

A guide to health and safety in agriculture

# The rural safety **handbook**

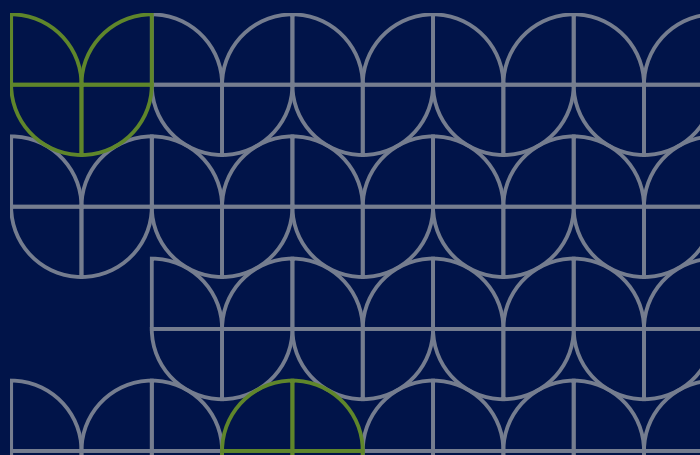
Disclaimer: This is intended as a guide only. For specific legal advice about health and safety regulations, please consult your local regulator.





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## **There's nothing quite like agriculture.**

It's up at the crack of dawn, and the satisfaction of a job well done at sunset.

It's rewarding. It's physical. It means connecting with the land and supporting the local economy. It provides communities with fresh, healthy food.

It's all of that - but not without risk. Mistakes happen.

From machinery accidents to chemical spills to natural disasters; the possibility of danger and injury is never far away.

Technically speaking, safety is about 'the law'.

But really, it's about your connection to your people, friends, and community. It's about getting home safe. Each and every day.

A strong health and safety culture does that. It helps prevent mishaps, cuts downtime, and makes for a productive, positive farm.

## **That's why we created this guide.**

We want to help. We've packed it with practical tips to help you manage health and safety on your farm or field. We'll cover your responsibilities, how to spot and reduce risks, how to handle incidents, and how to train your team.

## **But who are we to tell you?**

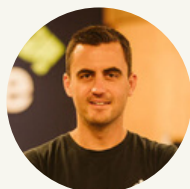
We're Onside. We created a rural compliance app entirely for the agriculture community. That's what sets us apart. We're ag-only and proud of it. We help protect people working at over 16,000 properties, every day. From our visitor and contractor management tools, to our real-time check-in features and incident reporting, our tools make health and safety easier.

We're trying to give back something that's been lost: time.

I hope you find something useful in here.

Something to keep your people safe.

**Ryan Higgs**  
CEO & Co-Founder  
Onside





# Your health and safety responsibilities

Everybody has a role to play in managing safety risk.

We'll explain who is responsible for what.

**1** PCBU

**2** Officers

**3** Managers

**4** Workers

# 1. PCBU

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'PCBU' (The Person Conducting Business or Undertaking) is a term used throughout legislation to describe all types of working arrangements. In most cases, it means a business or company.

**Their responsibilities, so long as they are reasonably able to be done:**

- Make sure workplace, equipment and systems health and safety risks are being managed continuously
- Make sure the handling and storage of plant, structures, and substances is safe
- Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers
- Provide information, training, instruction, or supervision to protect workers and others from risks
- Monitor the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace to prevent illness or injury
- Communicate with workers on issues that affect their health and safety
- Consult, co-operate, and coordinate with other PCBUs when there is a shared work health and safety matter

# 2. Officers

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Officers are owners, directors or partners who have significant influence over the management of the business (they could also be managers).

**Officers must:**

- Have up-to-date knowledge of work health and safety matters
- Understand the business operations and any risks involved
- Make sure there are enough resources available to manage risks
- Respond in a timely way to any information about an incident or risks that is received
- Have the right processes for complying with the safety legislation
- Make sure the processes mentioned above are available and used properly

## 3. Managers and team leaders

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This is anyone who has other workers reporting to them.

### **Managers and team leaders must:**

- Demonstrate good health and safety practices
- Implement and maintain a safety management system
- Make sure workers are able to carry out their responsibilities safely
- Make sure workers understand their health and safety responsibilities
- Report and investigate any notifiable events
- Communicate safety information to stakeholders (including contractors, team members, families, visitors, etc)
- Make safety part of all business decisions and operations
- Promote a positive culture of safety
- Create risk and incident reports regularly to review these with your team or provide to stakeholders

## 4. Workers

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This covers all other employees or contractors.

