TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-CHF · Children on Farms and Large Hay Bales Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Farm owners, families, workers and contractors on farms where children live, visit or play, and anyone who handles or stacks large hay bales · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

For farm families, workers and contractors: why a farm is a workplace and a home, keeping children away from water, vehicles, machinery and animals, and handling and stacking large hay bales so nobody is crushed, falls or starts a stack fire.

A farm is a workplace and, for many families, a home. Children who live on or visit a farm can be hurt by the same hazards as workers: dams and water troughs, vehicles and machinery, quad bikes and side-by-sides, animals, chemicals and falls. Large round and square hay bales are heavy and can roll or fall from a loader or a stack, crushing the people near them, and stacks attract children to climb and play.

This talk covers keeping children safe on the farm (a fenced safe play area, supervision by an adult who is not also working, keys out of vehicles, never as passengers on tractors or adult quad bikes, and visitors' children), and large hay bales: handling them with attachments made for the job, stacking them safely, never standing under or beside a raised bale, keeping off stacks, and hay stack fires. It is awareness, not machinery or loader training.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Explain why a farm is both a workplace and a home, and which farm hazards hurt children most: water, vehicles, machinery, animals, chemicals and falls
- Keep children safe: a fenced safe play area, supervision by an adult who is not also working, and children away from work areas
- Keep keys out of vehicles, and never carry children as passengers on tractors, machinery or adult quad bikes
- Explain how large round and square hay bales can roll, fall or tip a loader, and why stacks must be built and kept stable
- Handle and stack bales safely: the right attachment, falling object protection, firm level ground, and never under or beside a raised bale
- Keep people and children off stacks, recognise the signs of a heating hay stack, and report near misses

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What it covers

Module	Covers
Why it matters	A workplace and a home; Hazards that hurt children; Large bales that fall and roll
Controls that work	A safe play area and supervision; Keys, vehicles and passengers; Handling and stacking bales
Your part	Know where the children are; Nobody under, beside or on a stack; Report it

Activities

- Spot the risk: workers look at four farm scenes, from children playing near a bale stack to a ute left running by the shed, and decide what could go wrong and how to control it
- What would you do: workers decide what to do in four situations, from visitors arriving with young children during harvest to a bale stack that smells sweet and feels hot

What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Does it say at what age children can ride or drive on the farm? No, on purpose. The age and size at which a child can safely do a task depends on the task, the machine and the child, and guidance differs between places.

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The talk says never to carry children as passengers on tractors, machinery or adult quad bikes, and asks you to check the maker's age warnings and your regulator's guidance.

Why are children on farms and hay bales in one talk? Because they meet on many farms: bale stacks draw children to climb and play, and bales are moved by the same loaders and tractors that children must be kept away from. The talk covers both in general terms, so it suits a family farm briefing before harvest or hay season as well as a toolbox talk for workers and contractors.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Children on Farms and Large Hay Bales Awareness

Keeping children safe on the farm, and handling large hay bales without anyone being crushed

20–30 minutes · Farm owners, families, workers and contractors on farms where children live, visit or play, and anyone who handles or stacks large hay bales

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

CHF

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ Children on farms
- ✓ A safe play area and supervision
- ✓ Handling and stacking large bales
- ✓ Hay stack fires

This talk is not

- ✗ Tractor, loader or baler training
- ✗ Quad bike training
- ✗ Firefighting or first aid
- ✗ Our plan: **[Our farm safety plan]**

Awareness only. Machinery needs training on each machine, and some needs a licence.

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A workplace and a home

Children do not see the danger. The farm has to be set up so they do not meet it.

- Dams, troughs, tanks and channels
- Vehicles reversing, machinery and quad bikes
- Animals, especially in yards
- Chemicals, fuel and firearms
- Falls from stacks, silos, ladders and vehicles

A composite example

- During harvest, a toddler wanders out of the house yard while everyone is busy.
- He is found near the dam. The gate to the yard had been left open by a contractor.

If you cannot see the children, stop and find them.

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Duties under health and safety laws

The business must

- Manage risks to anyone on the farm
- Keep children away from work areas
- Provide safe plant and bale handling gear
- Tell workers and visitors the rules

You must

- Follow the farm's child safety rules
- Shut gates; take keys out
- Handle and stack bales as trained
- Report near misses

Most health and safety laws give these duties. Check the law where you work (in Australia, WHS or OHS laws).

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The order of controls for children and bales

1 **Elimination** Children not in work areas; bales handled by machine

2 **Substitution** Smaller bales or safer storage where it suits

3 **Isolation** Fenced safe play area; fenced dams; locked sheds

4 **Engineering** Self-closing gates, bale grabs, falling object protection

5 **Administrative** Keys out, supervision, farm rules, training

6 **PPE** Helmets for riders; boots and gloves

HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

Fences and gates work when nobody is watching.

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Children on Farms and Large Hay Bales Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

A farm is a workplace and a home. Large bales can fall, roll and crush. Keep this page.

The order of controls

1. Children out of work areas; bales by machine
2. Smaller bales or safer storage
3. Fenced play area, dams and sheds
4. Self-closing gates, bale grabs, cab protection
5. Keys out, supervision, rules, training
6. Helmets, boots and gloves, last

Never

- ■ Carry children on tractors, machines or adult quad bikes
- ■ Stand under, beside or on a bale stack

Hot stack

- ■ Steam, sweet or burning smell, heat
- ■ Keep clear; call the fire service

Before you start

- ☐ Do I know where the children are, and who is watching them?
- ☐ Are the keys out of every vehicle and machine?
- ☐ Is the safe play area gate shut?
- ☐ Am I clear of any raised or stacked bale?
- ☐ Is the stack on firm, level ground, and stable?

Bales

- ■ Attachment made for the job; carry low
- ■ Firm, level ground; stable stacks

Who and how

- ■ **[Our child safety rules]**
- ■ **[Who to report to here]**

Children in the safe play area. Nobody under, beside or on a bale stack.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not tractor, loader, baler or quad bike training.

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