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Safe use of netting for bird-scaring

This guide covers the use of netting applied and removed by machines such as the NetWizz attached to a tractor.

Netting protects seeds and crops from damage caused by birds, as well as damage from hail and pests.

The guide:

- is for businesses where birds gather in open spaces
 - 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 netting.

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

Serious injury or death can occur when:

- a worker is **tangled in netting** when it is being rolled in and out
- a worker operating a mobile elevating work platform – such as a Hydralada – contacts live power lines when netting is being put up.
Machinery, people or equipment must not come within 4m of any live overhead power lines.

How you can manage risks

This section outlines control measures you should consider to eliminate or minimise risks associated with applying and removing netting. 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
Worker becomes tangled in nets	<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>Workers should not work beside or in front of the netting vehicle.</p> <p>Do not wear loose clothing, jewellery or anything else that could get caught up in nets, machinery, vehicle parts, or equipment.</p>
Electric shock if operator, vehicle or load contacts overhead power line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify all overhead power lines in the area, as part of your risk assessment. - Treat all overhead power lines as live, unless the power company with responsibility for the lines formally advises that the power has been isolated (shut off). - Ensure that all machinery, people and equipment remain at least 4m away from overhead power lines and at least 6m from overhead transmission lines. <p>If operating machinery or equipment near live overhead power lines put control measures in place to make sure that the machinery, equipment or workers do not breach the safe distance requirements. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using a safety observer to make sure that workers stay a safe distance from the line - placing a warning sign in plain view near the overhead power line which states: 'WARNING. KEEP CLEAR OF POWER LINES' - placing bright barrier cones near the overhead powerlines to warn the operator to maintain a safe distance. <p>If there is the possibility of equipment coming within 4m of an overhead powerline, you must have a close-approach permit from the lines company.</p> <p>Restrict height of mobile elevated work platform (such as a Hydralada).</p> <p>More information</p> <p>Working safely near overhead electric powerlines (with horticultural mobile elevating work platforms) fact sheet</p> <p>Working near low voltage overhead electric lines quick guide</p> <p>Mobile elevating work platforms best practice guidelines</p> <p>New Zealand electrical code of practice for safe electrical distances (NZECP 34)</p>
Exhaust fumes from netting vehicle irritate eyes/lungs or poison vehicle operator or workers causing:	<p>Net handlers work as far away from netting vehicle as possible.</p> <p>Rotate workers to limit exposure to fumes.</p> <p>Keep workers away from vehicle exhausts.</p> <p>Turn off engines when not in use.</p> <p>Consider providing fully sealed and air-conditioned cabs.</p> <p>Review control measures immediately if workers report adverse health effects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dizziness - nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting - tiredness and confusion - stomach pain - shortness of breath and difficulty breathing - carbon monoxide poisoning
Safety trip mechanism not used or fails	<p>Install and maintain cut-off mechanisms (model dependent).</p>
Worker injured by lead vehicle (for example, tractor)	<p>Separate vehicles and people on the ground.</p> <p>Ensure reverse warning devices (and other safety features) are working.</p> <p>Workers to wear hi-vis vests to be more visible to vehicle operator.</p>
Musculoskeletal injuries caused by poor manual handling techniques (such as awkward movements or postures, lifting heavy weights)	<p>Redesign task or environment so operators can work safely.</p> <p>Loads to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - of a weight appropriate for worker's strength and height - easy to grasp or manage. <p>Adjust tension setting on roller.</p> <p>Provide adequate training on equipment use.</p>
Operator loses control on challenging terrain (for example, slope, uneven ground)	<p>Follow manufacturer's and/or supplier's instructions regarding suitable terrain.</p> <p>Make sure that vehicle's operator is trained and competent for the task and terrain.</p>
Fall from height when climbing to retrieve net	<p>Provide suitable work platforms to reduce the risk of falls, for example, mobile elevating work platforms.</p>

More information

Other bird scaring guidance

Introduction – general risk management

Firearms

Gas guns, gas cannons and pyrotechnic cartridges

Vehicles

Lasers

Drones