



This Month's Edition

This month's edition of the RLX Safety Newsletter contains information on:

- Gate safety;
- Horse related injuries; and
- Handling livestock safely.



Gate Safety

Gates continue to account for a significant number of safety incidents across RLX Sites. Historical incident data from RLX Sites shows that 71% of all gate related incidents required treatment, either medical or first aid. Furthermore the risk of injury can be severe resulting in hospitalisation and/or time off work.

Common gate related injuries include:

- fractures;
- sprains;
- lacerations; and
- bruising to various parts of the body (e.g. wrist, hand, finger, face, head and torso).

PREVENTING INJURIES

Many of these injuries can be prevented by ensuring correct gate techniques are used:

- **never** throw gates.
- while moving gates, keep **two** hands on the gate rail that is nearest to face height.
- when securing the gate, keep one hand on the rail that is nearest to face height and one foot firmly on the bottom rail.

To ensure that gates are operating correctly staff inspect all pens, gates and latches, prior to every sale to ensure that the:

- gates swing freely.
- gates aren't damaged or sagging in the middle.
- gate latches are in working order.
- gate chains are present and secure.
- gate closes firmly.

If repairs are required, they are to be undertaken immediately or a warning sign must be placed on the gate notifying site users that the gate is damaged and out of service.

SAFE WORK PROCEDURE

SWP027 - Correct Gate Techniques provides additional information on closing gates.



Horse Related Injuries

One worker is hospitalized every day in Australia due to a horse related injury. And for every worker injured, ten other people are hurt.

If you work with horses, be aware of the risks associated with their use and plan ahead to keep yourself and other workers safe.

COMMON CAUSES OF INJURY

People who interact with horses are most commonly injured as a result of:

- being hit by a horse—40%
- falling from a horse—35%
- muscular stress—7%
- being bitten by a horse—2%.

HORSE RELATED HAZARDS

There are many potential hazards associated with horse riding. Some of the common ones are:

- rider not in control of horse (inexperience);
- vehicle frightens horse;
- bad weather (e.g. thunder/lightning strike); and
- horse acts unpredictably (i.e. not fit for purpose).

Site Managers have responsibility to ensure:

- they provide a safe environment for horse related tasks to be conducted in;
- both horse and rider have been assessed as being competent to undertake the task;
- the rider is provided with training and clear instruction on the tasks they are undertaking;
- the rider has been provided with all relevant Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) relating to the task being performed;
- the rider's equipment (saddle, bridle etc.) are fit for purpose and not likely to fail while performing the task;
- riders regularly provide their horses with rest breaks, particularly during hot weather; and
- all riders use appropriate PPE including a Riding Helmet that meets AS/NZ Standard 3838 or ARB HS 2012.

Reference: <http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/print-guide?>

If you have any concerns call the safety hotline on 1800 907 312 or visit:



safe work australia

Handling Livestock Safely

Historical analysis shows that 81 incidents involving livestock occurred at RLX sites during the 2010 to 2016 period. 16 of these incidents involved Bulls.

Analysis also shows that:

- 26 of the 65 livestock related incidents required treatment in hospital;
- 9 of the 16 bull related incidents required treatment in hospital; and
- 50% of livestock related incidents occurred during drafting or penning activities.

HAZARD CONTROL

Site Managers are to ensure that all employees working with livestock at the site are inducted and trained in handling livestock.

Site Managers should also undertake the following activities on a regular basis:

- conduct risk assessments of equipment and animal handling practices to identify hazards and implement appropriate controls;
- hold regular meetings with employees and site users to discuss safety risks associated with handling livestock and how they can be managed; and
- re-affirm safe livestock handling techniques.

All site users handling livestock are provided with the following livestock related Safe Work Procedures (SWPs):

- Loading and Unloading Livestock
- Drafting Livestock
- Mousing Livestock
- Handling Livestock
- Weighing Livestock
- Horn Tipping Cattle
- Handling Fractious Livestock
- Handling Escaped Livestock.

SAFE LIVESTOCK HANDLING TECHNIQUES

Site users handling livestock at RLX sites must:

- always maintain a quiet/low profile and avoid loud noises or aggressive/sharp movements;
- always stand outside the 'flight zone' of the livestock in the pen unless movement is required;
- always maintain the safety of a fence at your back as a means of escape;
- never overuse the flapper, drafting aid or electric prodder on livestock; and
- work in pairs when possible.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR HANDLING LIVESTOCK

Anyone who works with livestock must understand that animals have their own personality and sense their surroundings differently.

Their vision is in black and white, not in colour. They also have difficulty judging distances.

Differences also exist between the vision of cattle, sheep and horses.

For example, cattle have close to 360-degree panoramic vision (Figure 1) and quick movement behind cattle may "spook" them.

Animals have extremely sensitive hearing and can detect sounds that human ears cannot hear. Loud noises frighten animals, and research proves that high-frequency sounds actually hurt their ears.

These factors explain why animals are often agitated or are reluctant to move, particularly in unfamiliar surroundings.

Prior to commencing livestock related tasks all people involved in the activity should watch the animals for signs of aggressiveness or fear that may alert them to possible danger. Warning signs may include:

- raised head or ears
- head shaking
- tail raised or swishing
- charging
- pawing the ground or snorting.

Figure 1
Cattle have a panoramic field of vision

