

# CHILDREN AND SAFETY ON FARMS

# HSA

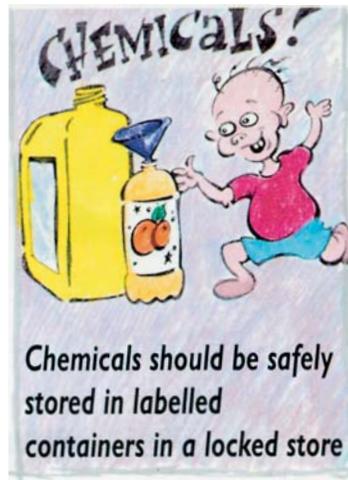
An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority



Here's  
how to avoid  
accidents!

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## OVER 20% OF FATAL ACCIDENTS ON FARMS INVOLVE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in Ireland. It is also the only high-risk industry that must deal with the presence of children. Farms are a high risk environment for children and young persons.

This guidance applies to children and young persons whether they are employed in agriculture or just helping their parents, neighbours or friends on the farm, or those, who are just visiting farms.

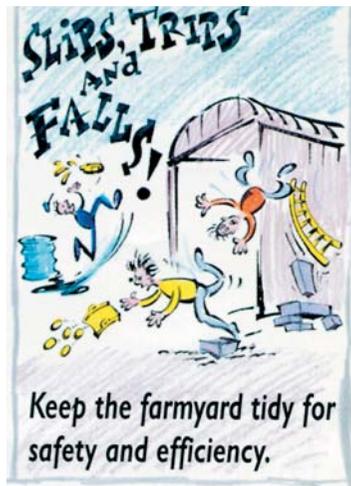


## THE LAW

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 applies to both those employed and to those whose health and safety may be affected by work activities.

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Children and Young Persons) Regulations 1998 require farmers to identify what work is suitable for children and what work is not suitable. The regulations cover children and young persons employed by farmers, as well as other children (e.g., family members, visitors).

The Health and Safety Authority has developed a Code of Practice for Preventing Injury and Occupational Ill Health in Agriculture with the aim of providing practical guidance to help prevent and reduce the number of accidents and instances of ill health on the farm.



# CHECKLIST

## 1. Assess the Hazards

Identify systematically all hazardous areas, operations and activities, particularly vehicles, machinery, animals and slurry pits. Consider the circumstances in which children might have access to land or premises.

## 2. Keep Children Out of Work Areas

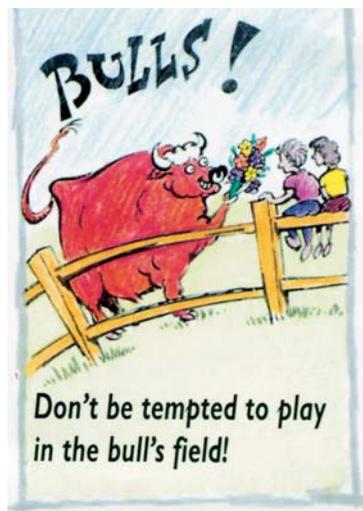
Identify areas from which children should be excluded. Make suitable arrangements to ensure they cannot enter. Consider displaying warning signs or pictures for children. Where the farm is also a home, play areas should be established well away from the work area.

## 3. Make Areas Accessible to Children Safe

If children have access to the workplace, can it be made safer? Is the workplace free from hazards? Can vehicle movement be reduced? Are dangerous machines properly guarded? Are pits properly fenced? Are harmful chemicals and veterinary medicines locked away?

## 4. Instruct Employees and Other Persons

Are they aware of your hazard assessment? Make sure they know where and when children are likely to be present and of the risks to children. Advise them of the areas and operations where children should not be present.



### 5. Inform Visitors

Inform everybody who may introduce hazards into the premises, e.g. drivers of vehicles, that children may be present. Perhaps a warning sign at the entrance stating that children will be present may be appropriate. Ensure that visiting workers abide by your safe systems of work.

