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Safe use of vehicles for bird-scaring

This guide covers the use of vehicles to scare and deter birds, either alone or in combination with other methods. The noise from motorbikes, quad bikes or other vehicles may prevent birds from gathering.

There are risks to workers and others from using vehicles, including injury and death from collisions, tipping, and roll-overs. Firing or discharging firearms, explosive devices or other noise-makers from vehicles can also cause serious harm, including to hearing. Exhaust fumes and particles can cause short-term or long-term health effects. Vehicle noise can negatively affect people and animals.

The guide:

- is for businesses where birds gather – such as farms, vineyards, orchards or similar properties where crops are grown, and airports
- provides advice on how a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) can manage the risks arising from the use of vehicles to scare and deter birds.

Before you read this guide you should read *Bird-scaring methods – an introduction to risk management* on our website. It covers your Health and Safety at Work 2015 (HSWA) duties and related information: [worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)

Use the right vehicle for the job

Vehicle operators should be licensed, trained and experienced. Provide adequate training and refresher training for all operators.

WorkSafe strongly recommends you install a Crush Protection Device (CPD) to your quad bike to reduce the risk of suffocation and crush injuries if the quad bike rolls.

How you can manage risks

This section outlines control measures you should consider to eliminate or minimise risks associated with vehicles. Give preference to control measures that protect many workers at the same time.

There may be risks and hazards that are not identified in this guide. You should still identify and assess health and safety risks arising from your own work – and you must engage with workers (and their representatives) when you are doing this. Workers must have opportunities to make suggestions, ask questions or raise concerns.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG	CONTROL MEASURES
<p>Vehicle accident causes operator or passenger injury or death</p>	<p>Note: Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least effective control measure. It should not be the first or only control measure you consider.</p> <p>Develop and share a hazard map that identifies the location of all hazards and describes control measures.</p> <p>Stick to suitable terrain; be cautious on slopes.</p> <p>Wear seatbelts and helmet where applicable.</p> <p>Crush Protection Devices (CPDs) are strongly recommended for quad bikes. Installing a CPD will reduce the risk of suffocation and crush injuries if the quad bike rolls.</p> <p>Never carry passengers on a quad.</p> <p>Operators of adult-sized quads must be at least 16 years old.</p> <p>Choose the right vehicle for the job.</p> <p>Check the condition of the vehicle before setting off (including tyres, brakes, lights, steering).</p> <p>Service, maintain and operate vehicles according to manufacturer's instructions/owner's manual. Know and follow towing limits and loads.</p>
<p>Vehicle strikes workers, other people, other vehicles or structures</p>	<p>Vehicle routes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create routes and use barriers or boundary lines that separate pedestrians, animals and non-work vehicles from areas where vehicles are in use for bird-scaring. - Set and adhere to speed limits on all routes. - Consider setting up one-way systems. - Routes should avoid sharp or blind corners. - Train vehicle operators to stop at the end of each row/end of planted field before exiting and check for other vehicles and pedestrians. <p>Vehicle operators should know presence and position of workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share maps that show where workers are working. - Put in place a system to indicate areas where workers are active – such as placing bright cones at the end of crop or vine rows to warn that workers are in the area. - Provide high-visibility vests or other clothing for workers or other people in areas where vehicles are in use. <p>Workers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tell workers where and when vehicles are operating. - Put warning signs in place in areas where vehicles are active. - Train workers to check for vehicles before exiting rows.
<p>Vehicle breaks down, brakes fail or tyre blows out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - causes collision with structure or person - strands operator in a remote location 	<p>Service, maintain and operate vehicles according to manufacturer's instructions.</p> <p>Make sure that operators know how to carry out routine safety checks – check that lights, tyres, wheels, brakes, reverse warning devices and other safety features are working well.</p> <p>Have an emergency plan in place, including methods for communicating with others to get help if the vehicle breaks down.</p>
<p>Accidental discharge of firearms carried on vehicle</p>	<p>Ensure all firearms operators know and follow the Seven firearms safety rules</p> <p>Make sure any firearms carried in a vehicle are unloaded.</p> <p>Make sure that workers do not operate a vehicle that has a loaded firearm in or on it.</p>
<p>Incident caused by explosive launched or firearm operated from moving vehicle, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - projectile fires in an unexpected direction - noise startles or distracts vehicle operator, causing loss of control 	<p>Make sure that any vehicle being used as a mobile platform is completely stopped before loading or using a firearm.</p>
<p>Lone or remote operator or injured driver unable to communicate with others in area</p>	<p>Know where operators are heading – their route, the probable conditions, and when they are expected back – so the alarm can be raised and a search team sent out if the operator does not return when expected.</p> <p>Operators to carry communication devices such as mobile phones, GPS, or personal alarms.</p>

WHAT COULD GO WRONG	CONTROL MEASURES
<p>Fatigued operator loses control of vehicle – resulting in injuries, death or damage to property</p>	<p>Note: Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least effective control measure. It should not be the first or only control measure you consider.</p> <p>Manage work hours and duration to minimise operator fatigue</p> <p>Put a workplace fatigue policy in place, covering topics such as break times, work schedules and rosters, and procedures for reporting fatigue risks.</p> <p>Set realistic deadlines.</p>
<p>Exhaust fumes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - cause short-term or long-term health effects - irritate eyes, nose, throat and lungs, or poison operator or worker <p>Operator or workers inhale diesel particulate matter (diesel exhaust particles, such as soot) causing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - respiratory problems - carbon monoxide poisoning 	<p>Check exhaust during routine maintenance of vehicles.</p> <p>Visually inspect vehicles before operation, checking for faults or damage – for example, blue or black smoke may indicate a mechanical fault.</p> <p>Keep workers away from vehicle exhausts and fumes.</p> <p>Turn off engines when not in use.</p> <p>Consider providing fully sealed and air-conditioned cabs.</p> <p>Increase air flow in cab to minimise worker exposure.</p> <p>Seek medical attention immediately if workers report adverse health effects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dizziness - nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting - tiredness and confusion - stomach pain - shortness of breath and difficulty breathing - coughing - wheezing. <p>Review control measures after adverse health effects are reported.</p> <p>Note: Inhaling diesel exhaust particles puts operators at increased risk of lung cancer and respiratory disease.</p>
<p>Noise of vehicle affects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - operators - workers and other people nearby - neighbours - livestock 	<p>Restrict hours of use/operation.</p> <p>Limit the time workers are exposed to vehicle noise by rotating tasks or shifts.</p> <p>Provide ‘quiet areas’ for workers, away from vehicle noise.</p> <p>Avoid operating noisy vehicles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - adjacent to neighbouring properties - near areas where people live or work - in areas where sound could echo. <p>Wear hearing protection of the correct class.</p> <p>Keep livestock out of target area.</p> <p>Use vine/row markers or maps to indicate areas that vehicle operators should avoid (such as areas where livestock is grazing).</p> <p>Comply with Resource Management Act (RMA) requirements and local council rules and regulations for noise. For example, limits relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hours of use - frequency of use - noise levels - distance from neighbouring properties. <p>Communicate clearly with neighbours. If concerns are raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discuss and resolve issues together - try to understand their point of view - consider writing down any agreements reached, and sharing a copy with neighbours.

More information

[Vehicles on farms](#)

[Keeping safe on farms](#)

[Good practice guide: Remote working](#)

[Safe use of two-wheeled motorbikes on farms](#)

[Identifying and managing impairment at work](#)

Other bird scaring guidance

Introduction – general risk management

Firearms

Gas guns, gas cannons and pyrotechnic cartridges

Lasers

Drones

Netting