



# News Release - SafeWork SA

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1 May 2007

## FARM SAFETY WARNING AS DROUGHT BREAKS

**South Australia's farmers are being urged to factor safety into their work as seeding begins on properties across the state.**

"Now that the weather has been kind, it would be a tragedy if this period of promise was marred by a death or serious injury on a farm," says SafeWork SA Executive Director, Michele Patterson.

SafeWork SA says farm safety issues to consider in this period are:

- Machinery, equipment and plant (*particularly tractors*)
- Lighting of sheds and workshops to allow work to be done safely
- Non-slip surfaces to prevent falls
- Fatigue, due to the long hours likely to be worked during seeding
- Competence, training and safety induction of workers hired
- The presence of children, as often farms are homes and workplaces in one.

*"By far, tractors are the deadliest piece of equipment on Australian farms,"* says Ms. Patterson.

"People can fall under the tractor or whatever it's towing; someone standing near the tractor can be struck or a person can be trapped against a fixed object by a running tractor which may have crept forward after they have dismounted."

Ms. Patterson recommends farmers conduct the following safety procedures:

- A Hazard Check: covering rollover protection; seat belts; guarding of exposed and moving parts including power take-offs, brakes, steps and handrails
- A Work Systems Check: meaning 'no passengers'; 'bystanders must be clear', safe work procedure in case of boggy or similar treacherous terrain; appropriate risk controls such as wide wheel tracks or traveling in low gear; & functioning communications gear.

"We mustn't forget that on farms, people frequently work alone and in remote locations so often help is not always close at hand," Ms. Patterson says.

"While this is a golden opportunity for farmers to recover financially from the drought, we caution that the work ahead will add to their fatigue and stress, further heightening their risk of a serious safety incident.

"For farmers, SafeWork SA's expert help is available via the phone or internet, and that advice will greatly enhance their chances of returning to their families safely," Ms. Patterson says.

*For answers and advice on workplace health and safety and the relevant laws, SafeWork SA operates a telephone Help Centre on 1 300 365 255 or 8303 0400. To report serious accidents or incidents, in the workplace call 1 800 777 209.*