### **Workers responsibilities are to:**

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety
- Take reasonable care not to put the health and safety of others at risk
- Immediately report notifiable incidents, injuries or illnesses
- Comply with the safety management system
- Use personal protective equipment provided
- Attend organised safety training
- Participate in safety meetings and discussions
- Report new risks or dangerous situations
- Make sure the work area is safe before starting work and when leaving the area

# Health and safety

## Who's responsible for what

### PCBU

- Make sure the workplace, equipment, and systems health and safety risk is managed continuously
- Make sure the handling and storage of plant, structures, and substances is safe
- Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers and make sure workers have access to these
- Provide information, training, instructions, or supervision to protect workers and others from risk
- Monitor the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace to prevent illness or injury
- Communicate with workers on issues that affect their health and safety
- Consult, co-operate, and coordinate with other PCBUs when there's a shared work health and safety matter

### Officers

- Have up-to-date knowledge of work health and safety matters
- Understand the business operations and any risks involved
- Make sure there are enough resources available to manage risks
- Respond in a timely way to information about incidents or risks
- Have the right processes for complying with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Make sure these processes referred to above are available and used properly

### Managers & team leaders

- Model good health and safety practices
- Implement and maintain a safety management system
- Make sure workers can carry out their responsibilities safely
- Make sure workers understand their health and safety responsibilities
- Report and investigate any notifiable events
- Communicate safety information to stakeholders (e.g contractors, team members)
- Make safety part of all business decisions and operations
- Promote a positive culture of safety

### Workers

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety
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- Immediately report notifiable incidents, injuries, or illnesses
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- Report new risks or dangerous situations
- Make sure the work area is safe before starting work and when you leave



# Managing risks and hazards

Risks and hazards are in every industry.  
Very few have as many as agriculture.

There are **four** things you need to do to manage this.

1 Identify

2 Assess

3 Control

4 Review



# 1. Identifying risks

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Make sure everyone on your property— your team, contractors, and visitors— report any new risks that could cause injury or illness. There should be an easy way for everyone to proactively record risks.

When updating your risk register, think back on any past incidents and take a walk around the property with your team. This helps ensure nothing is overlooked.

# 2. Assessing risks

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Once a risk is reported, you need to assess its severity. There are two parts to a risk assessment:

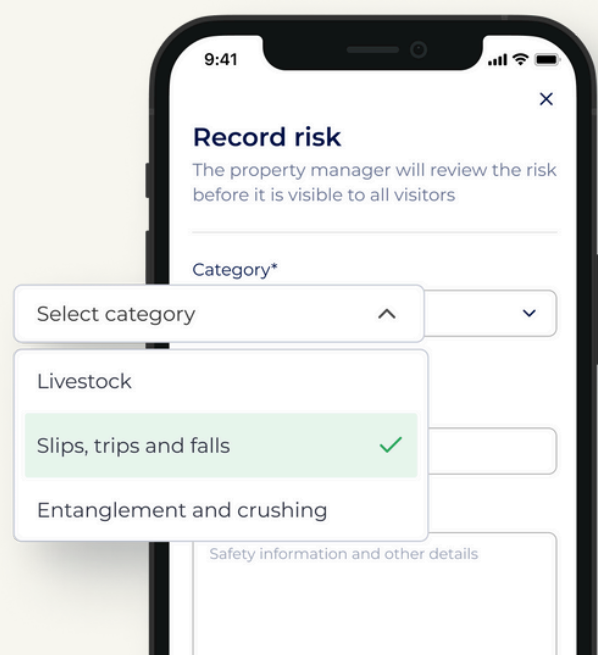
- **Harm category:** This measures how severe the risk is. To assess harm category, think about the worst-case scenario.
- **Risk likelihood:** This measures the chance of the risk causing harm. To assess risk likelihood, consider how often people will be exposed to the risk.

## Digital risk registers

A digital register makes it very easy to record, track, and manage risks, saving you a ton of time and hassle.

With everything organised and at your fingertips, you can quickly spot and fix any issues before they become big problems, helping ensure compliance and boosting overall safety.

