



This summary is to help employers and workers in the grains sector understand their legal **Work Health and Safety (WHS)** responsibilities and to easily access important information to help meet these requirements.

A more complete guide can be found here: <https://rirdc.infoservices.com.au/items/14-O88>

Model Work Health and Safety legislation has been adopted in both New South Wales and Queensland resulting in laws that are almost identical.

Responsibilities

Employers (Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking - PCBU) and workers (employees & contractors) all have responsibilities for a safe workplace.

The critical responsibility of an **employer (PCBU)** is to provide a safe workplace and ensure the safety of all those who work or visit the farm.

In the same way, **workers** (employees & contractors) have responsibility to:

- take reasonable care for their own health and safety and for that of others
- comply with reasonable instruction and cooperating with policies and procedures (e.g. training, use of personal protective equipment).

Case Study - Effective implementation of WHS

A farm foreman was using a grain elevator to load a truck from a silo. Some straw and trash had collected around the top roller bearing of the elevator discharge. Having seen this and while standing on the back of the truck, he reached up to clear away the build-up of straw, overbalanced and grabbed the top of the elevator with his other hand.

His hand became entangled in the drive resulting in serious crush and de-gloving injury to his hand and fingers. The incident was investigated by a work health and safety inspector. There was no prosecution or fine as the farm had a WHS plan in place that included ensuring that the machine was properly maintained, guards were in place and that safety induction and instruction in the use of the grain elevator had been provided for all workers. The worker also admitted that he was working contrary to safe work instructions given to him.

This business had utilized the Managing Grain Production Safety materials as the basis of its WHS development and had done all that was “reasonably practicable” to maintain health and safety in their workplace. Despite the occurrence of an injury to a worker, no proceedings were taken against the business as it had an effective WHS plan and system in place which it implemented.



HOW DO WE MANAGE WHS?

An effective approach to [Managing Risks to Health and Safety](#) consists of:

- (a) Identifying hazards
- (b) Assessing risks
- (c) Controlling risks
- (d) Reviewing control measures
- (e) Keeping records of the steps you take

You are required to develop a **WHS plan** that brings together all of the parts necessary to address safety in a systematic way and meets your WHS legal requirements.

In developing your farm WHS plan, you must include the following:

- *Management commitment* - clearly outline your own responsibilities and those of any workers; provide resources to meet those responsibilities; get involved
- *Consultation* - involve your workers when identifying and addressing safety issues
- *Management of hazards and risk* - identify tasks that are a risk for workers, take action to control these risks and develop simple procedures to manage risks where they cannot be eliminated
- *Training and instruction* - train workers in safe work procedures and make sure they are followed
- *Reporting safety* - have a system for reporting hazards, near-misses and incidents; act upon these
- *Return to work and workers compensation* - make sure all workers are covered by a worker's compensation policy with an injury notification system in place and return to work program

There is also a range of other issues that need to be included in your WHS Plan such as confined spaces (e.g. silos), electrical safety, emergency plans, hazardous chemicals, safety induction for new workers, contractor management, working at heights, plant and equipment etc.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR RISKS?

The injury evidence indicates the high-risk issues on grain properties include: aircraft (crashes), chaser bins (entanglement/runover), drowning (children in dams), farm utes (collisions), grain augers (entanglement/ electricity), headers (crush injury/ entanglement/ runover/ electricity), PTO drives, quads (collisions/ falls/ rollover), round bale lifters (crush injury), silos (falls), tractors and trailed equipment (entanglement/ runover), tyre repair (split rims/crush under vehicle).

WHAT RECORDS DO WE NEED TO KEEP?

Record keeping is essential to maximise the effectiveness of your safety system and also to provide concrete evidence of how you have managed safety which will be required if an injury event occurs. There are a number of records that should be maintained on cotton farms (e.g. induction, training etc). Examples of all registers required for record keeping on cotton farms are available at the [Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety website](#).

WHERE CAN I GET MORE HELP WITH WHS?

Industry specific information is available from:

[Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety](#)

[Grains BMP](#)

[Grains Research & Development Corporation](#)

[Rural Industries Research & Development Corporation](#)

Additional assistance can also be gained from your relevant state / territory Work Health Authority on the following numbers. All states/territories will provide free assistance to help you with WHS issues.

- [Worksafe ACT](#)
- [WorkSafe WA](#)
- [WorkSafe Tas](#)
- [NT WorkSafe](#)
- [WorkCover NSW](#)
- [Workplace Health and Safety QLD \(Enquiry Form\)](#)
- [WorkSafe Victoria](#)
- [SafeWork SA](#)

