

Guidelines on the Preparation of a Safety Statement for a Farm



GUIDELINES ON THE PREPARATION OF A

**SAFETY
STATEMENT**

FOR A FARM

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	3
What is a Safety Statement?	3
What must be covered by a Safety Statement?	3
Who has access to your Safety Statement?	4
What do you do with your Safety Statement once prepared?	4
Preparing a Safety Statement for your farm	5
— Step 1, Draw up a Health and Safety Policy	5
— Step 2, Identify the hazards including hazardous work activities	5
— Step 3, Carry out a Risk Assessment	6
— Step 4, Decide Prevention/Control Measures	6
— Step 5, Record your findings	7
— Step 6, Review and up-date	7
Examples to help you complete your Safety Statement	8
— Tractor (including ATV's) and Machinery Operation and Maintenance	8
— Animal Husbandry Activities	9
— Use and Maintenance of Farm Buildings	9
— Health Issues including Lifting	10
— Use and Maintenance of Fixed Equipment, Workshop, Tools etc.	11
— General Access and Transport	11
— Electricity	12
— Chemicals – Storage and Use	12
— Children and Safety	13
— Other Areas and Hazardous Activities	14

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INTRODUCTION

Most farmers are well aware of the **machines** and **work activities** involved in farm fatalities and accidents. Nevertheless, statistics show that generally the same type of accidents re-occur each year on Irish farms. These accidents and diseases are foreseeable and usually preventable. Unfortunately, too many farmers rely on good luck rather than good management to prevent accidents.

The majority of farmers are capable of preparing a comprehensive, workable safety statement, however, for some farms assistance from an outside competent person may be required. Preparing and in particular, implementing a safety statement for your farm will significantly reduce the likelihood of an accident occurring.

As with all other employers and self-employed people farmers are required **by law** to;

- identify the hazards and assess the risks on their farm and to
- draw up a written Safety Statement setting out the arrangements and resources provided to safeguard the safety and health of persons on the farm.

These guidelines are designed as an aid to farmers (employers and self-employed) in drawing up a safety statement. These Guidelines are not a legal interpretation.

Further information may be obtained from the Health and Safety Authority website at www.hsa.ie.

What is a Safety Statement?

A Safety Statement is a programme in writing aimed at minimising exposure to risk of injury or ill-health for all who work on the farm or who may be affected by that work. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 places the duty of preparing and implementing the statement on the person in control of the farm.

A comprehensive safety statement, where acted upon, is likely to reduce accidents on your farm. A good safety statement may also help in a compensation claim because, if it is acted on, it may well convince a judge that the employer was not negligent.

What must be covered by a Safety Statement?

The areas that must be covered by the safety statement are quite specific and are covered by The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (Section 20) and The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations, 2007.

The statement should:

- specify how the safety, health and welfare of **all** who work on your farm is secured;
- give details of arrangements that are in place to manage health and safety including your commitment to complying with your legal obligations;
- be based on an identification of hazards and an assessment of risks on your farm(s);
- specify the co-operation required from your employees on health and safety matters and arrangements for consultation on these matters where practical;
- where applicable include names (job titles) of your employees, whether part-time, full-time or family members you are appointing to be responsible for health and safety on your farm e.g. farm manager;
- include details of information available to employees on health and safety e.g. machine manuals etc.
- detail the welfare arrangements for employees (toilet/canteen);
- specify arrangements and resources provided, including First-Aid Training and Facilities, Emergency Plans, Fire Drills etc.

Who has access to your Safety Statement?

All workers (including family) must be made aware of the relevant contents of the safety statement and have access to it. Furthermore, the relevant contents must be brought to the attention of any other people on the farm who may be affected by health and safety risks and who therefore need to be aware of the necessary precautions. This could include casual/relief workers and contractors etc.

An Inspector from the Health and Safety Authority may examine your statement during the course of an inspection on your farm. If the statement is found to be inadequate, the Inspector can direct you to revise it within 30 days.

What do you do with your Safety Statement once prepared?