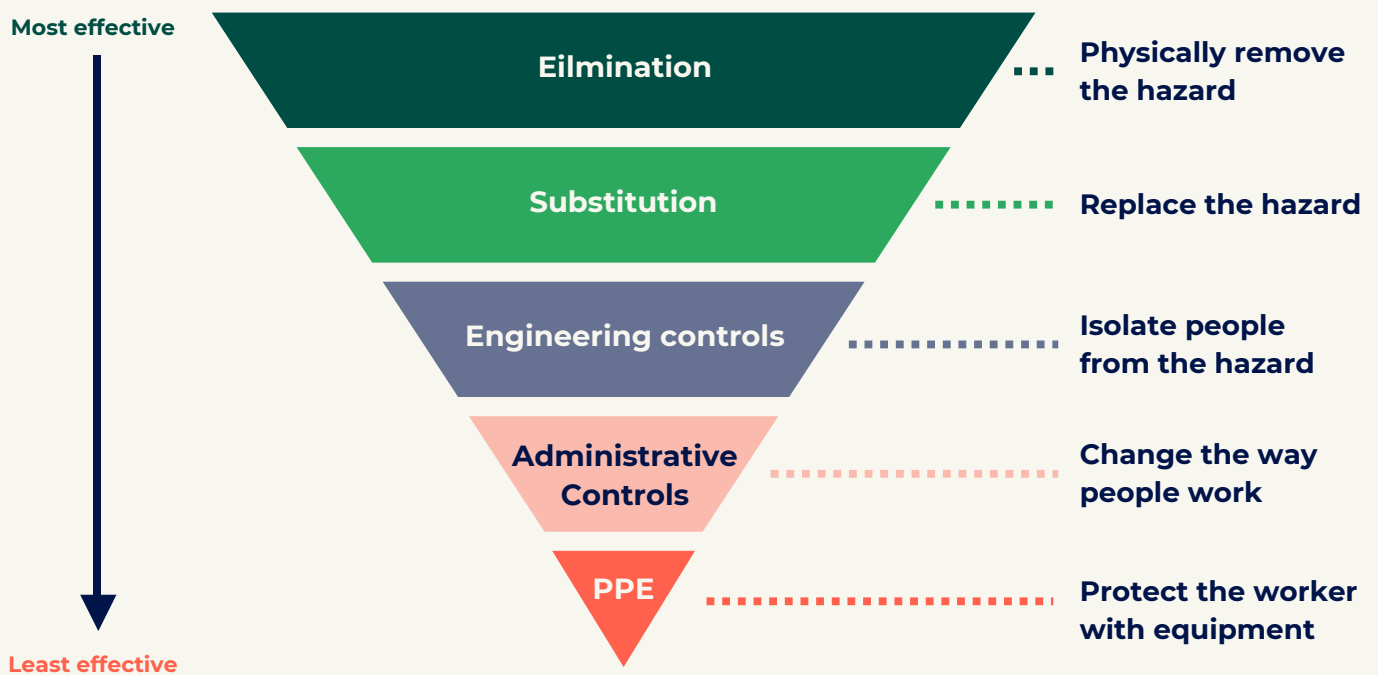
Less paperwork means more time to focus on the important stuff.



# 3. Controlling risks

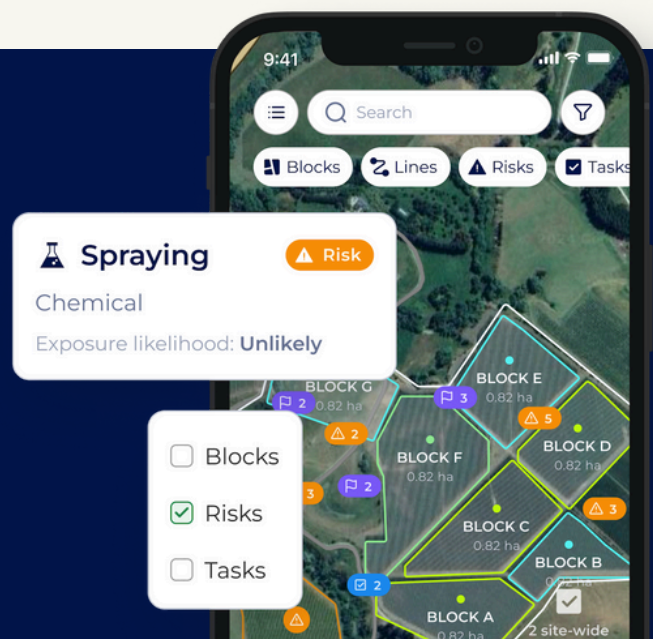
Identify the controls to put in place to reduce, or even eliminate the chance of a risk harming someone or making them ill.

The following diagram is a good way to think about controls.



"We use Onside's **real-time hazard mapping** feature to pinpoint where the guys need to go or areas they needed to avoid, especially for people coming in the next shifts."

Gary Hite, Farm Manager  
Van Dairy



# 4. Review risks

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Once your controls are in place, just make sure to review them every so often to ensure they're working well— especially when you've got a new project on the go, or have bought new equipment.

