and serves as a visible reminder of the importance of health and safety to all - owner, employees, contractors, and visitors.

The employer must identify the hazards at the workplace in the safety statement, for example:

- Operation of machinery
- Operation of vehicles
- Use of equipment
- Manual handling
- Maintenance work
- Construction work
- Working at heights
- Confined spaces
- Noise
- Harmful dusts
- Exposure to chemicals

In the Safety Statement, your employer is obliged to carry out three steps:

- 1 Identify all the hazards at the place of work.
- 2 Carry out risk assessments of these hazards.
- 3 Set out the steps that need to be taken to eliminate and/or control the risks in respect of each hazard.

Hazard: Anything that can cause harm.

Risk: The likelihood, high or low, that someone will be harmed by the hazard, together with the severity of harm suffered.

Risk Assessment: The careful examination of what, at the workplace could cause harm to people, so that the employer can weigh up whether they have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm, for example in relation to machinery, work equipment, electricity and systems of work.

Controlling Risk: The law requires employers and employees to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that workplace hazards will not injure anyone.

The risk will depend on the circumstances:

- Has adequate training been provided?
- Have adequate instructions been given?
- Is there adequate supervision?
- Has anyone been exposed to the hazard?
- How serious would the injury or ill health be?
- Is the hazard likely to cause injury or ill health?
- What steps were taken to ensure that the hazard would not cause harm?



Safety representative

Employees are entitled to select a person to be their safety representative, to represent them on safety and health matters with their employer. The employer must consult with employees and their safety representative to ensure cooperation with preventing injury and ill health. Where a safety committee is already in existence, the safety representative is an additional way of ensuring good consultation.

Safety representatives can represent their co-workers in consultations with their employer on matters of safety, health and welfare at their workplace. While the safety representative has functions, they do not have any additional duties, other than those that apply to employees generally. Therefore, a safety representative who agrees to represent his co-workers or accepts a management proposal to deal with safety or health issues cannot be held legally accountable for errors at the workplace.

Safety representatives, after giving reasonable notice to the employer, have the right to inspect the whole or part of a workplace that they represent at a frequency or on a schedule agreed between them and the employer. A safety representative may investigate incidents, injuries and dangerous occurrences at the workplace to find out the causes and help identify any necessary remedial or preventive measures. However, a safety representative must not interfere with anything at the scene of an incident and must not obstruct a Health and Safety Authority Inspector from doing their investigation.



6 Construction work

If the farmer/employer is having maintenance, building work or other construction type works carried out in connection with the farming business – the farmer will be a “client” with legal duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013.

The farmer must ensure that everyone working on any construction work has had specific construction safety training and holds up to date Safe Pass or CSCS cards.

The law requires that health and safety is considered and managed throughout all stages of a building project, from conception, design and planning through to site work and subsequent maintenance and repair of the structure. The law applies to all construction-type work, building projects, repairs and refurbishments.

Most farms carry out some building work from time to time, from new builds to dismantling and re-erecting entire buildings, to dealing with asbestos. Only trained construction workers must carry out this work, which involves risk, with proper controls in place.

The employer must arrange for you to attend a one-day training course in safety awareness (Safe Pass Training) if your work involves construction-type work or working on a construction site, for example employees working in the landscaping sector.



7 Hazards

7.1 Manual handling

In horticulture, lifting, carrying, pulling and pushing heavy or awkward objects can sometimes be part of the work. Some tasks may involve moving loads and other tasks might simply be repetitive. This is manual handling. At work, you may need to bend or twist your body a lot during the day. Back and shoulder strains and other manual handling injuries can result from lifting heavy loads, repetitive bending or twisting, having to maintain an awkward posture while moving a load or lifting a load to a height or from the ground. Your employer must assess the risks and put measures in place to protect you from injury.



The employer is required to eliminate or minimise manual handling and must provide manual handling training for any remaining manual handling tasks involved in the work. If your employer offers you this training, it is important that you complete it to help protect you when carrying out manual tasks at work.