A safety statement is a live document and must reflect changes on the farm eg. new machines or work practices introduced. It should be reviewed annually at least and kept by the farmer at his home.

PREPARING A SAFETY STATEMENT FOR YOUR FARM

The following are broad guidelines and examples to help you with the task of writing and monitoring your safety statement. The steps involved are;

STEP 1 — Draw up a Health and Safety Policy

Your Safety Statement should begin with a declaration specifying your commitment to securing a workplace that is as safe and healthy as possible. Specify how the statement or relevant sections (safety notices/warning notices etc.) will be brought to the attention of employees, contractors and visitors.

Example of policy statement;

This safety statement is my/our programme in writing for managing health and safety. It is aimed at protecting my family and employees from accidents and ill-health while at work. I will provide a safe place of work for all who work on the farm. Everyone working on the farm will receive a copy and the contents will be explained.

I will provide any guards, protective equipment, information, training and supervision necessary to protect those at risk. I will update it as necessary and review it at least once each year.

STEP 2 — Identify the hazards including hazardous work activities.

A hazard is anything (or any work activity) that has the potential to cause harm or injury. You will be familiar with many of the hazards associated with your farming activities. You may have experienced an accident in the past or had a number of near misses - identify the hazards associated with these.

Some hazards are obvious, for example unguarded moving parts of machinery, working at heights, slurry tanks (drowning, gases), or over-head powerlines. Less obvious, but at the root of many accidents, are hazards presented by untidy yards, workshops etc. and poor machine maintenance. Even new and well-guarded machines will have risks associated with them. Check safety warnings listed in the manufacturers' manual.

Farm activities likely to cause ill-health must be also considered. In the case of some hazards eg. excessive noise, it may take months or even years before damage materialises. Farmers lung, brucellosis, Weils disease, toxoplasmosis, are some of the more serious diseases found in the farming population. Consult Code of Practice for Preventing Injury and Occupational Ill Health in Agriculture. (See HSA website www.hsa.ie)

Walk around your farmyard and examine all aspects of the farm. Look at the activities at different times during the year as the work place or work system(s) may change from season to season. When identifying hazards it is helpful to record the various activities first, then the dangers (or hazards) associated with these activities. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on the significant hazards that could result in serious harm.

'Out- farms' and any other place of work that you have control over must also be included. Consider sketching a plan of the farmyard. The sketch will help with marking out dangers etc. These guidelines include a checklist which provides a systematic approach to identifying hazards.

STEP 3 — Carry out a Risk Assessment

Where a hazard (or hazardous activity) exists, the next step is to determine the *likelihood* of it causing harm and the *consequences* of it happening. Then decide whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. There are always difficulties in assessing risks and 'best practice' in any activity should always be used as a yardstick.

Risk will depend on many, often related, circumstances;

- is anyone exposed to the hazard? Who's exposed? Children? Skilled worker?
- is the hazard likely to cause injury and how serious?
- is the hazard well controlled?
- is the level of supervision adequate?
- what training has been provided?

When work practices change or 'new' machinery is introduced these must be assessed also.

STEP 4 — Decide Prevention/Control measures

You probably have some safety precautions already in place. Your risk assessment will tell you whether these are adequate or if more should be done. Specify actual or proposed arrangements for training in areas like *manual handling, sprayer operation, ATV operation* etc. Where possible, hazards should be eliminated. However, this may not always be possible and you may have to consider how the risk of injury can be reduced.

Some common methods of reducing the risk are:

- fence off/contain the hazard (e.g. fit guard over PTO shaft)
- replace the hazard with something less hazardous (e.g. AI service to replace the stock bull)
- provide training and/or supervision

- provide information (integrate safety notices with safety statement i.e. put up a warning notice at a hazard (e.g. overhead powerlines)
- provide personal protective equipment (PPE) or clothing (e.g. earmuffs or eye goggles). PPE should only be used as a last resort after all other ways of eliminating the hazard have been fully explored.

Specify the co-operation required from employees and others at work on the farm, names of responsible persons, consultation procedures and available information. A system for ongoing monitoring/checking will have to be included.

