

Work environment – Rural safety

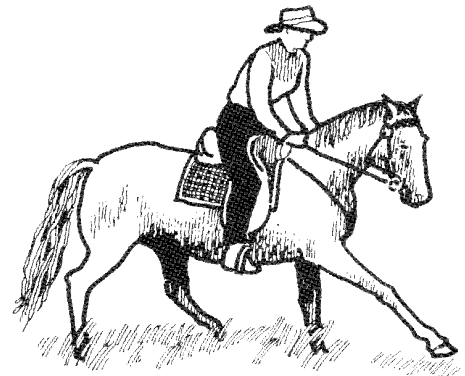
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Horse riding >

This bulletin outlines some simple safety guidelines for those working in the rural industry and is one of a series on Rural Industry safety.

Consider the rider

- Plan ahead - consider safe work practices. Get assistance if necessary.
- Be suitably attired - leather soled riding boots are recommended as they are designed to easily slip out of the stirrup in the case of an accident. Do not use boots that have been repaired with half soles. Jeans, jodhpurs or long trousers will prevent chafing and a hat will provide protection from the sun.
- A safety approved riding helmet (eg polo or pony club style) should be worn where there is an above average risk involved, eg inexperienced riders, horse breaking etc.
- Make use of aids - whips, spurs, breastplates, running rings, etc.
- Know your limitations and avoid riding horses which are likely to exploit those limitations. Respect horses, they have the strength, speed and ability to cause injury.



- Concentrate and be alert - you can never be sure how a horse will react in a given situation.

Consider the equipment

- Bridles and bits should be kept in good repair and fitted so that the horse is comfortable.
- Saddles and girths should be kept in good repair - stirrup leathers, girth straps and surcingles should be well oiled and checked regularly.
- Stirrup irons should be strong enough not to collapse in the case of a horse falling. They should be of a size that allows the foot to slip in and out freely without allowing it to be forced completely through.
- Keep saddle cloths free from burrs and other foreign material.
- Horses vary in conformation, temperament, ability and in levels of training. Some require breastplates or cruppers to keep the saddle in place and running rings, nosebands or headchecks to keep their head and neck in a position for easy control.

Consider the horse

- Riders need to be very careful when galloping close to a beast. It is extremely dangerous to allow the horse to touch a beast behind the point of the shoulder under these circumstances. The horse can fall by touching the beast's hind legs or from the beast turning completely under the horse's neck.

putting safety first >



- In stock yards be careful riding under gate caps. Some are too low for horse and rider to pass under safely.
- High speed chases on horses can cause accidents - where practicable use dogs to control stock.
- Extra care should be taken when riding in slippery or boggy conditions.
- Riders should be matched to horses that are within their handling capabilities. It is foolish to assign an inexperienced person with a flighty uneducated horse.
- It is not advisable to persevere with horses which are likely to buck, bolt or become uncontrollable. Some tolerance though, is generally accepted during the breaking-in and early stages of training.
- If a horse is likely to buck, it is best to saddle it and give it some exercise prior to mounting. This can be carried out in a number of ways. For example, by lunging or leading it from another horse. The horse should then be mounted and ridden in a small yard before being ridden in a unconfined area.
- If a horse is likely to bolt it should first be ridden in a yard. If a horse bolts in an unconfined area, the rider should remain calm and gradually circle the horse by applying pressure to one rein until the horse comes under control.
- Riders should remain alert and in a position of control whilst mounted. Adjusting equipment is a job to be carried out from the ground.

RESPECT horses. They have the strength, speed and ability to cause injuries.

Be sure to:

- wear approved safety riding helmets;
- maintain riding equipment in good order.

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