

CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT ON THE FARM



INTRODUCTION

Contractors and sub-contractors can play a big role on your farm. Farm owners' and managers' responsibilities extend to the health and safety of everyone who works on the farm – full-time, part-time, casual employees, and this can also include contractors and their employees.

HERE'S THE THING

Contractors need to understand the farm's health and safety program to ensure that their employees comply with the minimum farm safety standards while they perform work on your farm. Farm owners and managers will want to work with contractors to make sure they share a common understanding of the hazards that workers face and how their worksite will be made safe while they attend the farm.

Whenever you hire external contractors, you invite individuals onto your farm who are presumed to be competent and self-sufficient, which does not mean that they can be left to their own supervision. Even though they may be professionals, when they arrive on your farm they may be strangers to your manner of doing things and your farm facilities which increases the level of risk to which they and, in turn, you are exposed¹.

This is why it is important to take charge of contractors and harmonize contractor practices with your own. Then you will be adequately prepared to monitor and supervise the work carried out on your farm.





Here are the steps to QuickStart your: **CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT**

STEPS FOR CONTRACTOR MANAGEMENT

STEP 1

Plan for Contract Work

Define and assess all important aspects of the project that contractors are being hired to complete:

- Define who is responsible for safety of the workers.
- Detail work to be carried out and the required approach.
- Complete a hazard assessment for work tasks of the project and develop the safe work procedures that are required to ensure the health and safety of contractors while working on your farm.
- Determine whether high risk work training is needed i.e. confined space work, working with hazardous substances, or working at heights.
- Prepare emergency response plan for the project including farm map to identify hazards that may impact the contractor: powerlines, no-go zones, waterways and also indicate location of fire extinguishers and first aid supplies.

STEP 2

Pre-qualifications

The prequalification stage helps determine whether the contractor possesses all the necessary qualifications, technical capability and minimum safety standards to carry out the work. It will be useful to have a checklist to assist you with the assessment process.

- Contractor experience: relevant to the project.
- Do the contractor's health and safety programs or methods meet the minimum standards of your farm? If the contractor does not have a program, are they willing to follow and adhere to the farm's OHS program?
- Supervision: The contractor must explain how the work will be supervised, provide the name of the individual in charge and detail the manner in which any incident or accident will be reported.

STEP 3

Contract Initiation

Once you have decided on a contractor and signed the contract (which must detail your requirements in matters of occupational health and safety), organize an initial meeting with the contractor prior to commencing work to discuss:

- Whether or not they have a valid WCB account in good standing and provision of a employer clearance certificate with the farm name assigned.
- Expectations respecting worker schedule, work quality, fitness for work, site entry and exit.
- The farm's safety requirements for contractors and all persons working with the contractor:
 - safe work practices and procedures
 - emergency response plan
 - out of bounds areas
 - required PPE, footwear and suitability for work
 - hazard and risk management responsibilities
 - incident reporting and investigation process
 - training requirements for high risk jobs
 - adhere to all local, provincial, federal and farm OHS requirements

STEP 4

Supervise Work In Progress

Supervision of the contractor is crucial to ensure that all work is carried out as agreed upon in the contract and that all risks that might lead to an incident or accident are kept in check. It is essential to monitor the work progress and ensure compliance with standards, rules and safety procedures. In the event that issues arise during work performed or if any incidents occur, take action promptly, investigate and put corrective action in place to ensure that similar safety issues do not recur in the future.

Once the project is finished, meet with the contractor and discuss what went well and what could be done better in the future to enhance the overall safety of contractors on the farm.

LET IT GROW FEED THE PROGRAM

Your farm based contractor management program will grow over time as your farm changes and you require more contractors for specific projects. Here are some ideas to grow your contractor program:

- Identify a main contractor manager for your farm. Whether the farm owner or an experienced farm worker, pick someone that will be well trained and will be responsible to manage the contractors while they are on site.
- Establish a contractor screening process. With a screening process, all contractors are required to meet the farm's prequalification requirements prior to commencing work. Contractors are selected based on the grade they receive. Considerations in the prequalification may include: WCB account, formal task hazard assessments completed for all job tasks, site specific hazard assessments, incident investigation management program, COR certification, and lost time track records.
- If the farm hires significant contractor work, the farm could also set up a contractor audit process. In the audit process, contractors may be subject to work performance audits while working on your farm. The audit will check whether the contractor is following their OHS program during the course of their work.





- Hazard Management QuickStart
- Fatigue Management on the Farm QuickStart
- Working at Heights on the Farm QuickStart
- Emergency Response Planning QuickStart
- Risk Management System Information

Alberta Human Services - <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/pdd-online/contract-administration.aspx>

Farm Safe Policy Example



Canada