## When reviewing risks, keep these points in mind:

- Review both old and new risks
  - Make sure the reviewer understands the risk
  - Involve anyone who will be exposed to the risk in the review
  - Use the latest industry codes of practice and guidelines
- 

**This diagram shows how often you should review risks and controls based on the severity of the risk.**





# Managing incidents

**On a busy farm, things go wrong.**

There are four things you need to do to manage incidents that occur on your property.

**1 Prepare**

**3 Record**

**2 Respond**

**4 Investigate**

# 1. Prepare

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Being prepared for an incident can reduce its impact and might even save someone's life.

## Here's how to ensure you're ready:

- Make sure first aid kits are available, well-stocked, and placed strategically around the farm (and in vehicles). Everybody needs to know where they are.
- Check that fire extinguishers are accessible and strategically placed around the property. Everybody should know where they are and how to use them.
- Ensure you always have trained and current first aiders on hand.
- Identify a safe spot where a helicopter can land if needed.

## Download the Red Cross app

The Red Cross has a great app that gives simple instructions on how to administer first aid. It's free. Encourage all of your team to download it.

Simply click on the link below, or search 'Australian/NZ First Aid' in the App Store or Google Play Store

- [Australia - Apple App Store](#)
- [Australia - Google Play Store](#)
- [New Zealand - Apple App Store](#)
- [New Zealand Google Play Store](#)



## 2. Respond

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**For emergency services, dial:**

 **Australia: 000**

 **New Zealand: 111**

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**If an incident occurs on your farm, follow these steps:**

**Ensure your personal safety first:**

- Check the scene for any immediate dangers
- Make sure it is safe for you and others before approaching

**Provide immediate assistance:**

- Call emergency services if needed
- Administer first aid if you are trained

**Secure the area:**

- Prevent further injuries by cordoning off the area
- Ensure that only authorised people enter the scene

**Gather information:**

- Document details about the accident (time, place, etc.)
- Collect witness statements (if possible).

**Report the incident:**

- Notify the relevant authorities or management as soon as possible
- Fill out any required accident report forms

**Follow up:**

- Ensure that the injured person receives medical care
- Update your safety procedures to prevent future incidents

## 3. Record

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All incidents, including near misses and unsafe behaviours, should be recorded immediately. Recording incidents, particularly near misses, is the fastest way to improve your safety plan as risks can be identified and managed before anyone gets hurt.

### Notifiable incidents

If a notifiable incident occurs, you must notify your local regulative body within 48 hours. If ignored, serious penalties can apply.

#### **A notifiable incident is when:**

- a person dies
- a person experiences a serious injury or illness
- a potentially dangerous incident occurs

If you've decided the incident is notifiable, the scene must be secured and left as it is until your regulator says it's OK to proceed.

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#### **For the complete criteria of a notifiable incident, check out:**

- New Zealand - [WorkSafe](#)
- Victoria - [WorkSafe Victoria](#)
- New South Wales - [SafeWork NSW](#)
- Queensland - [Workplace Health and Safety Queensland](#)
- ACT - [WorkSafe ACT](#)
- South Australia - [SafeWork SA](#)
- Northern Territory - [NT WorkSafe](#)
- Western Australia - [WorkSafe WA](#)
- Tasmania - [WorkSafe Tasmania](#)

# 4. Investigate

Once an incident has been recorded, investigate it as soon as you can to make sure no key details slip through the cracks. The depth of your investigation should match the potential or actual severity of the incident.

During the investigation, dig deep to find all the root causes and the associated risks. Then, check if those risks are already on your risk register.

- **If yes** - review how you are controlling the risk and the corrective actions required to ensure it won't happen again. Update the controls in the risk register based on your findings.
- **If no** - add the risk to the risk register and decide on the best controls.

Severity	Investigation level
<b>Fatality or permanent disability</b> (actual or near-miss)	→ <b>Full investigation</b>
<b>Time off work or doctors visit</b> (actual or near-miss)	→ <b>Investigation</b>
<b>First aid</b> (actual or near-miss)	→ <b>No investigation required</b>

## Digital investigations

Digital health and safety systems make investigations a lot easier. Workers can quickly report incidents using their phone. This will instantly alert the right person(s), prompting an immediate investigation.

Digital systems also keep all the data in one place, so it's easy to track trends and put together reports. It speeds the process up and helps keep you compliant with regulations.





# Planning for an emergency

**Emergencies happen.**

Planning for one can be broken down into **three** parts.