You should avoid handling heavy or awkward loads where possible, and if you are concerned about any particular task you should tell your supervisor. Your employer may have provided lifting and movement equipment to help you, such as a trolley or other lifting aid and it is important to use them.

If you need to lift a load, you should:

- check the weight of the load by looking at any weight marking on the load,
- use lifting aids to move heavy loads,
- perform team lifting where necessary,
- where there are handles on the load, these should be used,
- consider the characteristics of the load (will it be difficult to lift, are the contents likely to shift),
- consider if there is room to complete the task safely, if the floors are even, if there is enough light, and
- before moving a load, walk the route you intend to travel to check that it is clear and free from hazards to prevent slips, trips and falls.

In general, inappropriate manual handling techniques carried out over a long period of time result in back injuries, but can also occur from a once off heavy lift.

To avoid the risk of injury, you should:

- ensure that you have received training in manual handling,
- think about and apply what you have learned,
- assess the load in terms of weight, size, shape and available grip,
- ask for assistance if the load is too heavy or awkward to move,
- place yourself correctly with feet flat on the ground,
- keep your back straight,
- bend your knees and get in close to the load,
- grip the load firmly and bring it in close to your body,
- raise your chin before lifting,
- use your leg muscles to raise the load without snatching or jerking,
- ensure the load does not obstruct your view, and that the route and set down area is clear before you move,
- avoid repetitive bending or twisting, and
- be especially careful where the ground may be uneven, unstable or slippery.



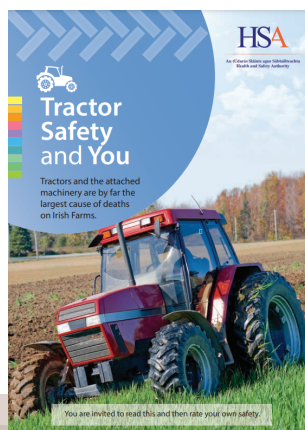
7.2 Vehicles and machinery

Injury and ill health can be caused by a range of factors:

- Lack of training and experience
- Lack of knowledge of safe working procedures
- Working with unguarded or inadequately guarded machinery
- Ignoring warning signs and safe working procedures
- Working too close to operating vehicles and machinery
- Clearing blockages while machinery is still running
- Not following safe working procedures when machinery is being cleaned or maintained
- Not isolating machinery to prevent it from being started by others
- Not reporting defects to your employer
- Operating machinery when tired, distracted or unwell

To prevent injury and ill health during vehicle and machinery operations, a number of steps can be taken:

- Ensure that you are trained in the operation of the vehicle or machine
- Ensure that you understand all vehicle or machinery controls
- If unsure of any vehicle or machine control or safety procedure, ask your supervisor or employer
- Ensure that all guards are in place before operations commence
- Switch off and isolate machinery before you clear any blockages, or carry out any maintenance work



The main causes of vehicle and machinery injuries and ill health are:

- Being struck or reversed over by a vehicle
- Falling from a vehicle
- Entanglement in moving parts of a machine
- Being trapped or crushed by a vehicle or moving parts of a machine
- Being struck by moving parts or by material ejected from the machinery
- Being trapped by a moving machine and a fixed object
- Clothes or long hair becoming caught and drawn into moving parts
- Being overcome by exhaust gases

Safeguarding machinery

Many serious injuries involve the operation of machinery and some of these injuries may prove fatal. Often these occur because adequate guarding was not provided or kept in place.

Repair and maintenance of machines may involve the removal of guards and, in the rush to complete the job, safety guards may not have been refitted. Tractors, vehicles and machinery must never be used unless all the guards are in place, and the operator is trained and competent.

You must ensure that safeguards are in place before operating any machinery with hazardous features. Some examples of machinery with hazardous features are given below.