Remember **YOU** have ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the controls are implemented and maintained.

STEP 5 — Record your findings.

Record the more significant hazards and the most important conclusions from your risk assessment. A format which you can use to record your findings is attached to these Guidelines.

STEP 6 — Review and up-date.

Periodically evaluate the statement. Work practices may change, new equipment or substances may be introduced. Legislation or standards may have changed. The evaluation will help to check if your safety measures are working effectively.

EXAMPLES TO HELP YOU COMPLETE YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT

Every farm has its own unique hazards and associated risks. It is important that you do not base your assessment solely on the examples listed in these guidelines.

The following are examples of common hazards/risks found on many farms. Identify hazards (hazardous activities) associated with each grouping. The checklist and questions below should help you to carry out a comprehensive risk assessment.

Further information in the Code of Practice for Preventing Injury and Occupational Ill Health in Agriculture.

Tractor (including ATV'S) and Machinery operation and maintenance;

List all machines used or likely to be used including tractors. Identify all hazardous activities and assess the associated risks. Remember tractors may be used for different purposes. Look at work practices which are dangerous, eg. Operating hydraulic controls from the rear of the tractor, carrying passengers etc.

Could an accident result because of an absence of adequate guarding? lack of maintenance or repair? Specify who's responsible for checking/maintenance of machinery work. Examine method for carrying out repairs? manner of storage? Examine operational safety? Tractor/trailer reversing.....

Specify how you propose to eliminate/control the hazards. Is training provided? Is the Operators Manual available?

Tractor and Machinery Examples;

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
<p>Tractor (Model/Make)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Using PTO with stub un-guarded - high risk of entanglement (death or serious injury) 2) Operating hydraulic controls from rear of tractor – high risk of crushing 3) Carrying a passenger in or on the tractor or draw-bar - risk of passenger falling out/off tractor 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I will ensure 'U' guard is in place over PTO stub. Replace PTO stub guard when not in use. 2) I will never operate hydraulics from rear of tractor. 3) No passengers to be carried on this tractor (no seat provided)

Animal Husbandry Activities

Look at the dangers associated with animal husbandry activities; assisting calvings, de-horning calves, skulling cattle, castrating etc. Specify what facilities to use and how to carry out the job safely.

Check bull housing facilities. Outline system of work for handling bulls. Does the bull have a ring and chain? Who does the herding? Will the bull(s) be allowed to run with the herd during the breeding season? Warning signs used?

Condition of cattle handling facilities - crush/race, calf crate, etc.

Describe procedure for safely moving stock on foot by road?

Examine procedures for handling other breeding stock - rams, cows, heifers, boars, sows etc.

Animal Husbandry Activities ... examples.

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
<p><u>Bull</u></p> <p>1) Entering bull pen for feeding/bedding - risk of being attacked and injured.</p> <p>2) Bringing cows in for milking when bull is running with herd - risk of being attacked and injured in paddocks.</p>	<p>1) No one to enter house unless bull is restrained in head gate.</p> <p>2) I will ensure that a chain will be attached to bull ring when out with cows.</p>
<p><u>Pigs</u></p> <p>1) Moving breeding pigs (especially boars) – risk of wounds to legs from biting and crushing</p>	<p>1) Keep an eye on boar/sow, avoid facing away -</p> <p>2) Always use a driving board.</p>

Use and Maintenance of Farm Buildings (Working at Heights) - slurry storage and emptying/agitation.

Fatal accidents can arise from slurry handling activities – asphyxiation from toxic gases; drowning in pits/tanks. Falls from buildings, falls through fragile roof's, falls from bales etc. can result in serious injury. Building maintenance and demolition work is dangerous for non-experienced and experienced workers. Check stability of (damaged) block walls.

Also;

- Condition of ladders and anchoring of ladders,
- access to lofts, unprotected stairs,

- Is scaffolding provided for work at heights.
- Look out for possible dangers near overhead powerlines etc. (tipping trailers etc.)

