



WORKSAFE

Use the right
farm vehicle

THE RIGHT WAY
EVERY TIME



Decisions you make in an instant on the farm can be the difference between life and death. When someone dies from a farm accident there's almost always a farm vehicle involved.

But there are some simple things you can do to help you go home safely at the end of the day.

Safe use of all vehicles

Safety is about eliminating the risk

To be safe when using farm vehicles you need to:

- choose the right vehicle for the job
- make sure the vehicle is up to the job
- make sure the driver is up to the job
- read the vehicle owner's manual
- wear a seatbelt, if one is fitted – on and off the farm
- wear a helmet when required
- watch where you are going.

Choose the right vehicle for the job

The right vehicle is the safest one, it may not be the one that's most convenient.

To choose the safest vehicle you need to think about:

- whether you plan to take people with you
- whether you need to carry a load
- what the terrain on the farm is like and what the weather is doing
- whether you need to tow something
- what other jobs might come up.

The table in this document may help you choose the safest vehicle for the job. Remember, the right vehicle yesterday might not be the right one today.

Make sure the vehicle is up to the job

Your vehicle supplier and the owner's manual will tell you what needs to be maintained and when.

Before starting a task with a vehicle that you haven't used in a while, or has been used by someone else, you should check it to make sure:

- it has fuel, oil and coolant
- the tyres are the correct pressure and have enough tread
- wheel nuts are firmly secured
- the brakes work

- any active safety system, such as traction control, is operational
- there's no rust that affects the safety of the vehicle
- the engine is clean
- the lights work and are clean
- the steering isn't loose.

Make sure the driver is up to the job

Don't use a farm vehicle if you:

- are not familiar with the vehicle or have not been trained to use it
- don't think the vehicle is the best for the task
- have been drinking, taking drugs or are on medication that makes you sleepy
- are fatigued.

There are farm vehicle training courses run by providers in most parts of New Zealand. Formal training courses are the best option to learn techniques to safely operate a farm vehicle. Get training and have regular refresher training to avoid developing bad habits.

You also need to get to know how the vehicle performs, especially before using it in a challenging situation.

Read the vehicle owner's manual

This includes advice about trailers, loads, maintenance and passengers. Stick to the limits advised by the manufacturer.

If there's a seat belt fitted, wear it - on and off the farm

The simple action of doing up your seatbelt can be the difference between life and death. Many fatalities we see show the seatbelt wasn't used - and this simple action may have saved someone's life.

Wear a helmet when required

A helmet is required when riding a two wheel motorbike, a quad or when driving a side-by-side.

Watch where you are going

Stay focused on where you are going and stop if you need to look at something else, or if you need to test the terrain. Many accidents happen when the operator is trying to do another task or is distracted by something else.

Safe use of quads

Is it the best vehicle for the job?

Before using the quad, make sure it's the best vehicle for the job – not in terms of convenience, but in terms of safety. The table in this document may help you choose the safest vehicle for the job.

Learn how to ride them safely using active riding techniques

Safely riding a quad isn't intuitive, you need to learn how to ride them safely using active riding. Make sure you are physically able to ride actively.

Always wear a helmet

Helmets need to fit well, be securely fastened and be in good condition. You're required to have a motorbike helmet that meets New Zealand Standard NZS 5430 or equivalent when you are riding on the road. You also need to wear a helmet off-road. If travelling off-road at speeds less than 30 km/h, a helmet designed to NZS 8600:2002 (an ATV helmet) can be used.

Keep off sealed or paved areas

The tyres on quads aren't designed to be used on sealed road surfaces or paved areas. If they are, the handling and control of the vehicle can be seriously affected. If you must go on these areas, carefully read and follow the manufacturer's advice in the owner's manual.

Never let kids under 16 years ride adult-sized quads

Kids don't have the same levels of risk awareness as adults and might not react fast enough to stop an accident happening. Most kids also don't have the size and weight needed to properly control an adult-sized quad.

Never carry passengers on quads designed for one person

Are there places that aren't safe to ride the quad?

Terrain or seasonal effects on your land may make some parts of the farm unsafe for a quad. If there are places that people shouldn't be riding the quad, make sure everyone knows where is off-limits.

Know the requirements for loads, tyre pressure and maintenance

Follow the advice in your owner's manual for tyre pressure, towing and carrying loads, and maintenance.

Safe use of side-by-side* vehicles

They're for off-road use

The tyres on some side-by-side vehicles aren't designed to be used on sealed road surfaces or paved areas and the handling and control of the vehicle can be seriously affected. Read your owner's manual to check if your side-by-side vehicle can safely travel on the road and what precautions to take.

Wear a seatbelt whether driving or travelling as a passenger in a side-by-side

The seatbelt will stop you from falling or being thrown out of the vehicle if you were to crash.

Keep your arms and legs inside the vehicle at all times

If you feel the vehicle might tip over, brace your feet on the floor or footrests and keep hands on the steering wheel or handhold. Never hold the cage. Use the nets or doors supplied.

Never let kids under 16 years drive side-by-sides

Kids also shouldn't travel in a side-by-side unless they can comfortably sit with their feet on the floor and reach and hold on to the handhold.