Type of machinery hazard

- Machinery powered by drive shafts, for example Power Take-Off (PTO) shafts
- Crop intake machinery, for example potato harvester, bark chipper
- Machinery with rotating flails and tines, for example composters, rotavators, hedge cutters or strimmers
- Hydraulically-raised trailers which may descend suddenly as a result of hydraulic failure

Type of machinery guarding

- PTO shaft guards enclosing the entire length of rotating shafts.
- Fixed-distance guards
- Mechanical restraining devices, used to protect against sudden loss of pressure

Injury prevention when operating tractors, vehicles and machinery

Always follow these steps:

- Read the operating manual, if available
- Undertake training and be familiar with all controls
- Ask for further training and ask questions if unsure of safety controls or procedures



Operating tractors

- Never operate a tractor/vehicle or other machinery unless you are trained and authorised to do so
- Make sure that you understand all the controls
- Check that independent brakes work effectively.
- Check that no one else is near before you start the engine and that no one is in danger before you move
- Check that brakes and steering operate correctly
- Check where others are working and make sure that you can see them
- Follow safe working procedures
- Never allow children to ride on tractors/vehicles or machinery
- Apply the Safe Stop procedure:
 - Reverse park safely
 - Apply handbrake
 - Lower all implements
 - Switch off engine
 - Remove key
 - Lock



Operating machinery

- Never use a machine unless you are trained and authorised to do so
- Never attempt to clear blockages or clean a machine unless the drive is disconnected and the machine is stationary and switched off
- Check for, and release, any stored energy
- Never wear chains, loose clothing or have loose long hair, which could be caught up in moving parts
- Never distract people who are working with machines
- Never dismount from a moving tractor or other self-propelled machine
- Keep all guards in place
- Check that all controls are clearly marked and show what they do
- Check that you are provided with, and use, the necessary protective clothing
- Report all defects to your supervisor immediately
- Ensure that all PTO shaft guards are complete and kept in place
- Check that the PTO guard does not rotate and that the restraining chain is in place



All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Do not use an ATV (quad bike) unless you have received formal training.

- Always wear head protection and PPE such as eye protection
- Never carry passengers
- Keep speed down, particularly on uneven surfaces
- Remember that increasing speed increases vehicle instability and the risk of overturning
- Follow the rules provided at training when driving on slopes and rough terrain
- Never exceed the towing capacity of the ATV

Use of ATVs may be unsuitable for older operators with poor physical mobility and slower response times.

7.3 Slips, trips and falls

There are a number of possible causes of slips, trips and falls.

- Untidy workplaces
- Wet floors
- Uneven surfaces
- Working on platforms on fork lift trucks
- Working on tractors and machinery
- Improper use of ladders
- Working at heights
- Working on or near fragile roofs and roof lights
- Working near open edges



Prevention of slips, trips and falls

Take the following steps to minimise the risk of a slip, trip or fall incident.

- Ensure you wear appropriate footwear that provides adequate grip
- Ensure that workplaces are tidy, clean and free of obstacles
- Ensure a risk assessment is carried out for working at heights and controls identified are implemented
- Store tools, equipment, cables and containers by careful storage or stacking
- Avoid tripping hazards such as trailing cables and tools
- Ensure that walkways are kept clear at all times
- Where platforms are more than two metres above the ground ensure that the edges are fenced with a one-metre high handrail
- Ensure all openings in floors are covered or that a secure fence is erected around them
- Do not use staircases unless substantial handrails are available
- Ensure that all spillages on floors are cleared up immediately and that warning signs are put in place



Ladder safety

Ladders present a particular risk in relation to slips, trips and falls. Where possible use of ladders should be avoided, but if used you should do the following;

