

Child Safety – Side by Side Vehicles

Side by Side Vehicles have become increasingly prominent in farming accidents across Australia.

SSVs are unquestionably a safer mode of transport than a quad bike, but there is a prominent reason why farmers, and farm workers, are being seriously injured or killed when operating these vehicles – the failure to wear seatbelts. Seatbelts are an engineering control.

There have been numerous incidents on farms involving SSVs which have resulted in operators and passengers being catapulted out of the vehicle or into the windscreens.

Farmers that fail to wear a seatbelt in an SSV also bypass a secondary safety device (engineering control) that is built into the vehicle – the speed limiter.

- The manufacturers specifications for most makes of SSVs specify that a child should not ride in an SSV, either as a passenger or a driver, unless their feet can reach the floor and at the same time are able to hold the overhead rails
- Many SSV manufacturers specifications indicate the need to wear a helmet when operating an SSV

Eliminate the risk

Do not allow your working children to operate, or ride as a passenger, if they cannot fully brace themselves in the vehicle by supporting their feet firmly on the floor of the vehicle and reach the grab rails at the same time.

Engineering controls

Make sure that working children always use seat belts and side nets.

Administrative controls

- Train and supervise your working children to safely operate SSVs and to drive to the conditions on the farm.
- Ensure that all other farm personnel (this also means you) lead by example and always use seat belts and side nets.
- Provide signage to indicate maximum vehicle speeds around the farm.

Personal protective equipment

Always ensure that working children are provided with, and wear, appropriate helmets when operating SSVs.

Note

A person cannot drive an SSV on a public road unless they hold a motor vehicle drivers licence, probationary license or learner's certificate (and they are accompanied by a licensed passenger as they would be in a passenger vehicle).

There are also specific operating conditions that apply to the operation of quad bikes on roads that are published by VicRoads.

GET HELP

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