

Summer
2023

HEALTH AND SAFETY WORKS

ADVICE AND INFORMATION FOR STRUTT & PARKER'S RURAL CLIENTS

As we move from spring into summer, many farms, estates and rural businesses will be looking forward to harvest to reap the rewards of the year's hard work.

This is a great time to review the farm's health and safety arrangements and here we offer you guidance on how to help ensure your staff and business interests stay safe for harvest 2023.

ARE YOU HARVEST-READY?



Consider all the machinery and equipment that will be used, not just the *big stuff* like combine, tractor and grain carts, but things that may be called into action if required like the spare trailers, water / fuel bowser, welders etc., and make sure it's ready for use and works as it should.



People and moving vehicles: getting harvested crop from field to store is all about logistics and efficiency of movement, yet introduces a significant risk where people and vehicles circulate in close proximity: review your layout and routes & look to improve for example segregation, one-way systems, crossing points, rules for reversing, communication, signage and PPE.



Grain stores can be dangerous places with some having moving vehicles (see above) moving parts, falls, be confined spaces as well as being dusty and have limited light. Make sure you have rules in place should anyone need to enter a grain store.



Training and communication with all those involved is vital. Make sure there is a process of induction for new / temporary staff that clearly explains everything that is needed. Consider having a pre-harvest workshop to discuss and agree the plans, encouraging questions from those doing the job and ensure that a suitable means of communications is in place.



Health aspects of the work can be overlooked in the rush to get the job done. Fatigue is a factor affecting our ability to make decisions and react, staying hydrated, having breaks and being physically and mentally prepared for long periods of intensive work are all very important, what do you have in place to help manage these?

PREVENTING FIRES

Following the exceptionally hot and dry 2022, during which we experienced many damaging fires in both urban and rural areas and with the fire services reporting record numbers of calls, here's some general advice and practical steps to take before summer to help avoid a fire on your property:

- Farm machinery and equipment used during harvest time typically sits largely dormant for a season – stored items can gather combustible debris and dust, and wiring can be damaged by rodents. It's good practice to thoroughly service and check all systems that will be used in advance, including the auxiliary items like the spare trailer, augers and fuel bowsers etc., and not just the main combine rig.
- Consider fitting a fire suppression system to your combine – this can be a prudent solution as a fire can obviously put a combine out of service for a while and be hugely costly in both lost time, while waiting for parts, and the potential crop damage. The P-mark systems are often preferred by insurers.
- Always ensure that any indication of exceptionally hot-running machinery is investigated. Consider using a thermal camera for items such as brakes and bearings.
- Use an air compressor at reduced pressure to regularly blow out debris from the machine when in use.
- Ensure that there is a fire extinguisher in good working order and easily accessible on the combine, and that your team is aware of the fire & emergency plan including location of nearby water sources,
- Keep stored combustibles such as bales away from nearby public accessible areas where practical, and in any case away from other combustibles which could spread a fire.
- Ensure you have a fire and emergency plan in place including the action to take in the event of a fire and key information for emergency services.



HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSULTANCY

Strutt & Parker has an active network of nationwide offices and highly experienced agents trained to IOSH Managing Safely level.

Please contact [Gulliver Hedley](#) our Health and Safety Manager for an informal review of your harvest health and safety arrangements

Additionally we offer professional Health and Safety Consultancy services, providing competent and practical solutions to help support your business's needs. For more information, or for a discussion on what we can offer please call your local office.