**1** Planning

**3** Reviewing

**2** Practice

# 1. Plan

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## **All workplaces must have an emergency plan in place.**

In an emergency, there's usually only a small window of time to act. Emergencies can strike anytime, whether it's due to mistakes, technical glitches, mechanical breakdowns, or natural disasters, just to name a few.

So, it's best to always be ready for anything. Planning for an emergency means people can respond in a quick and organised way.

Your plan must let workers and visitors know what to do in an emergency. It should be easy to access and updated regularly.

## **First, identify the different situations that could require an emergency response on your property.**

The most common types of emergencies are:

- Medical
- Fire
- Chemical spills
- Incidents involving vehicles
- Incidents involving machinery
- Electrocutation
- Natural disasters
- Drownings

## **Next, put a plan in place for any emergencies relevant to your business.**

Plans should include:

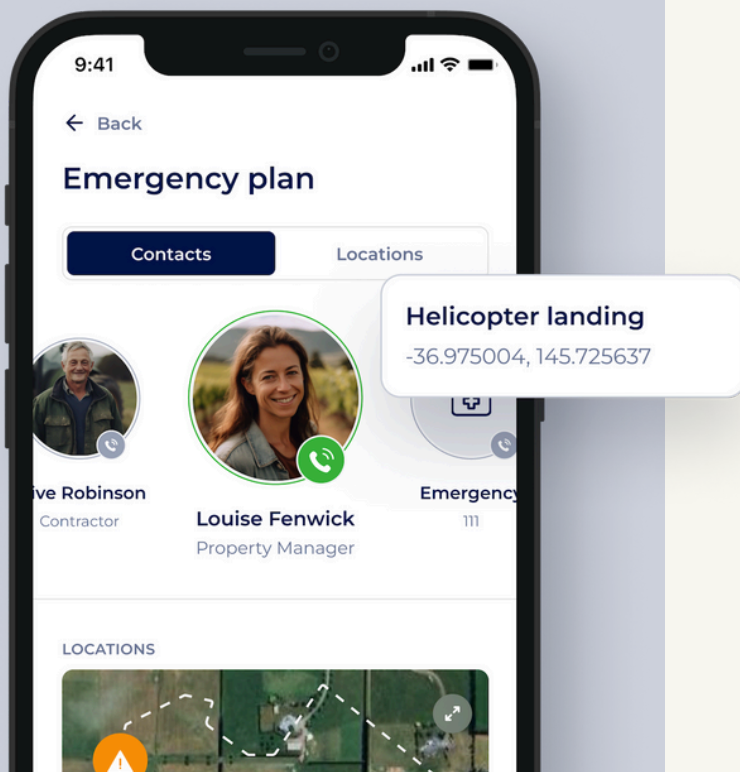
- The action(s) required - the steps needed to manage the emergency
- The person (or people) responsible
- Date of action to be completed
- Review date

## 2. Practice

Every couple of months, pick one of your plans and run through it with your team. The best time to practice is when everyone's together for a toolbox meeting.

It's alright to keep these sessions short and sweet, but make sure they're hands-on and interactive. If your team is involved and engaged, they'll be more likely to remember what to do when it counts.

Plus, it's a good chance to learn together.



## 3. Review

After you've practiced a plan or had to carry out the real thing, take a moment to review what went well and what could use a bit of tweaking.

Make any changes you think are needed so your emergency plans keep getting better, at least once a year.

During a review, it's a good time to check that fire extinguishers are in the right spots and the first aid kits are fully stocked.

It's always good to have a quick yarn with the team to see if anyone has any new ideas or concerns.



# Training your team

**An agribusiness is only as good as its people.**

Here are **four** things you need to do to get your team trained and aware of their safety responsibilities.

**1 Induct**

**2 Assess**

**3 Train**

**4 Record**

# 1. Induct

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Take the time to properly induct new employees to your business. This is the first step towards injury and accident prevention.

Explain all the hazardous situations they could come across, and the specific health and safety requirements for each situation.

**From a health and safety standpoint, an induction should cover:**

- Emergency procedures
- How to report an injury or accident
- Hazards and their risks (tasks, plant, equipment and substances)
- Employer and employee responsibilities
- Information about health and safety meetings
- Employee/management consultation process
- Personal protective equipment use and maintenance
- The work injury claims process

# 2. Assess

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Once you've inducted new team members you'll need to assess their skill level, and then provide any training/upskilling that's needed.

Assessments can be done using written tests, questionnaires, practical task assessments or by external training providers. The simplest way to assess competency is to watch the person doing the job or task.