- Make sure the ladder is suitable for the task and in good condition
- Always check ladders before use for defects and report damaged ladders to your employer
- Make sure the ladder is resting on a level firm ground and never placed on an unsteady base, for example; rubble, oil drums, boxes or vehicles
- The ladder must be securely anchored at the base or have someone hold onto it
- Set the ladder at the correct angle. It must be angled one out for every four up and firmly secured according to controls identified in the risk assessment for working at heights
- Ladders must extend 1m above the landing place, otherwise ensure that there are firm handholds in place
- Secure the ladder against slipping by tying it at the top
- Never place ladders where there is danger from overhead electric cables or from moving vehicles
- Only competent trained individuals should carry out maintenance work on glasshouse and shed roofs



7.4 Chemicals

Chemicals are widely used in the horticultural sector, and injuries and ill health involving their use can have serious, and often long-lasting, consequences for victims. Chemicals can find their way into your body through a variety of means:

- Breathing in contaminated air through the nose, mouth and lungs
- The mouth by ingestion, by touching your mouth after handling chemicals or pesticides
- Unintentional ingestion when kept in inappropriate containers
- Skin contact, even when there are no wounds or scratches, as some chemicals can be absorbed through the skin

When chemicals enter your body, they then pass into the blood stream, which can carry them to the liver, kidney, brain and nervous system and may result in serious and often long lasting damage.

Substances harmful to your health include pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, disinfectants and cleaning materials. Visit www.hsa.ie/chemicals.ie for more information.

How do I know if a chemical is dangerous?

The label on the chemical container indicates the dangerous properties of the chemical. Below is an example of a hazard label. Additional information can be found in the safety data sheet (SDS) which is supplied with the chemical (if you don't receive one, ask your supplier). The SDS provides important information about the hazards of the chemical and how to use, handle, store and dispose of it safely.

TACTILE WARNING
Hazardous areas which are touched by a child or partially ingested should cause the child to spit out the product.

HAZARD STATEMENTS
Have the signal word and hazard statements on the label. The chemical should be kept away from heat, hot surfaces.

PRECAUTIONARY STATEMENTS
Avoid the dangerous substance by the use of appropriate handling and storage.

CHILD RESISTANT FASTENING
This container has a child-resistant fastening. It is not intended for use by children.

HAZARD PICTOGRAM
This pictogram indicates the hazard of the chemical.

SIGNAL WORD
DANGER

What do the hazard pictograms mean?

DANGER	Life threatening even in small amounts and brief exposure.	Handle with care
DANGER	Causes very serious long-term health effects.	Never swallow or inhale
DANGER	Causes skin and eye burns.	Avoid contact with skin
DANGER	Corrosive to metals.	Handle with care
DANGER	Damage to ozone layer.	Avoid release
DANGER	Explosive - sensitive to fire, heat, vibration and friction.	Keep your distance
DANGER	Highly flammable - serious fires if exposed to sparks, flames, heat.	Handle with care
DANGER	Causes or intensifies fire, increases fire risk.	No ignition sources
DANGER	Container explodes if heated. Very cold liquid burns when touched.	Wear protective clothing
DANGER	Toxic to aquatic environment.	Do not pour down drain

Pictograms accompanied by the appropriate hazard statement

There are a range of important precautions that can be taken:

- Ensure that you have received training in the use or application of chemicals
- Always wear the necessary PPE, protective clothing and appropriate masks
- Ensure that you clearly understand the message conveyed by chemical symbols
- Cooperate with your employer in the steps taken to avoid injury,
- Do not smoke, eat or drink in chemical handling areas and do not keep food there
- Do not transfer contamination for example by putting pens and pencils in your mouth
- Ensure thorough washing of your hands before leaving your workplace
- Be especially careful when handling concentrated chemicals to avoid splash back to eyes, face and hands
- When a chemical is poured from its original container within a workplace, and the risk cannot be removed or controlled, then there may be a need for a warning sign or in-house label
- Never store chemicals in containers such as milk bottles or soft drink containers
- Ensure that chemicals are replaced in the secure, locked store after use
- Be aware of the emergency measures in place in case of a chemical spill or incident
- Do not remove or damage the labels on containers

