

Safety in Horticulture

An OH&S Resource Kit

for the Citrus, Grape, Stonefruit and Almond
growing industry in the Riverland of South Australia



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Disclaimer

This kit has been developed to provide information to assist the horticultural industry to improve its occupational health, safety and welfare (OH&S) performance together with any associated documentation and systems.

The information contained in the kit is not considered to be exhaustive, but addresses the priority issues identified by members of the industry at, and subsequent to, the strategic planning day.

Growers should only act upon information in the kit after considering the implications for their own workplace and workers. It may be necessary to seek further advice for a grower's own particular circumstance.

WorkCover Corporation and The Riverland Horticultural Council, their employees and any other organisation represented on the OH&S steering committee disclaim any liability to any person in respect to the content of, or any action arising from the use of, this kit.

Updating

This printed version of the kit will not be updated as a new print edition. All updating and future versions will be available through WorkCover Corporation's Internet site at: www.workcover.com

Owners are encouraged to review the website document at regular intervals to obtain updated information.

To access the information click on the SAfer Industries tab under:
For Industry, then click on Citrus, grape, stone fruit and almond growers.

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Introduction

This occupational health and safety (OH&S) improvement kit has been produced specifically for you as citrus, grape, stone fruit or almond growers in the Riverland to help improve the OH&S performance of your business.

Improved OH&S means fewer and less severe injuries, better trained and informed employers and workers, improved morale among workers, and better efficiency and reduced costs for your business.

The kit and its companion, the OH&S calendar, were developed from ideas put forward by employers in the industry, the Riverland Horticultural Council and other interested groups at a workshop facilitated by consultants from WorkCover Corporation on 30 June 1998.

The workshop was held as part of the Corporation's SAfer Industries program, a program designed to improve the OH&S performance of a range of high-risk industries. These industries have been targeted by the Corporation to receive special assistance to reduce the number and cost of work-related injuries and illnesses.

As a result of the workshop the Riverland Horticultural Council OH&S Steering Committee was formed. The steering committee has worked hard to identify the wide range of projects under way. You may already be aware of some of them. The production of this kit is one such project.

The content of the kit is the end result of input from a large group of experts, and I congratulate them on their efforts.

The kit addresses important issues on the block, in the packing shed and in the workshop, and contains information for you and your workers on a wide range of topics, together with tools such as checklists and record formats to guide you in improving your OH&S performance.

As Chairperson of the OH&S Steering Committee, I commend the growers' OH&S resource kit to you, and ask you to use it as an ongoing reference and tools package for your business.

Philip Sims
Chairperson
Riverland Horticultural Council
OH&S Steering Committee.
30 June 2000

About the Committee

The Riverland Horticultural Council OH&S Steering Committee was formed as a result of the workshop held on 30th June 1998.

The committee represents the interests of some 3000 citrus, grape, stone fruit and almond growers across the Riverland. Meetings, held monthly, address a wide range of issues affecting growers, their employees and families.

Projects have been initiated covering issues over a range of topics.

The list includes:

- This kit and its companion OH&S calendar
- Ergonomic assessment of picking bags
- Clarification of first aid requirements**
- Road testing a range of safety glasses`
- Elevating work platforms**

Topics marked ** are included in the growers kit

Future work will address the training and licensing of elevating work platforms operators.

The committee comprises:

A. Stepien	RHC
P. Rapisarda	Employment National
I. Armstrong	CGSA
P. Sims	RHC
M. Trautwein	SAFFGA
T. Martin	AAGA
P. Wohlers	MADEC
D. Lang	TAFE
C. Spinks	Workplace Services, DAIS
J. O'Neil	AWU
B. Adams	WorkCover Corporation

Planning Workshop

The growers' OH&S kit was instigated at a Strategic planning day held on 30th June 1998 as part of WorkCover Corporation's SAfer Industries program. Annette Kappler, an OH&S Industry Consultant with the Corporation, facilitated the day.

The major outcome from the planning day was the comprehensive strategic plan, from which all the projects evolved.

Twenty-three representatives from across all aspects of the industry attended the day.

Organisations represented were:

Riverland Horticultural Council

Citrus Growers of SA

South Australian Fresh Fruit Growers Association

SA Farmers Federation

Australian Dried Fruit Association

Apple and Pear Growers Association

Consolidated Co-op Wineries

Women in Horticulture

Local Action Planning

Riverland Multicultural Forum

Regional Health Service

Workplace Services, DAIS

Primary Industries SA

Farm Injury Reference Group

Simarloo Australia Pty Ltd

Waikerie Agricultural Bureau

WorkCover Corporation

Acknowledgment

The information contained in this kit covers a wide range of topics and could not have been produced without the skill and effort of numerous contributors who wrote, edited, reviewed and proof read the information and check sheets.