Never carry passengers in the cargo bed of the side-by-side

Carrying passengers in the cargo bed can cause loss of control of the vehicle and offers the passenger no protection if the vehicle crashes.

Follow the manufacturer's recommendations in the owner's manual for loads and tyre pressure

Always wear a helmet

The exposed steel frame in side-by-sides can cause a head injury if you crash. You've only got one head. Look after it and wear your helmet.

* Also known as UTVs or LUVs.

Safe use of tractors

Always wear a seatbelt if the tractor has a roll-over protective structure (ROPS)

Keep seatbelts and anchor points in good condition.

Make sure the ROPS is structurally sound with no sign of rust

In a recent incident a person died because the ROPS was corroded and couldn't protect them.

Never use the controls of a tractor unless you are in the driver's seat, or it has specifically designed controls for use in other positions

Never climb on or off a moving tractor

It's tempting to save time by getting off the tractor and letting it keep moving forward while you do other things, but it's not worth the risk. Every year people are seriously hurt or killed doing just this. Make sure the tractor has stopped and is unable to move before getting off.

Keep the load limited to what the tractor is designed for

If you need counterbalance weights – use them. Take care when carrying a load on the front loader. This changes the vehicle's centre of gravity.

Don't turn down a slope

Take care when driving tractors on slopes. Don't drive diagonally up or down. When working across slopes always turn uphill. If you have to go down a slope, find the gentlest slope possible and drive straight down.

Pay attention at all times

Tractors respond differently to other vehicles so keep all your attention on where you are going, especially in areas near creeks or drop-offs.

Don't carry passengers on tractors without ROPS, seats and safety belts

A NOTE ABOUT DUTIES

If you manage a farm, you are a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA). A PCBU must make sure workers and other people are not at risk from the work done on the farm, and make sure everyone remains healthy and safe. While your workers have responsibilities to keep themselves safe, it's your responsibility to make sure the vehicles they use are safe and maintained, workers have the right training, and you provide the right safety gear.

Safe use of two-wheeled motorbikes

Always wear a helmet

You've only got one head, and a helmet is the best way to protect it. Helmets need to fit well, be securely fastened and be in good condition. You need a motorbike helmet that meets New Zealand Standard NZS 5430 or equivalent.

Never let kids ride adult-sized farm bikes

Kids don't have the same levels of risk awareness as adults and might not react fast enough to stop an accident happening. Most kids also don't have the size and weight needed to properly control an adult-sized motorbike.

Anyone riding a motorbike on the road must have a motorbike licence

Before riding your motorbike on the road get your motorbike licence and always follow the road rules. The road includes anywhere between the fences, not just on the road surface.

Learn how to ride them safely

Always follow the recommendations in the owner's manual before carrying passengers

Use the front and rear carrier, if the motorbike has them, to carry loads

Don't carry things across your knees on the motorbike.

For more information see our good practice guides available on our website:
[worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)

Safe use of quad bikes

Safe use of two-wheeled motorbikes on farms

Safe use of tractors on farms

Choosing the right vehicle for the job

VEHICLE USE	TWO-WHEELED FARM BIKE	QUAD	SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLE	UTE OR FOUR WHEEL DRIVE	SMALL TRUCK	SMALL FARM TRACTOR
Working on farm						
Inspecting farm and stock	✓	✓	✓	✓ ⁴	●	●
Mustering of stock	✓	✓	✓	✓ ⁴	●	●
Spraying	X	● ¹	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maintenance work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Carriage of goods						
Light tools, equipment and dogs	●	● ²	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bulky loads and stock	X	X	●	✓	✓	●
Light, low or secured loads	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Heavy or high loads	X	X	●	●	✓	✓
Passengers	●	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Ground conditions						
Sealed roads	✓	X	X	✓	✓	●
Steep uneven terrain	✓	● ⁴	● ⁴	● ⁴	X	X
Flat or gentle sloping terrain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rider capability						
Inexperienced/untrained on farm	X	X	X	X	X	X
Towing						
Narrow or small trailer	X	● ³	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other trailer	X	X	● ³	✓	✓	✓

✓ Vehicle is appropriate for this task/circumstances if used safely

● Vehicle could be used but an alternative vehicle may perform better or be safer

X Caution: Vehicle may not be the safest vehicle for the task or in these circumstances

¹ On flat ground, provided the spray unit is purpose built for use on a quad bike, and with baffles in tank. Do not exceed quad bike manufacturer's carrier limits, including unit total weight and fluid.

² Appropriate to carry up to two dogs only.

³ Only use trailers suitable for use with the vehicle. Do not exceed vehicle manufacturer's towing limits.

⁴ Four wheel drive.

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**FEDERATED
FARMERS**
OF NEW ZEALAND

AGRICULTURAL LEADERS'
HEALTH & SAFETY ACTION GROUP



**MOTOR INDUSTRY
ASSOCIATION**
INCORPORATED

ISBN 978-1-98-852702-4 (print)
ISBN 978-1-98-852703-1 (online)

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