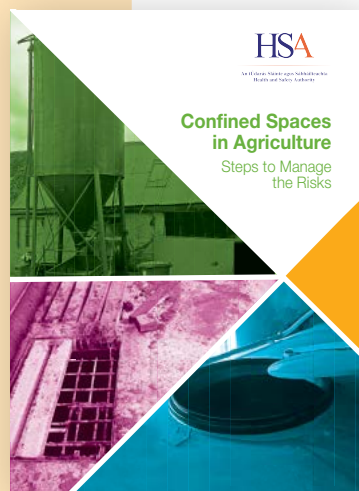


7.5 Confined spaces

On a farm, any enclosed or poorly ventilated space where feedstuffs or organic products are stored or allowed accumulate, for example grain, apples or manure, potentially presents a confined space risk.

Composted material and manure can release toxic gases, bacteria, mould spores, allergens and other biological material into the air. If exposed to low levels of these materials, you may notice symptoms such as coughing, itchy eyes, stuffy nose, sneezing or sore throat. For anyone who has asthma, or a sensitised immune system, the health effects can be more severe.

- You have been formally trained to enter and work in confined spaces
- The farmer/employer has a confined spaces programme and a rescue plan specific to your farm
- Equipment is available to safely enter the space and rescue injured workers in an emergency
- Machinery has been locked out and pipes have been isolated where necessary
- The atmosphere in the confined space has been tested to ensure it is safe to enter
- The space is properly ventilated
- A designated standby person is stationed at or near the entrance to the confined space



7.6 Electricity

Incidents involving contact with electricity can cause deaths or serious injuries from external or internal burns. Contact with or coming close to, overhead power lines or underground cables cause many of these injuries.

Remember that electricity can jump gaps when equipment or machinery gets close enough to power cables - you do not need to make direct contact with overhead power lines to be injured.

Ensure that:

- you check all portable electrical tools particularly their flexible leads and plugs for any damage before use and report any defects to your employer,
- all socket outlets are protected by an RCD (Residual Current Device),
- all damaged cables are repaired or replaced immediately,
- all electric tools used outdoors are operated at reduced voltage (110v) and connected through an RCD,
- the test button on RCDs is checked periodically to ensure it is operating effectively, and
- you fully unwind the cable from an extension reel or drum when using electrical appliances to avoid a risk of overheating, electrocution and fire.

Do not:

- work under overhead power lines without using a safe system of work,
- allow any part of a machine, for example crop sprayer, ladder, or irrigation pipes, within 15m of an overhead cable,
- store machinery against poles or stay wires,

- use any mechanical digger where there may be underground cables, ensure that your employer checks out and marks their location,
- use any machines unless the power cables are suitably protected, for example armoured cable covered in thick flexible rubber or neoprene, and have an earth connection,
- overload sockets by using adaptors,
- use socket outlets, plugs or switches outdoors in damp conditions unless they are of the appropriate industrial type to protect against rain, splash and use of water jets,
- start any maintenance or repair job unless the equipment or machinery has been switched off, locked off or unplugged,
- move tall machinery or high loads under or in the vicinity of overhead lines unless the clearances have been checked and are safe, and
- touch or go near fallen wires.



7.7 Fire

Fire and evacuation plan

In the event of a fire, all personnel must leave the workplace and go to the nearest safe assembly point. The most senior member of management on duty, or a designated fire officer, must ensure that a head count is carried out to determine if anyone is missing. Action to tackle the fire will only begin after establishing where all personnel are.

Facilities for evacuation

All doors leading to the outside must have exit signs on them and they must not be locked while people are working on the premises.

Firefighting facilities

Extinguishers must be located at designated points in the workplace and inspected regularly.



8 Training and communication

Competent training providers must provide training to all employees. Such training will focus on the specific tasks you perform in your day-to-day work for example manual handling techniques, safety with vehicles and safe use of chemicals.