**Record the competency of your team using these four categories:**

1. Needs training
2. Able to work under supervision
3. Competent
4. Able to train others

## 3. Train

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Training can be completed by members of your team that are qualified or competent, or by an external provider or trainer.

Verbal and written explanations are useful for explaining what needs to be done. Written documents with pictures are another way of presenting information, and are better than words alone.

The best way to teach people is to show them how to do the job.

## 4. Record

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It's important to keep a record of team training and competency. If something goes wrong, you need to prove that the person had been inducted, assessed, and trained.

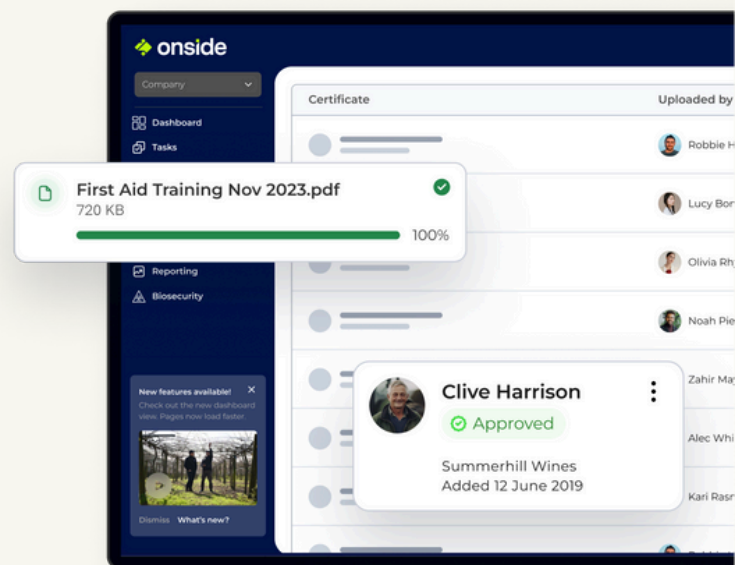
Also, keep a copy of induction forms, licenses, and certificates, including issue dates and renewal dates for each team member.

### Digital record keeping

Using a digital record keeping system helps agribusinesses stay compliant with regulations and make audits easier.

They save time and cut down on errors, compared to doing everything by hand.

Digital record keeping systems are also much more secure, while being easier to access, so you'll be able to keep track of training and skills without any hassles.





# Working with contractors and visitors

Managing contractors and visitors can be complex.

Let's break it down into **four steps**.

**1** Selecting

**3** Monitoring

**2** Inducting

**4** Evaluating

# 1. Selecting a contractor



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When using contractors, you want the work to be cost-effective, efficient, and of a high standard. A good contractor gets the work done quickly and up to scratch, saving you hassle and stress.

**You also need to feel confident that the job will be done safely.**

If an incident happens, it not only costs money and time but also causes headaches for everyone involved. Nobody wants to deal with the paperwork and delays that come with accidents, let alone the risk of someone getting seriously hurt.

So, picking the right contractor isn't just about getting the best deal – it's about keeping the whole operation safe and sound.

Always ask for this information	
<p> <b>Low risk work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current health and safety policy</li><li>• Evidence of training and competency</li><li>• Public or general liability insurance</li><li>• Any risks they are bringing</li></ul>	<p> <b>High risk work</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current health and safety policy</li><li>• Evidence of competency</li><li>• Public or general liability insurance</li><li>• Any risks they are bringing</li><li>• Site specific safety plan (SSSP)</li></ul>



## 2. Inducting a contractor

### Managing contractors is a two-way street.

1. You need to be aware of the risks contractors bring onto your property.
2. They need to understand the hazards that already exist on your farm.

An induction process is crucial for this, as it communicates the risks you've identified and provides the necessary information for everyone to stay safe.