Use and Maintenance of Farm Buildings – (Working at Heights) – Slurry Storage and emptying/agitation examples

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
1) Work on roof of farrowing unit (asbestos sheets) - risk of falling through fragile roof material.	1) I will ensure that nobody will work/walk <u>directly</u> on the fragile roof over the farrowing unit (or the workshop or the calf house) unless crawling boards are available and used.
2) Operator agitating/emptying slurry from lagoon.- high risk of falling in (lagoon 6ft. deep)	2) When gate is opened for agitator, tie it against the tractor to prevent access. Never leave agitator unattended.

Health issues including lifting (manual handling)

List the hazards to health on your farm.

Ill health may arise from (examples).....

- exposure to spores in mushroom houses, or from handling dusty feed, including hay.
- incorrect lifting and carrying,
- exposure to noise in piggery during feeding time.
- exposure to chemicals when spraying,
- diseases transmitted from animals to humans (zoonoses)
eg. leptospirosis (also Weils disease) from infected rat or cattle urine, - brucellosis, - enzootic abortion, - orf.

Health including lifting (manual handling).... examples.

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
1) Risk of inhaling dust spores likely to cause lung disease (farmers lung).... no longer able to do physical work.	1) I will use industrial loader to handle dusty material, wear suitable dust mask (type; EN 149 FFP2S)

Use and maintenance of Fixed Equipment, Workshop Tools and Fencing Erection/Repair

Fixed equipment could include some of the following - corn roller/crusher, stand-by generator, milk pump, bench drills, etc. Make sure to list all such machinery/equipment and the hazardous activities associated with using them. Assess the risks and specify how they will be controlled.

Accidents can involve some of the following (examples).....

- poor housekeeping - trips and falls,
- electrocution using power tools, welders etc.
- inadequate guarding on tools,
- eye injuries from use of fencing tools,
- skin damage from fuel oils, battery acid,

Examine on-farm machine repairs and maintenance - jacks and axle stands (availability and condition). Specify how to carry out associated dangerous jobs.

Check tools and equipment used when carrying out fencing repairs. Serious risk of eye injury.

Chainsaw - is use restricted to trained/experienced persons only?

Is there a fire extinguisher in the workshop?

Use and maintenance of Fixed Equipment and Workshop Toolsexamples;

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
1) Working under machines, vehicles, trailers etc. – risk of equipment failure/collapse -causing instant crushing , death.	1) I will always test jack before use 2) Use axle stands for support before any work is undertaken, never exceed the safe working load.

General Access and Transport

Access - examine all access points. Look at the following;

- access into and out of all farm buildings, and out of farm yards, moving stock on public roads, large machinery movement on roads,
- any molasses/whey tanks? how are they cleaned internally (poisonous gases, lack of air), how well are the tanks supported?

Specify how all hazards will be controlled and who’s responsible. Any dangerous steps, walkways, gangways, ladders to grain bins/silos, etc.?

General Access and Transport.... examples.

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
Driving in and out of main farmyard gates - risk of traffic accident from oncoming traffic on main road due to restricted visibility.	I will cut down the hedge on the left and maintain warning signs on main road. Also sound horn before exiting.

Electricity

Also refer to the ESB Publication *Farm Well... Farm Safely*.

Working under overhead power lines and inappropriate use of portable equipment with extension cables are the major causes of electrical fatalities on farms. Identify hazards with electrical installations, you may need help from a competent electrician. Are your installations up to ETCI (Electro- Technical Council of Ireland) recommendations?

All sockets (240V and 400V) in your farm buildings must be protected by 30milli Amp. Residual Current Devices (RCD's, previously known as ELCB's). These should be tested regularly i.e once/month. Who's responsible?

Outline the safe procedure for using the stand-by generator.

Any overhead powerlines in the farmyard or in fields?

Electricity examples.

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
Using domestic sockets in the workshop - risk of electrocution..... death	I will get a Competent electrician to replace existing sockets with industrial sockets (IP 44) and fit a dedicated 32 amp. socket for the welder. All sockets protected by RCD's.

Chemicals - storage and use: Fire/Explosion.

Accidents....

Breathing, swallowing or skin absorption of harmful substances.