Machine, vehicle and equipment training

Your employer must provide you with appropriate training in the safe use of vehicles, machinery and equipment.

In relation to forklift truck training your employer must provide training in accordance with the Code of Practice for rider-operated lift trucks.

It is imperative that a two-way communication process exists between employers and employees. This is achieved through:

- periodic training programmes,
- work and safety briefings,
- on-going supervision,
- health and safety at work documented meetings, and
- sign-posting of hazardous work areas and machines with safety signs.



9 Emergencies and first aid

First aid

Immediate and proper examination and treatment of injuries may save your life. Neglect or poor treatment of even a trivial injury may lead to serious infections and ill health.

- Your workplace must provide first-aid equipment appropriate to the type of work you are carrying out
- You should ensure you know the location of the first-aid box and who is appointed to look after first aid
- First aid boxes must contain:
 - adhesive plasters
 - individually wrapped triangular bandages,
 - safety pins
 - large individually wrapped sterile non-medicated wound dressings
 - individually wrapped wipes
 - paramedic shears
 - pairs of latex gloves
 - sterile eye wash



Where you are working in an area that is remote from emergency medical services, you should be provided with a first aid kit, the contents of which must be the same as listed above.

Telephone numbers of emergency services should be displayed in a prominent area in the workplace, for example in the canteen or the office.

Emergency procedure

- Keep all emergency access ways and escape routes clear
- Ensure that you are familiar with all emergency procedures at work, for example serious injury, ill health, chemical ingestion, chemical spills, fire drills
- Know who must raise the alarm
- Know where to go to reach safety
- Be familiar with emergency signs and notices
- Never smoke or use other ignition sources banned in areas where gases or flammable liquids are stored or used



10 Health, welfare and well-being

Health problems can arise at work and may develop unnoticed. The best way to protect your health is by being aware of the risks, minimising them and reporting any illness to your employer as soon as symptoms show. Training in this area is essential and full compliance with national safety and health control measures is required.

10.1 Skin protection

Skin problems can be caused by a number of issues:

- Damage to skin caused by cuts, abrasions or punctures
- Dry and chapped skin by exposure to cold and wet conditions
- Damage from frequent immersion in water which removes natural oils from the skin
- Exposure to chemicals
- Over-exposure to sunlight

Consequences include:

- Dermatitis
- Infected wounds
- Skin cancers
- Sun burn

Prevention:

- Wear suitable gloves and protective clothing when handling chemicals
- Ensure respiratory protective equipment is well maintained and that filters are replaced as required
- Wash your hands to remove harmful substances
- Apply industrial barrier creams to protect your skin
- Cover cuts and abrasions with waterproof adhesive plasters
- Treat minor infections immediately
- Do not over expose yourself to the sun – wear appropriate clothing and use sunscreen as appropriate
- Look for any warts, moles and skin discolorations and report them to your employer if they grow, bleed or itch

10.2 Weil's disease

This can be contracted from materials contaminated with rats' urine. Symptoms include feverish illness, headaches or mild flu-like symptoms and can result in meningitis.

Prevention:

- Wear protective gloves when handling materials likely to be contaminated
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking
- Maintain good personal hygiene

10.3 Mushroom workers lung

Workers, including pickers, in the mushroom industry may develop an allergy caused by inhaling spores produced by open mushrooms. Symptoms of infection include fever, headaches, shivering, muscle pains and breathlessness. If not treated early permanent lung damage may result.

Preventative measures include:

- training, and
- use of appropriate face mask, or respirator, to protect against inhalation of spores.

10.4 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Clothing (PPC)

Your employer must provide you with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Personal Protective Clothing (PPC) as appropriate and free of charge.

You have a legal duty to make proper use of PPE, to wear the PPC provided in accordance with instructions, and to return it to the designated storage area after use.

You should report any defects immediately to your employer.

