



Working with horses on farms: checklist

This checklist has been developed to help persons in control of a business or undertaking (PCBUs) establish safe work procedures for working with horses on farms that can be adapted through consultation with workers and their health and safety representatives, where applicable.

Horses on farms checklist

Riders

	Workers have been assessed for riding competency before they are assigned riding work
	Workers are treated as novice riders unless they can demonstrate otherwise
	Workers are assigned work relative to experience and competency
	Workers are matched to a horse suited to their age, size, experience and riding ability by a competent person
	Workers are instructed to never ride horses while under the influence of drugs or alcohol
	Tasks are reassessed if the rider is stressed or tired
	Workers can control their horse before leaving a training environment

Riding alone and in isolation

	Procedures are in place to ensure the location of workers is known
	Regular check in procedures have been agreed
	Workers are provided suitable communication equipment
	Emergency communication systems are in place and have been checked
	An emergency plan is in place
	Riders have been provided with information about the best routes to take, 'no-go' zones and what tasks are suitable for using horses
	Riders have been provided with a farm map identifying unsafe areas
	The time it will take to finish the job alone is known and a time the worker is due to return has been arranged; actions to be taken if the worker does not return on time are agreed

Loading and unloading for transport	
	Anti-slip loading ramps with shallow inclines are used
	Workers are instructed not to stand directly under the ramp when lowering or raising it
	The truck or float is safe and suitable for the size of the horse
	There is adequate lighting (natural or other) to avoid loading problems
	Two people are used to load and unload horses (where possible)
	Horses are kept on floats for as short a time possible
Hygiene around horses	
	Suitable hand washing facilities, including running water, soap and a way to dry hands, are available
	Workers are instructed to wash their hands before eating, drinking, smoking and after touching horses or any contaminated equipment or personal protective equipment (PPE)
	Stables and yards are clean
	Horse manure and soiled bedding is removed regularly
	Eating areas are away from areas with animals
	Workers are instructed not to eat, drink or smoke in areas with animals
	Horse tack and tools, including any equipment that has touched horse blood and bodily fluids, are cleaned regularly
	PPE is provided at no expense to the worker to protect clothing, exposed skin and face from contact with a horse's blood and bodily substances (e.g. if examining a horse's wound, disposable gloves are worn)
	Appropriate first aid supplies are available
	Workers are instructed to cover cuts and grazes with water-resistant dressings
	All horses are regularly checked by a veterinarian
	Horses showing signs of illness are isolated from people and other animals
	Sharps, such as used needles, are disposed of in a rigid, puncture-resistant sharps container
	A pest control program is in place
	Feed bins are covered to discourage rats and other pests
Riding gear and personnel protective equipment	
	Riders are instructed not to wear jewellery while riding or handling horses
	Riders wear boots or appropriate footwear
	Workers handling horses wear sturdy, enclosed boots or shoes
	Riders wear fitted, comfortable clothing and gloves
	Riders wear a correctly adjusted and fitted helmet where there is a risk of head injury – novice riders should always use a helmet and all riders should use one when conducting higher risk work such as mustering
	Riding helmets comply with Australian standard AS/NZS 3838 (SAI Global marked) or comparable standard
	Riding helmets are in good condition
	All riding helmets are less than five years old
	Helmets are replaced if they have been involved in an incident involving significant impact

Riding gear and personnel protective equipment (continued)	
	Body protectors are in good condition
	High visibility reflective clothing is worn when accessing roads and riding in low visibility conditions
	Irons and leathers are maintained and in good condition
	Girths and surcingles are in good condition
	Bridles and horse bits are in good condition
	Adequate grips are in place on reins
	Safety irons are available and used by novice riders
	Horses are properly saddled and bridled when being ridden
	Saddles are in good condition
	Girth points are free from wear
Stables	
	Stables are laid out to safely accommodate the number of horses being housed
	Stable boxes have enough room to allow a person to turn a horse and move around the horse safely
	Adequate lighting (natural or otherwise) is available for completing all tasks at all times of the day or night
	Dust is reduced or eliminated by sprinklers or other control measures
	General housekeeping, stable hygiene and regular maintenance is undertaken to ensure a safe working environment for all workers
	Stable doors are wide enough to remove horses in an emergency
	Stable doors swing freely
	Stable doors close properly
	Horse-proof latches are in place
	Stables and yards are adequately fenced to eliminate the risk of horses escaping
	Access and egress points to and within the stable and associated areas are adequately controlled with suitable gates
	Quick release knots are used when tying up horses
	Workers are instructed that mounting blocks are to be used to stand on when mounting horses