### 6. Instruct and Supervise Children Working on the Farm

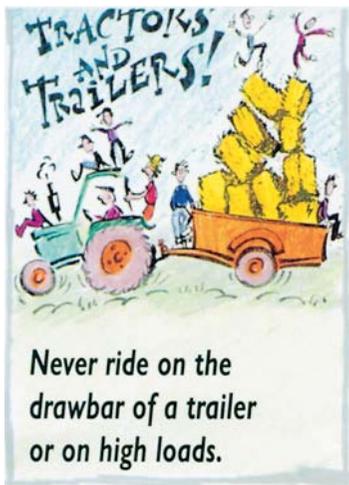
Make sure you know what jobs children should not do. When children undertake jobs, identify the training, instruction and supervision necessary to enable them to work safely. Ensure they are adequately trained and supervised.

**Children should be kept out of danger areas. Check frequently to ensure that children are not in these areas.**

## DANGER AREAS

Children should be excluded from:

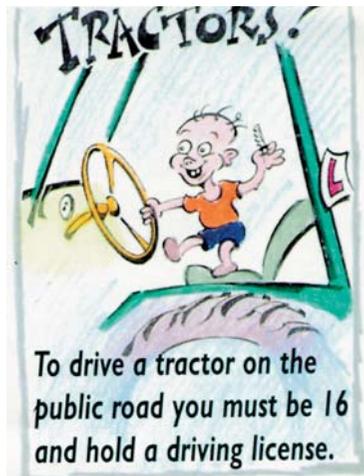
- Areas where the work conditions may effect their health e.g. where there is excessive noise or dust.
- Silage pits which should be well fenced off and not accessible.
- Access to bulls and other potentially dangerous livestock.
- Hazards such as slurry stores, silos, bulk storage hoppers, grain pits, etc.
- Areas where there are stacks of hay or straw bales, pallets or sacks or stacked timber etc.



## CONTROL AND CHECK

- Ladders should be stored in a safe place when not in use, e.g. on a wall out of reach, laid on their side or made unclimbable in some way.
- Heavy items of equipment such as gates or wheels detached from tractors should be secured or laid flat to eliminate the risk of them falling onto a child.
- Fences, gates and walls should be kept in good repair. Vehicles, including tractors, should be locked when parked.
- Guards to machines should be kept in position. When it is necessary to remove them, for instance when the machine is under repair, it must be ensured that the machine cannot be started without the guard. Remember that a guard designed to protect an adult may not be effective for children, who have been known to squeeze through or behind guards.
- Empty cans or drums containing dangerous chemicals should be thoroughly rinsed prior to safe disposal.
- Access to water hazards such as slurry pits, ponds, streams and wells should be controlled. When not in use sheep dipping baths should be emptied and covered
- Electrical circuits and equipment should be regularly checked and faults corrected immediately to avoid the danger of electrocution.
- Keep children out of areas where potentially dangerous animals are kept  
Always drive at a safe speed particularly where children are present.

**REMEMBER:  
IT COULD  
BE YOUR  
CHILD WHO  
IS KILLED  
OR MAIMED!**



## INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND SUPERVISION

- As well as physical barriers and warning notices being provided children need to be told where they may not go, what to look for and must be properly supervised.
- Where they are involved in work activities they will need specific instruction. The instruction, training and supervision given will depend not only on the complexity and the risks involved, but also the child's age and experience.

**Drivers: Many accidents involve children being run over or crushed by vehicles. Drivers need to be constantly aware that children could unexpectedly be in a position of danger.**

## STAFF AND VISITING WORKERS

- Employees and others who work on agricultural premises also have a responsibility to protect children there. Visiting workers such as building or other contractors or delivery drivers must be made aware of the need for particular care as they may not be used to the presence of children in close proximity to work areas.

### **Safe Tractor Driving Skills for 14-16 year olds**

This programme has been specifically designed to develop safety skills of 14-16 year olds in relation to tractor driving.

The course covers both the practical and theory relating to tractor handling for on-farm use only.

For more details contact: FRS Network  
Head Office  
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Co. Tipperary  
Phone 0505 22100  
or email [info@frsnetwork.com](mailto:info@frsnetwork.com)

# Children and Safety on Farms

*Working to  
create a  
National Culture  
of  
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Health and Welfare  
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