10.5 Employee welfare

Your employer must provide adequate welfare facilities including toilets and wash-up areas. Washing facilities should have adequate lighting and include running hot and cold or warm water as well as soap and clean towels. You must ensure that they are kept in a clean and tidy condition.

You must be provided with access to drinking water.

Your employer must provide you with a room where you can make hot drinks, prepare food, and sit down.

10.6 Smoking

Employees and any other persons (for example visitors, customers) are not permitted to smoke in an enclosed workplace and must comply with the legislation in this regard.

10.7 Workplace bullying

Your employer must prevent bullying and will have prepared an effective anti-bullying policy, based on the code of practice on the prevention of workplace bullying.

10.8 Dangerous tasks

Your employer will define any dangerous tasks, which must not be undertaken by you, based on a risk assessment. For example, working on glasshouse roofs, use of chainsaws and operation of certain machinery.



Appendix 1 **Sample Checklist**

Checklists are a useful method to ensure that all aspects of safety, health and welfare are discussed and that appropriate controls are implemented. Please note that the below is only a guide and may not be complete for your particular workplace.

1 **Safety management system**

- Strong commitment
- Safety statement implemented
- Adequate delegation of responsibilities
- Adequate training, instruction and supervision provided
- Adequate follow up on recommendations
- Review and implementation of controls to prevent injury and ill health

2 **Employee safety programme**

- Adequate job rules posted in work areas
- Adequate job instruction
- Adequate training
- Adequate emergency action training including use of fire extinguishers
- Adequate supervision

3 **Supervisors**

- Regular workplace inspections
- Near hit and incident investigations
- Hazard and incident reporting to management
- Adequate Certified first aiders
- Monitoring and enforcing safety rules
- Adequate supervisor training for above responsibilities

4 Vehicles and machinery

- Pre-operational checks
- Vehicle/machinery specific training provided
- Only formally trained, experienced and fit/healthy operators to operate/drive tractors, quads, vehicles and machinery
- Traffic management plan implemented
- Designated pedestrian walkways
- Vehicle/machinery operating manual available in language of trained operator

5 Mechanical power system

- Proper general condition
- Adequate guarding
- Emergency stop buttons operational and correctly positioned
- Lockout/isolation provisions for adjusting, servicing, lubrication of systems
- Qualified trained operators
- Adequate warning signs posted
- Authorised personnel only

6 Material handling equipment

- Trained workers
- Various forms of lifting aids for example trolleys, carts, forklifts, other devices
- Adequate surface and ground conditions

7 Hand and power tools

- Proper condition and maintenance
- Proper storage
- Guards and safety devices in place
- Electrical grounding or double insulation protection provided
- Correct adjustments
- Load rating sufficient for work performed
- Authorised for use only by trained personnel
- Defective tools tagged and taken out of use

8 Ladders

- Properly stored
- Inspected before each use
- Damaged ladders repaired or destroyed immediately
- Safety feet in serviceable condition
- Unpainted and free of grease and oil
- Properly positioned, footed and tied in at top
- Metal ladders not used in electrical areas

9 Structure/Housekeeping

- Walkways and passage ways kept clear for easy and safe access
- Sufficient exits for prompt escape
- Exit signs adequately illuminated
- Flammables kept in appropriate storage and away from exits
- Spillages cleaned immediately
- Snow and ice cleared

10 Floors and stairs

- Cleaned and well maintained
- Free of slip, trip or fall hazards
- Free of protrusions, for example nails
- Openings covered or barricaded
- Load limits posted on upper floors
- Handrails on at least one side
- Grating on outdoor stairs
- Steps uniform in height and tread depth

11 Stacking and storing facilities

- Adequate storage facilities
- Storage is secure (structure condition regularly checked)
- Damage to racking systems monitored
- Maintenance and equipment checked such as skids
- Warning signs posted (for example load limits, storage heights)

