WORKSAFE
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HSWA

SAFETY ALERT

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AGRICULTURE SECTOR – QUAD BIKES AND SIDE-BY-SIDES

Preventable deaths on quad bikes and farm vehicles

What happened?

A young person recently lost his life in a quad bike incident while checking possum traps in the Bay of Plenty area. Our thoughts are with his family, friends and community.

This death is part of a continuing pattern. WorkSafe New Zealand has confirmed seven work-related deaths in agriculture in 2026 involving quad bikes and one involving a side-by-side vehicle.

These deaths are largely preventable

Serious harm and deaths involving quad bikes and other farm vehicles continue to happen, and many could have been prevented through appropriate risk management and safe work practices. Every one of these deaths is a life lost that should not have been.

The impact on families and communities

Behind each number is a person who was loved and a family left to cope with a profound and lasting loss. Friends, workmates, neighbours and rural communities feel the impact for years afterwards. In close-knit farming communities, one death is felt by many.

What you can do to stay safe

Choose the right vehicle for the job

- Ask whether a quad bike is the safest option. For some tasks, a side-by-side, a ute or another vehicle with better rollover protection may be safer.
- Use a vehicle that suits the task, the terrain and the load, and stay within the manufacturer's limits.
- Keep vehicles well maintained, including tyres, brakes and steering, and check them before each use.

Ride smart

- Wear a helmet, and use other protective gear such as sturdy footwear, gloves and eye protection.
- Slow down, especially on slopes, uneven ground, wet or loose surfaces, and when carrying or towing a load.
- Take extra care on steep terrain and near drains, banks and waterways, and avoid slopes that are beyond your skill or the vehicle's capability.
- Do not carry passengers on a quad bike designed for one person.
- Keep loads balanced, secure and within the vehicle's limits.
- In a side-by-side, wear your seatbelt and keep your arms and legs inside the vehicle.

Be trained and prepared

- Make sure everyone who rides, including workers, family members and young people, is trained and competent for the vehicle and the task. Do not let children or inexperienced riders use adult-sized vehicles.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back, especially when working alone or in remote areas such as when checking traps.
- Carry a way to call for help, and know how to get assistance quickly if something goes wrong.

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For farm owners, managers and businesses

- Identify and manage the risks of each vehicle and task and review them when conditions or jobs change.
- Set clear rules for helmet use, passengers, speed and load limits, and make sure they are followed.
- Provide suitable vehicles, protective equipment and training, and keep maintenance up to date.
- Talk with workers regularly about what is working and what is not, and act on concerns.

Remember

Take a few minutes to check your vehicle, wear your helmet and plan the job. It could save a life.