

Child Safety – Chemical Safety

Unfortunately, many farmers manage the risks of chemical safety on their farms intuitively without understanding the hazardous nature of the substances they use, or the risks associated with the storage and handling of these materials.

Parallel to ensuring the safety of your employees, to ensure the safety of your working children, you need to ensure that you have obtained, read and thoroughly understand the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) of the substances that you are going to allow your working children to use.

Read the SDS so as to fully understand the hazardous nature of the substance (the risks of inhalation, ingestion or skin absorption) and then ensure that the manufacturer's specifications for the same use of the relevant product are being properly followed before allowing your working children to use these substances.

Apart from ensuring that the working environment is suitable for the task (ventilation, access to first aid facilities) your working children will also need to be provided with appropriately sized personal protective equipment. An adult sized pair of gloves, or a respirator that does not fit properly, will not be appropriate for your working children to use. You will need to ensure that they are provided with the right PPE and that it is accessible and appropriate for the task they are going to perform.

Eliminate the risk

Do not allow working children to be exposed to hazardous substances.

Administrative controls

Train your working children so that they understand the risks of hazardous substances and the appropriate procedures for handling and storage of dangerous goods.

Personal Protective Equipment

Make sure that PPE you provide for your working children is suitable for the task, fits them properly and is immediately accessible.

For further guidance, access the VFF Hazardous Chemical Handling and Storage Guide, available for free download on our website.

Administering Veterinary Chemicals

Some of the substances that are injected into livestock can be extremely hazardous and can create serious health and safety risks. Farm workers, including working children, are at risk of needle stick injuries when administering single or multi-dose vaccinations. Some of these substances can also, for example, cause severe neurological health effects and serious ulcerations of the skin.

The range of health effects can vary significantly dependent upon the type of chemical that is being injected.

Administering vaccinations also requires a strong level of experience and confidence in animal handling techniques.

Younger working children should not be permitted to engage in administering vaccinations until they are older – minimum 16 years of age.

Eliminate the risk – some veterinary products are particularly hazardous and should only be handled by experienced workers

Engineering controls – ensure that animals are properly restrained if allowing working children to perform injections.

Administrative Controls – ensure that you have read and fully understand the SDS for the relevant substances.

Ensure that appropriate first aid facilities are readily available.

Agriculture Chemical User Permits

An agricultural chemical user permit (ACUP) is a permit issued to a person that gives authority to:

- Purchase specified 'restricted supply' chemicals in Victoria
- Use specified 'restricted use' chemicals in Victoria

Persons undertaking work involving the use of these restricted chemicals must undertake relevant training before they can apply for and hold an ACUP.

A person is required to hold an ACUP to use any of the agricultural chemical products that are Schedule 7 poisons (Dangerous Poisons) or that contain any of the following chemicals:

- Atrazine, metham sodium, or ester formulations of MCPA, 2,4-D, 2,4-DB or triclopyr
- 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) or PAPP (4-aminopropiophenone)
- Pindone concentrate (2.5% or greater) for the preparation of baits
- Gaseous methyl bromide
- Phosphine formulated as liquefied gas

A person cannot obtain an ACUP licence until they are 18 years of age or over.

Eliminate the risk – Do not allow working children to perform work with 'restricted' chemicals.

Engineering controls – Restricted chemicals are required to be stored in areas where they are secured (e.g. a locked shed or cage).

GET HELP

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