The efforts of all concerned are acknowledged. They include:

Angela Bateman

Kay Loechel

Anne Stepien

Carole McKendrick

Georgie Basey

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Ian Armstrong

Tok Basuki

Nigel Duddy

Richard Ebel

Ian Furness

Mick Gallant

Shaun Hannam

Daryl Lang

Tom Martin

Jim McArthur

Phil Sims

Brian Sones

Chris Spink

Michael Trautwein

Peter Wohlers

Robin Yardley

Brian Adams

George Aldridge's drawing skills continue to make a point where, often, words fail us.

Getting started with the kit

Purpose of the Kit

The purpose of this kit is to provide growers and their workers with information about a range of important topics that will help improve the OH&S performance of the Industry. Using the information on each topic will assist in identifying hazards and risks to health and safety using the S.A.F.E. process detailed below.

The kit also provides employers with information for inclusion in induction programs for new or transferring workers.

Occupational Health Safety and Welfare (OHS&W) Legislation places the prime responsibility for making the workplace safe on employers. Workers also have responsibilities that include protecting their own safety and that of others, and assisting the employer to make the workplace safe.

Hazard Management – Reducing the Risks

The OHS&W Legislation is designed to ensure everyone understands their responsibility to work together to minimise risks to health and safety at work. Minimising risk is achieved by identifying hazards that could affect the safety and health of people at the workplace, assessing the degree of risk from those hazards and then developing and implementing controls to minimise that risk.

This can be achieved through a hazard management method called S.A.F.E.

See the hazard
Assess the risk from the hazard
Fix the hazard
Evaluate the results

See the hazard.

Employers need a procedure for routinely identifying hazards. The best method for a business is the simplest one that can be carried out as part of normal business operations.

Management and workers regularly inspecting the block, packing shed or workshop together can identify the majority of hazards. If the jobs, machinery and chemicals are also examined hazards associated with these can be identified.

Workers and their supervisor should be involved in the process because people working in an area and doing the tasks are generally more aware of the problems that exist there. Also if they are involved in developing safety solutions they will be more committed to making the solution work.

Getting started with the kit

The checklists in this kit are designed to assist in planning and conducting inspections. Each topic contains information about hazards, – situations that increase the risk of injury, and also some of the control strategies, – ways to reduce the risk of injury.

Use the checklist, together with your own knowledge and that of your workers to identify situations that could cause an injury or illness. Once hazards have been identified, the next step is to assess the risk from those hazards.

Assess the risk from the hazard.

The risk from a hazard is a measure firstly, of the probability that a certain accident will occur, and, secondly the severity of the injuries from the accident.

E.g. A hazard that could occur frequently, leading to severe accidents would be assessed as a very high risk, whereas a minor injury that could remotely occur would be classified as a low risk.

Once the risks have been assessed, employers can use the level of risk to prioritise their actions; that is, identify those that need urgent attention from those that can be monitored and fixed later.

The level of risk also gives growers a guide as to what may constitute reasonable action, i.e. how much effort and resources should be put into minimising the risk. I.e. employers would be expected to put a lot more effort and resources (like time and money) into fixing a high risk hazard than they would a very low risk hazard.

Fix the Hazard

Once the risk has been prioritised employers, together with their workers must develop controls, or ways to minimise the risks. The kit provides information for each topic about ways to reduce the risk of injury (examples of controls).

The OH&S Regulations state that risk controls must be considered in a specific order that addresses hazards at their source. The order is:

Elimination: E.g. Stop doing a high-risk task, or stop using a piece of high-risk equipment.

Substitution: E.g. Use a less toxic chemical, or a less noisy piece of equipment

Engineering: E.g. Fit guards to a hazardous piece of machinery

Administration: E.g. Put up warning signs or write safe work procedures, do a task at a different time of the day

Personal protective equipment (PPE): Provide workers with personal protective equipment, e.g. ear muffs, safety glasses.

Getting started with the kit

In reality many controls are a combination of two or more controls types. E.g. If a noisy machine cannot be substituted with a quiet machine immediately, then the employer would need to provide hearing protection (PPE) and write a safety instruction while the new machine is being purchased.

After putting controls in place their effectiveness needs to be evaluated.

Evaluate the Results

After controls have been implemented, monitor the situation and inspect it regularly to make sure that the controls put in place are working and not creating any additional risks.

Structure of the kit

The kit has been designed for everyday use in the workplace. It provides essential information on a wide range of topics covering work on the block, in the packing shed and the workshop, as well as a range of topics of a general OH&S nature. It also gives some ideas about what to do to make those situations safe.

The information and check lists will help you and your workers meet your responsibilities under the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare (OHS&W) Act and Regulations.

