TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-LVS · Livestock Handling Safety Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Farm workers, family members, contractors and anyone who works with cattle, sheep, horses or other stock · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 16 November 2026

For farm workers, family members and contractors who work with stock: yards and escape routes, the flight zone and point of balance, dangerous animals, lifting and strain, and diseases from animals.

Cattle, horses, sheep and other stock can kick, crush a worker against a rail or gate, knock them down or charge, often without warning, and catching, lifting and crutching small stock strains backs and shoulders. A calm, familiar animal can still hurt someone when it is frightened, protecting its young or hemmed in. WHS or OHS laws require the business to manage these risks like any other, starting with yards and equipment that keep people out of reach.

This talk covers how livestock injure people, yards, races, crushes and escape routes, identifying dangerous animals, low-stress handling with the flight zone and point of balance, handling aids for small stock, diseases spread from animals, and when to get out and get help. It is awareness, not training in handling a particular kind of stock.

Learning outcomes

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

- Explain how livestock injure people: kicks, crushing, knock-downs, charges, bites and strains from handling
- Describe how well-designed yards, races, crushes and escape routes keep people out of reach
- Use the flight zone and point of balance to move stock calmly, without getting into the pen
- Recognise dangerous animals and situations, including bulls, cows with calves, stallions and frightened stock
- Reduce strain when handling sheep and other small stock, and reduce the risk of diseases spread from animals
- Know when to get out of the pen and get help, and report injuries, near misses and damaged yards

What it covers

Module	Covers
How livestock injure people	Kicks, crushing and knock-downs; Dangerous animals and situations; Strains from handling
Controls that work	Yards, races and crushes; Escape routes; Low-stress handling
Your part	Before you work the stock; Hygiene and diseases from animals; Getting out and reporting

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Activities

- Read the yard: workers spot the hazards and the missing escape routes in three yard set-ups
- Get out or carry on: workers decide what to do in four situations where an animal, the yard or the job is not right

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

Is this stock handling training? No. It is awareness for everyone who works with or near stock. Workers who handle cattle, horses or other large stock need hands-on training and supervision with that kind of animal, in the yards they will use.

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

Livestock Handling Safety Awareness

Yards and escape routes, calm handling, and dangerous animals

20–30 minutes · Farm workers, family members, contractors and anyone who works with cattle, sheep, horses or other stock

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

LVS

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ How livestock injure people
- ✓ Yards, races, crushes and escape routes
- ✓ Calm handling and dangerous animals
- ✓ Strain, hygiene and getting out

This talk is not

- ✕ Training in handling a kind of stock
- ✕ Animal welfare or veterinary advice
- ✕ Livestock transport rules
- ✕ Our procedure: **[Our livestock handling procedure]**

Awareness only. Handle large stock only after hands-on training and with supervision.

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How livestock injure people

A calm animal can still hurt you when it is frightened, hemmed in or protecting its young.

- Kicks from cattle and horses, forwards, sideways and back
- Crushing against a rail, gate, wall or another animal
- Being knocked down or trampled in a pen or race
- Charges from bulls, cows with calves and frightened stock
- Strains from catching, lifting, crutching and loading small stock

A composite example

- A worker climbs into the race to push a stuck steer forward. The steer swings round.
- She is pinned against the rails. There is no escape gap in that section of the race.

Most livestock injuries happen when a person is inside the animal's reach.

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Duties under WHS or OHS laws

The business must

- Identify the risks of working with livestock and manage them
- Provide safe yards, races, crushes and equipment, kept in repair
- Provide training, supervision and enough people
- Consult workers about the yards and the work

You must

- Follow the safe ways of working
- Not take risks to save time
- Not handle stock you have not been trained for
- Report injuries, near misses, damaged yards and dangerous animals

Victoria's OHS laws set similar duties in their own terms. Check yours.

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The order of controls for livestock work

1 **Elimination** No handling needed: fewer musters and treatments, or a different system

2 **Substitution** Quieter stock: cull or sell animals that keep endangering people

3 **Isolation** Work from outside the pen: races, crushes, head bails, side gates

4 **Engineering** Escape gaps, man-gates, non-slip floors, cradles and conveyors

5 **Administrative** Low-stress handling, enough people, plans, training, check-ins

6 **PPE** Boots, gloves, eye protection; helmets for horse work

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.

The yard keeps you out of reach. The handling keeps the stock calm.

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TOOLBOX TALK · HAZ-LVS

Livestock Handling Safety Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

Livestock can kick, crush, knock down and charge, often without warning, and handling stock strains bodies and can spread disease. Most injuries happen when a person is in the animal's reach. Keep this page.

The order of controls

1. Less handling: fewer musters and treatments
2. Quieter stock: cull or sell dangerous animals
3. Work from outside: races, crushes, side gates
4. Escape gaps, man-gates, non-slip floors, cradles
5. Calm handling, enough people, plans, training
6. Boots, gloves, eye protection; helmets for horses

Calm handling

- Work the edge of the flight zone, not inside it
- Use the point of balance to move stock forward or back
- Move quietly; do not crowd or hit stock

Dangerous animals

- Bulls: barriers, experienced handlers, never alone
- Cows with calves, stallions, stressed stock
- Tell everyone before they work the mob

Before you work stock

- ☐ The yard: rails, gates, crush and race sound, nothing protruding
- ☐ The way out: escape gaps or man-gates clear
- ☐ The animals: any bulls, cows with calves or agitated stock?
- ☐ The people: enough of you, a plan, children and visitors outside
- ☐ You: boots, gloves, cuts covered, and a way to call for help

Get out and get help when

- An animal turns on you or will not settle
- The yard, gate or crush is damaged
- You are asked to work large stock alone
- Help: **[Who to call for help with stock]**

Report it

- **[Who to report to here]**
- Injuries, near misses, damaged yards, dangerous animals
- Unwell after working stock? See a doctor

Work from outside the pen, keep an escape route, and stay out of reach.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It does not train you to handle a particular kind of stock.

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