

Livestock Handling Plan

SAMPLE

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SAMPLE

Purpose and Scope

This Livestock Handling Plan sets out the arrangements [Company Name] will implement to manage work health and safety (WHS) risks associated with the handling, movement, loading, transport and unloading of livestock. It is designed for use in farming and agriculture operations, and for transport and logistics activities involving cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, horses and other farmed animals.

The plan aims to:

- Identify foreseeable hazards related to livestock handling and associated tasks.
- Implement and maintain effective risk controls in line with the hierarchy of control.
- Clarify WHS responsibilities for officers, managers, supervisors, workers and contractors.
- Support compliance with applicable Australian WHS legislation, Codes of Practice and relevant Australian Standards.
- Provide practical guidance for day-to-day operations, including seasonal peaks, night work and remote or isolated work.

This plan applies to:

- All workers, including permanent, casual, seasonal, labour-hire and volunteer workers.
- Contractors, transport operators and service providers working on or visiting [Company Name] sites.
- All locations where livestock are handled, including farms, saleyards, depots, loading ramps, transport vehicles and abattoir delivery points.

WHS Responsibilities

Officers and Senior Management

Officers (such as company directors and senior managers) must exercise due diligence to ensure [Company Name] meets its WHS duties. This includes taking reasonable steps to:

- Acquire and keep up-to-date knowledge of livestock-related WHS hazards and risks.
- Understand [Company Name]'s livestock operations, including stock routes, loading points, yards, races and transport arrangements.
- Ensure appropriate resources and processes are available to eliminate or minimise risks from livestock handling.
- Verify that WHS processes are implemented and effective through inspections, audits and performance reviews.

Key duties include:

- Approving and reviewing this Livestock Handling Plan at least annually.
- Ensuring competent persons are appointed to manage livestock safety.
- Providing adequate budget for infrastructure (yards, ramps, lighting, PPE, plant) and training.
- Ensuring incident trends and near misses involving livestock are discussed at management meetings.

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing this plan at operational level. They must:

- Plan work so that livestock handling tasks are adequately resourced and supervised.
- Ensure workers are trained, competent and fit for the tasks they perform.
- Consult with workers when planning changes to yards, traffic flows, loading procedures or livestock handling methods.
- Monitor compliance with safe work procedures, including fatigue management and use of PPE.
- Stop or modify work if unsafe conditions or behaviours are observed.

Checklist for managers and supervisors:

- Inductions completed for all new and seasonal workers.
- Pre-season refresher training on livestock hazards and controls completed.
- Yard and ramp inspections conducted and documented.
- Transport operators briefed on site-specific procedures.
- Fatigue risks assessed for long-distance livestock transport.

Workers and Contractors

All workers, including contractors and transport drivers, must:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others.
- Follow [Company Name] procedures and instructions for livestock handling and transport.
- Use provided plant, equipment and PPE correctly.
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions, aggressive or unpredictable animals, and all incidents and near misses.
- Participate in training, consultation and toolbox talks.

Workers must not:

- Enter yards, pens or trailers containing livestock without an agreed plan and escape route.

- Work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Ride on the back of trucks or trailers with unsecured livestock.

Consultation, Communication and Training

Consultation Arrangements

[Company Name] will consult with workers, including contractors where reasonably practicable, on matters that may affect their health and safety when handling livestock. This includes:

- Designing or modifying yards, races, ramps and loading facilities.
- Selecting livestock handling equipment and PPE.
- Developing or reviewing safe work procedures for mustering, drafting, loading and unloading.
- Planning rosters and transport schedules that may impact fatigue.

Consultation methods may include:

- Toolbox talks at the start of mustering or transport runs.
- Pre-season safety meetings for shearing, weaning, calving, lamb marking or peak transport periods.
- WHS committee meetings or health and safety representative (HSR) forums.
- Informal discussions in the yards or at depots, with outcomes recorded.

Communication

[Company Name] will ensure key information is communicated clearly and in a timely manner, using:

- Site induction packs and driver information sheets.
- Signage at key points, yards, ramps and loading areas.
- Radios, mobile phones or UHF for coordination during mustering and loading.
- Whiteboards or digital systems for scheduling and recording livestock movements.

Where workers have language, literacy or cultural barriers, [Company Name] will provide information in appropriate formats, such as diagrams, demonstrations, or translated materials where reasonably practicable.

Training and Competency

All persons involved in livestock handling must receive task-specific training before working unsupervised. Training topics may include:

- Animal behaviour and low-stress stock handling techniques.
- Safe use of yards, races, crushes, head bails and gates.