### Keeping a record of contractors who have been inducted is a smart move for future reference.

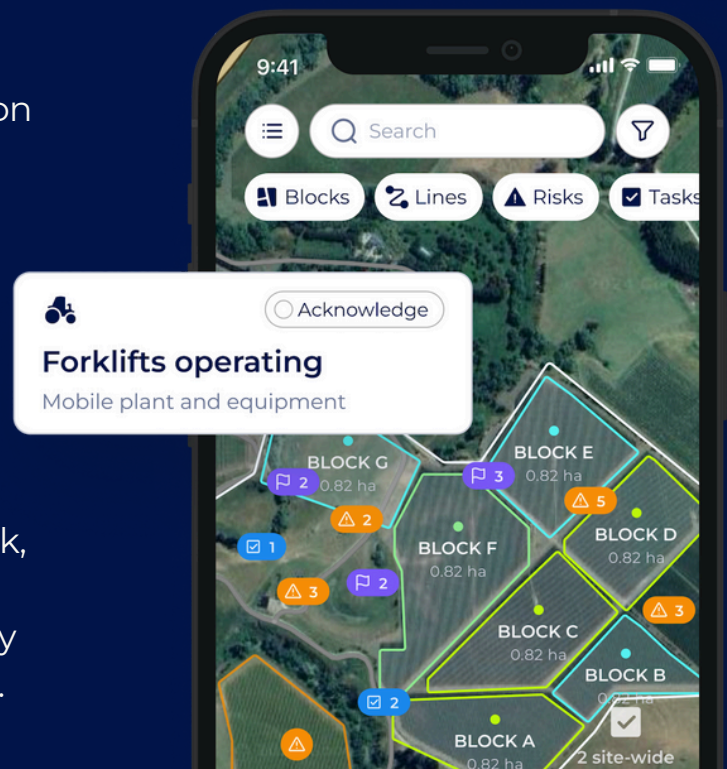
This will give you confidence that everyone is on the same page and that safety protocols are always followed.

## Visitor and contractor management systems

Visitor and contractor management systems are a game-changer for farms. They can help you keep track of who's on your property in real time, which is a lifesaver in emergencies.

They can also send instant alerts, communicating to workers any risks happening across the farm, helping mitigate any potential incidents.

These tools also cut down on paperwork, giving farm managers more time to focus on what's important. All in all, they make the farm run smoother and safer.



# 3. Monitoring a contractor

When contractors are on your farm, ensure they're working safely and nobody is at risk by clearly communicating your policies and procedures.

Regularly check in on their activities to ensure they're following safety protocols and encourage open communication so they feel comfortable reporting any potential safety issues they notice.

If **you** notice something unsafe, **here's what you need to do:**

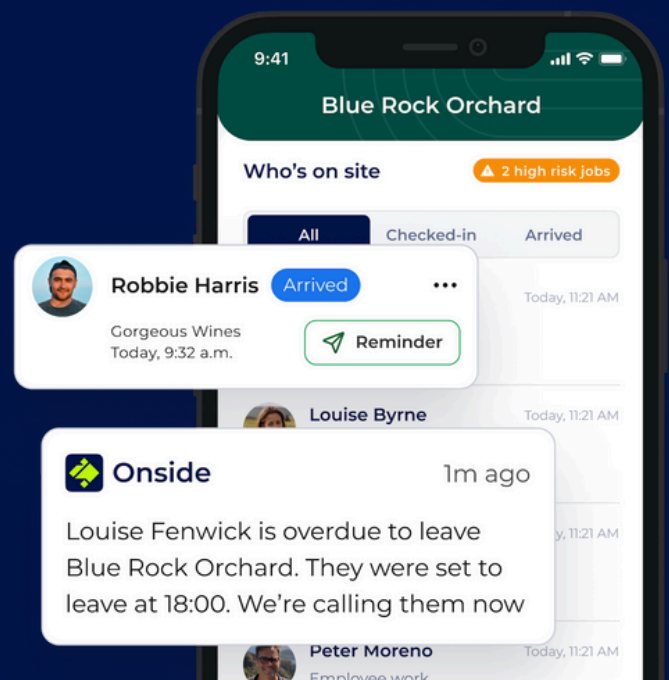
1. Discuss the issue with the contractor
2. Agree on a workable solution
3. Implement the solution and continue to monitor
4. Record the incident with photos, if necessary

## Real time monitoring

With real time monitoring of contractors and visitors through a health and safety system, you get peace of mind knowing who's on your property and what they're up to.

You can quickly spot and address any safety issues, keep everyone accountable, and ensure everyone follows the rules.

It also simplifies communication, making it easier to keep everyone on the same page and safe. It's like having an extra set of eyes looking out for you, so you can focus on running your farm.



## 4. Evaluating a contractor

When the job's done or at the end of each season, it makes sense to evaluate the performance of your contractors.

From a safety standpoint, this evaluation helps identify areas for improvement and clarifies whether risks were well managed, or not.