Each topic is addressed in several ways:

- Information pages, which discuss the problems associated with each topic, what some of the risks are and what you and your workers need to do to ensure your safety. The information can also be used for worker induction training and when carrying out workplace inspections.
 - A comprehensive check list, that contains questions and information about each topic. To help you plan your improvement program we suggest that you:
 - work through the checklist, and the information sheet to gauge whether you need to make any improvements
 - write actions you need to do to improve your compliance with the questions in the checklist. (You can refer back to the information sheets for guidance to identify what you need to do to meet your responsibilities for OH&S)
 - assign someone to be responsible for ensuring the action is carried out
 - set an agreed completion date for the action
 - follow up progress regularly
 - check to make sure your changes are successful and have not introduced any new hazards.
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Getting started with the kit

The kit has been divided into sections to give you ready access to information you need for General OH&S, the Block, Packing shed and Workshop. Other sections are provided for you to store records such as: Material Safety Data Sheets, inspections, training records, hazard reports, plant maintenance and policies etc.

Using the kit

The kit can be used in several ways.

- For induction training of new or transferring workers. Each topic can be used to train new and transferring workers. The risks and their controls are discussed in each topic. Refer to topic G02 Induction.
 - As a stand-alone kit. Simply read the information sheets and go through the checklist for each topic. The action plans you develop can then form part of your ongoing OH&S program.
 - As a problem solving guide for hazard management. Use the kit to help you solve OH&S problems as they arise. These could be inquiries from workers or contractors, or problems raised during inspections or in hazard and accident reports. Use the kit as a look-up reference.
 - As a resource kit, when you are:
 - writing safe work procedures
 - engaging contractors
 - using Employment Agency workers.
 - Use your OH&S Calendar for OH&S tips relating to the seasonal tasks. All topics are referenced in the calendar. Each tip in the calendar includes a reference to the information topic in the kit, e.g. B11 (Block topic 11), P06 (Packing shed topic 6). This way you will be able to address the complete kit over a set period of time.
 - The kit also contains sections for you to keep your ongoing records for:
 - Material Safety Data Sheets
 - equipment maintenance schedule
 - Inspection checklist records
 - training records
 - induction records
 - accident and investigation reports.
 - policies
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Getting started with the kit



Keep your records up to date. Reviewing them regularly, as part of your ongoing continuous improvement system will help you to identify problems and keep track of changes you make to solve those problems.

Using the checklists

Purpose of checklists:

Checklists help you examine your workplace in a systematic way. Answering the questions on the checklist will help you identify actions you need to take to identify and control hazards and improve OH&S. The outcomes from completing the checklist should form part of your ongoing improvement plan for OH&S in your workplace.

Note:

- Lines marked  are a legal requirement and are referred to directly in the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act or Regulations
- Lines marked  are not specifically identified in the Act or Regulations, but are considered to be part of the General Duty of Care provisions of the Act.
- You will often see reference to a Code of Practice or an Australian Standard in the kit
 - A Code of Practice is a document that gives you details about how to meet the minimum standard for any situation required by the OHS&W Act or the Regulations. Codes of practice, such as First Aid in the Workplace and the Manual Handling Code of Practice have been specifically written for use in all industries.

Some Australian Standards have been called up in the Legislation as Codes of Practice. E.g. Aust. Standard 1121 Guards for Agricultural Tractor PTO Drives is a Code of Practice and sets the minimum level of compliance.

Where the Legislation refers to a Code of Practice you must meet the minimum standard set down in the code. It is not necessary to follow the code exactly, but you must be able to show that what you have done exceeds the minimum standard in the relevant Code of Practice.

- An Australian Standard is a document produced by Industry as a guide for complying with OHS&W. Australian Standards, not called up as Codes of Practice are not enforceable under OH&S Legislation.

Getting started with the kit

Step by step Instructions for using checklists

1. Make a photocopy of the checklist you want to use
 2. Make up a group to be the inspection team.
If a group carries out an inspection, particularly the workers in the area being inspected, the results will be better. Results are better because workers who do a job in an area are generally more aware of problems and hazards in their work and area, and will be more committed to making solutions work if they have been involved in solving the problem.
 - In smaller businesses there may be only one employee working in an area with one or two casuals. This is OK, they can form the inspection team with the business owner
 - In larger businesses more than one group could be formed.
 3. Examine each question as it applies to your workplace and show in the column if your situation is okay, or if changes are needed.
 4. If changes are needed write down what needs to be fixed, and what is the best way to fix it.

Not all changes need to be alterations to equipment. It may be that a job needs to be carried out differently to be safe.

There may be a several ways to fix a problem. The best way may take time and money to be properly put in place. If this is the case, a temporary solution may be needed until the best one is in place. This should be shown on the checklist and built into your ongoing improvement plan.
 5. Identify who is going to be responsible for taking the action.
Remember that the person responsible for an action must also be given the authority to do it.
 6. Nominate a completion date
The completion date must be realistic and achievable. People should be given targets they can reach.

If completion dates are not achievable, and not met because of this, improvement programs can lose the support of both managers and workers.
 7. Include the actions as part of your overall improvement program so that you can check them off as they are completed.
 8. Keep completed checklists in the Checklist section of this kit for future reference and proof of compliance.
 9. Monitor your changes to ensure they are satisfactory and that they do not introduce new hazards.
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Getting started with the kit

Need more help?

For further information contact

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