Splash-back onto face or body from concentrated chemicals.

Poisoning from contact with Organo-phosphorous dips.

List all the harmful substances used. How should you use them safely? Perhaps there is some similar substance you can use which is less harmful? Are all containers labeled with safety information on storage and use? Don't forget dairy detergents, silage additives (acids) etc. Specify personal protective equipment required and provided.

Fires from hot-exhausts, wiring faults, cigarette butts, faulty heaters and lights etc.
 Poorly dried hay.... self ignition. Storage of flammable materials, petrol etc.
 Explosions.

Chemicals - storage and use: Fire/Explosion. examples

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
Easy access for children to chemical store - High risk of poisoning to children	I will replace existing lock with new one. Store will always be locked when unattended.
Using hazardous substances - risk of poisoning because of misuse of chemical and lack of precautions.	Users must always read and follow the instructions. Wear personal protective clothing provided. Practice good hygiene, wash hands before and after use. All chemical containers must be marked.

Children and safety

Please refer to the *Code of Practice on Preventing Accidents to Children and Young Persons in Agriculture* (available from HSA website www.hsa.ie)

List the activities and associated hazard(s) where/when children may be at risk. Examples of common accidents to children are;

- falls off tractors/trailers,
- run over by tractors/machines,
- drowning in slurry pits, water tanks/troughs,
- overcome by slurry gas,
- struck by doors on windy days,
- contact with dangerous substances.

Children and safety..... examples.

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
General hazards associated with high risk farm operations - silage making, slurry agitation/emptying etc. - children risk being run over by machinery. Also risk falling into and drowning in slurry tanks/pits.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) I will advise all contractors that there are children on the farm.2) Children will not be allowed in the yard while high risk operations are underway.3) I will replace manhole/slurry covers immediately after use or when activity is not supervised.

Other Areas and hazardous activities

There may be other activities for consideration not already dealt with in the previous sections. Detail the policy for dealing with Visitors, Recreational Users and Trespassers. Decide on Accident and Emergency Procedures, Fire Drill etc.

Other Areas and hazardous activities

Hazardous Activity and associated risk	Control Measures
Exiting fields in wet conditions onto public road - High risk of traffic accidents	Remove mud from public road after field work

THE EXAMPLES GIVEN IN THESE GUIDELINES WILL HELP YOU WITH THE TASK OF WRITING YOUR SAFETY STATEMENT. A BLANK COPY OF A SAFETY STATEMENT FORMAT FOR A FARM IS ATTACHED.

SAFETY STATEMENT FOR FARM OF

NAME:

**ADDRESS OF
FARM:**

PREPARED ON:

REVISED ON:

Signed by:



Sketch your farmyard here (optional)

Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control Measures
Tractors (including ATV'S) and other Machinery (refer to Guidelines page 8 for examples)

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Contd over.....

..... continued

Tractors (including) ATV's and other Machinery

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Animal Husbandry Activities (refer to Guidelines page 9 for examples)

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

**Use and Maintenance of Farm Buildings - (Working at Heights) - slurry storage and emptying/agitation
(Refer to Guidelines page 9)**

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Health issues including lifting (manual handling), (refer to Guidelines page 10 for examples)

<p>Hazardous activity and associated risk</p>	<p>Control Measures</p>

Electricity (refer to Guidelines page 12 for examples)

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Chemicals – storage and use; Fire/Explosion (refer to Guidelines page 12 for examples)

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Children and safety (refer to Guidelines page 13 for examples)

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Other Areas and hazardous activities (refer to Guidelines page 14 for examples)

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

Detail the policy for dealing with Visitors, Recreational Users and Trespassers. Decide on Accident and Emergency Procedures, Fire Drill etc;

Accident and Emergency Procedures (Fire Drill);

Blank Sheet — Keep for photocopying additional pages

Hazardous activity and associated risk	Control Measures

NOTES

(include details of training provided and received)

Guidelines
on the Preparation
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*Achieving a
Healthy
and Safe
Working Life
-Together*

HEALTH AND SAFETY
AUTHORITY

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