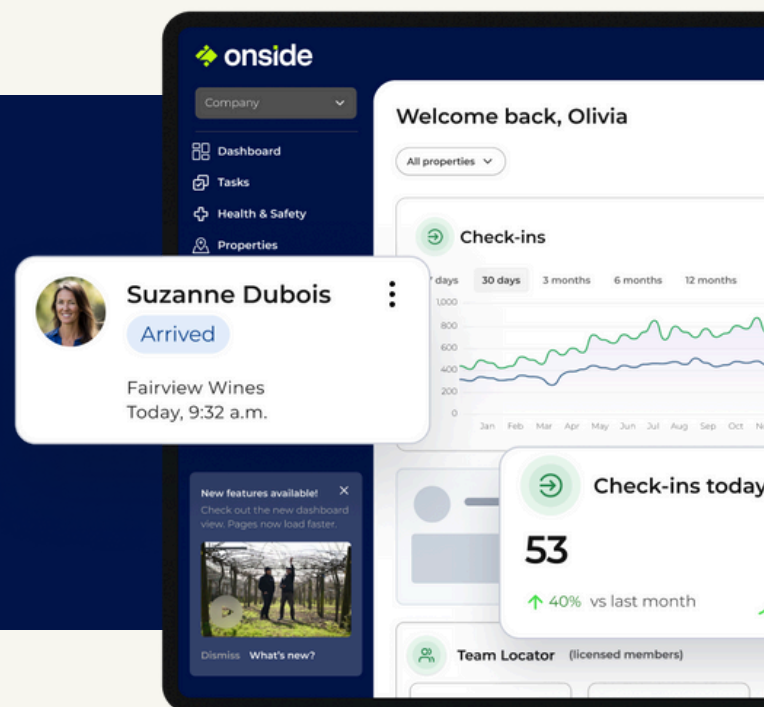
You want to always make sure that:

- Timeframes were met
- The work was of a high standard
- You got value for your money
- That the job was conducted safely

By doing this, you can keep improving your operations and maintain a high standard of safety and efficiency on your farm.

"The value with Onside is **knowing where all the contractors are** across our different farms,"

Matt Corbett, Cellar Master  
**Greystone Wines**

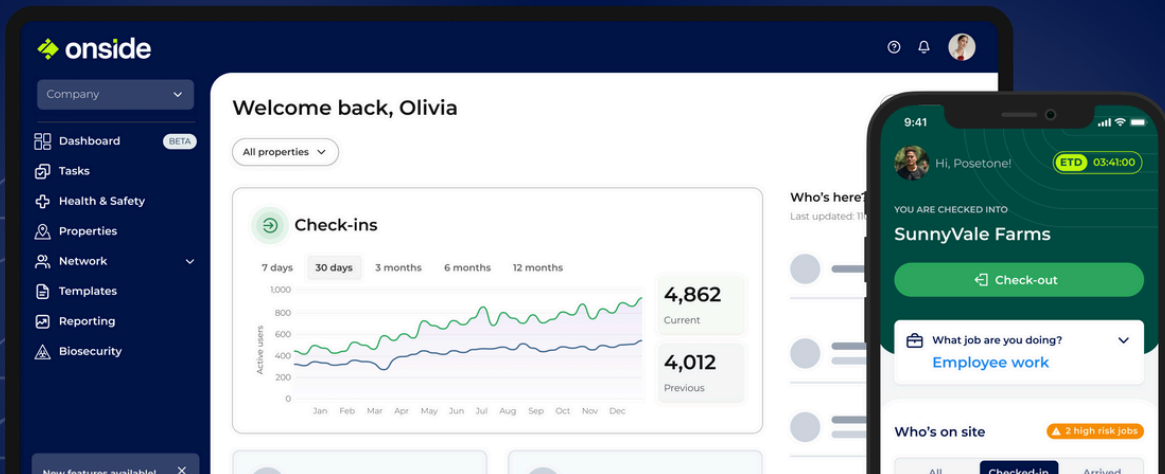




# Rural health and safety software designed for the field

[How it works](#)

[Get started](#)



## Keep everyone safe when they're **on site**



### LIVE SAFETY UPDATES

With Onside's digital farm mapping and geofence, update risks instantly, share with contractors, visitors, and staff, ensure they've acknowledged safety info, and complete inductions from anywhere.



### TASK MANAGEMENT

Use tasks to track job progress and who's responsible. Assign follow-up actions to manage risks and incidents. Create recurring tasks with templates and keep a digital log for compliance evidence.



### LOG INCIDENTS EASILY

Make incident reporting simple for everyone on site. Log incidents on the spot, add photos and locations, create tasks for corrective actions, and get detailed reports at the click of a button.



### INSTANT REPORTING

Generate reports without manual admin. Automatically compile data on check-ins, tasks, incidents, and risks. Perfect for annual audits, certifications and internal reporting.