12 Fire protection

- Appropriate type of fire extinguishers available
- Appropriate number of fire extinguishers available
- Appropriate location of fire extinguishers
- Extinguishers inspected monthly
- Fire hoses properly mounted
- Fire equipment visibly marked
- Proper clearance for sprinkler heads
- Fire emergency alarm system operational
- Warning signs posted to indicate what to do in case of fire (emergency services telephone number)

13 Electrical

- High voltage and control panels closed and secured
- Control panels identified
- Electrical switches labelled
- General condition of wiring monitored
- Proper IP Rating on electrical equipment
- Explosion-proof fixtures in flammable atmospheres (dust or vapour)
- Lockout systems used
- Electrical equipment protected from fluids

14 Lighting

- Appropriate light provided
- Pedestrian routes and working area adequately illuminated during work hours
- Lighting fixtures kept clean, particularly from dust for better visibility

15 Noise exposure

- Noise minimised at source
- Use of engineering controls
- PPE for high noise areas
- Hazardous noise areas identified and marked clearly
- Use and care of PPE monitored

16 Ventilation

- Adequate ventilation provided in all indoor work areas
- Adequate ventilation provided in any other enclosed work area
- Local extraction provided where required
- Hoods connected to exhaust system

17 First aid

- Record kept of all incident or injuries requiring first aid
- Accident Report Forms available
- Accidents reported to Health and Safety Authority (HSA)
- Adequate type and number of first aid kits
- Adequate number of personnel trained to administer first aid
- Adequate components in first aid kits

18 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Appropriate PPE provided free of charge
- Training provided in proper use
- Monitoring of proper use of PPE
- Cleaning and maintenance of PPE monitored
- Adequate PPE storage facilities provided

19 Pesticides

- Separate locked storage area
- Access by trained and authorised persons only
- Appropriate chemical warning signs posted
- No smoking signs posted
- Chemicals only stored in original container with fully visible labelling
- Separate storage for certain chemicals, for example pesticides
- Trained and licensed operators
- Full listing of chemicals stored
- Guidelines for pesticide application, storage and disposal

20 Fuel safety

- Tanks/drums made of steel or appropriate material
- Located underground or at least 40 feet from buildings
- Tanks adequately vented
- Tanks adequately grounded
- Appropriate colour-coded portable containers
- Containers used with correct fluids
- Caps secure
- No smoking signs posted
- Appropriate safety rules in place for refuelling
- Separate containers provided for oily rags, flammable scraps, chemical wastes
- Correct cleaning solvents are used for cleaning

21 Compressed gases

- Store upright and secured
- All cylinders marked or identified
- Stored away from heat sources
- Stored away from stairs, elevators and exits
- Inspected for damage, dents and corrosion
- Appropriate warning signs

22 Construction work

- Maintenance, building work or other minor works, employer as client will fulfil legal duties in construction law
- Everyone working on any construction site will have a Safe Pass Card (training)
- Written appointments of qualified project supervisors for the design process and construction stage will be made for construction work

23 Confined spaces

- Appropriate warning signs
- Appropriate PPE and entry procedures
- Confined spaces are identified such as; bulk liquid storage tanks, wells, cisterns, dry wells, septic tanks, silos or manure storage tanks, sprayer and chemical transport vehicles, manure/bio/digester units
- Risks involved with confined spaces made clear to all
- Appropriate training provided

Appendix 2 Further information

The below publications are available on www.hsa.ie:

- Confined Spaces in Agriculture - Steps to Manage the Risks
- Code of Practice for Working in Confined Spaces published in accordance with Section 60 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Code of Practice for Preventing Injury and Occupational Ill Health in Agriculture
- Farm Safety Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document
- Code of Practice for Safety in Roofwork
- Using Ladders Safely – Information Sheet

Relevant Irish laws, for example:

- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Confined Spaces) Regulations 2001

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine - www.gov.ie/agriculture

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Further Information and Guidance:

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Tel. 0818 289 389

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Callers

00353 1 6147000

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