

Quad Bike Safety Issues Paper

Response from the Safe Farming Tasmania Reference Group members - consisting of;

- Primary Employers Tasmania (to provide their own submissions).
- Fruit Growers Tasmania
- Dairy Tas
- Nathan Cox - (independent rep)
- Tasmanian Agricultural Productivity Group
- TFGA (to provide their own submissions).
- Tasmanian Women in Agriculture
- Tas Agricultural Contractors Association
- Rural Youth Tasmania.

Note. This response is aimed at quad bikes being used in workplace applications within the Tasmanian Rural Sector.

Primary Employers Tasmania and the TFGA will also provide their own separate submissions.

1. Increasing rider safety.

Q 1. What are the best ways to communicate to quad bike users about risks and safe use practices?

Response: Ideally at point of sale and additionally via industry forums and gatherings.

Rather than just relying on purchasers to read the owner's manual, provide information such as safe operation information/tips on things such as, terrain limitations, load limitations and PPE safety requirements etc. This could possibly be done either electronically via an App, USB or brochure and would be over and above what manufacturers provide in their respective operator manuals.

Note. The Farming Safely in Tasmania guide contains quad bike safety and training information, and training information and video clips are available on the supporting USB to assist with in-house training.

Worksafe Tasmania have a quad bike safety publication available.

Alarmingly, during farm visits and at industry gatherings, the HandS consultant regularly hears stories from workers and farmers of near misses and very close calls related to quad bikes.

Q 2. What do you think are the key safety messages for quad bike users?

Response: Proper structured training, the wearing of approved helmets, consideration of the fitment of rollover protection, recognition of rider experience and skill levels, no children on an adult sized bike, vehicle limitations including load and terrain, no passengers, regular maintenance and correct vehicle choice (i.e. would a lighter and less powerful quad, or an alternative vehicle be a safer choice and still do the job required).

2. Review available training in Tasmania.

Q 1. Have you utilised training in relation to quad bikes? If so what was your experience?

Response:

Q 2. Is appropriate training readily available in the State? If not, how is it lacking?

Response: Yes, but trainers and training organisations should be regularly audited to ensure consistent delivery quality and consistency.

It is very costly and difficult for remote areas such as the Bass Strait Islands to access affordable training.

Q 3. Do you think training should be mandated (legally required) in some way?

Response: Yes.

Q 4. What do you think are the barriers to greater numbers of riders using training courses? How could these be addressed?

Response: As per question 2, a combination of affordability and availability, particularly in remote rural locations such as the Islands.

Note. The Farming Safely in Tasmania guide and supporting USB (that contains a safe work procedure for quad bike usage) and the WorkSafe Tasmania Quad Bike publication are designed to assist employers to provide workers with basic training.

3. Helmets.

Q 1. In your experience, is there a high prevalence of quad bike users wearing helmets?

Response: No, it is common when driving past farms to see quad bike riders (farm owners and workers) operating quad bikes with-out wearing a helmet.

Note. The Safe Farming Tasmania Program's senior health and safety consultant regularly has discussions around quad bike safety and the wearing of helmets with his clients (farmers and farm workers) and strongly recommends that employers make the wearing of a helmet by workers on quad bikes and motorcycles a non-negotiable employment condition.

Q 2. What would encourage greater use of helmets?

Response: Education and making the wearing of approved helmets on quads and motorcycles mandatory in the workplace (on farm).

Q 3. What would encourage greater use of helmets?

Response: Education and making the wearing of approved helmets on quad bikes and motorcycles on farm a mandatory requirement.

Note. The wearing of hard hats (safety helmets) is a long accepted personal protection requirement in the construction and forest industries and there are consequences for breaches.

Q 4. What is currently is a barrier to the wearing of helmets?

Response: Other than the manufacturer's advice, there is no legal requirement for the wearing of a helmet in the workplace. The unsuitability of current Australian Standards approved on-road motorcycle type helmets in rural applications. Comments regularly heard from quad bike users are that motorcycle helmets are too hot, too heavy, impair vision and reduce hearing ability.

Q 5. Would you support the creation of an Australian Standard for quad bike helmets?

Response: Yes. However the current New Zealand Standard NZS 8600(ATV) for quad bikes and on-farm motorcycle usage provides good guidance.

Q 6. Should helmets be mandatory (legally required) for quad bike riders?

Response: Yes.

4. Rollover protection.

Q 1. Have you installed rollover protection? If so, what has been your experience? If not, why not?

Response: Some members of the reference group who are farmers and use quad bikes on their farms have fitted rollover protection to their quad bikes.

Note. The Safe Farming Tasmania Program's consultant strongly recommends that farmers consider fitting rollover protection to their quad bikes and make the wearing of a helmet by workers a non-negotiable.

Q 2. Is the cost of installing rollover protection a barrier?

Response: Considering the current financial pressures the rural sector is facing, yes.

5. Government-led action.

Q. Do you support the development of an Australian Standard for quad bike design standard?

Response: Yes. However the current NZ standard may suffice.

6. Consumer safety rating system.

Q 1. Would a safety rating system affect your purchasing choices in the future?

Response: Yes. A star rating would assist in determining and deciding what is the safest, best quality, and most suitable quad bike available for on farm use.

Q 2. If a system was implemented, what do you think should be included as part of the system?

Response: As above, a nationally recognised simple star rating system as per other consumer items available for purchase for domestic and professional applications.

7. Rebate scheme.

Q. Would a similar rebate scheme deliver improved quad bike safety in the Tasmanian context?

Response: Yes. Victoria have developed and implemented a great scheme designed to encourage farmers to fit a rollover protection to their quadbikes or consider replacing quads with a safer alternative.

The reference group strongly agree that a similar scheme introduced in Tasmania would be very well supported by the rural sector.

Footnote:

The Safe Farming Tasmania Senior Health and Safety Consultant Phillip John - is a former Senior Inspector with Workplace Standards Tasmania. In this role Phillip specialised in the rural and forestry sectors which included farms, milk and vegetable processing factories, forest harvesting, pulp and paper mills and saw mills, and the many spin-off businesses that are associated with these sectors.

He has investigated many fatalities and serious accidents over the years and has been directly involved in prosecutions for breaches of health and safety law.

He is a former manager of WorkCover Tasmania's health and safety advisory service and Senior Health and Safety Consultant with WorkCover/WorkSafe Tasmania. His most recent role with WorkCover/WorkSafe was managing sponsorships and the partnership between WorkSafe and AFL/Netball Tasmania.

He has been directly involved with health and safety administration and management for over 25 years. He has extensive experience in working with Tasmania's health and safety legislation and providing practical advice and guidance to Tasmania's businesses community, including industry representative bodies and organisations across the state.

He grew up on a small dairy farm on the North West Coast and had a trade, farming and forestry background prior to moving into Health and Safety.