

SURVIVAL GUIDE

FOR LIVESTOCK HANDLERS





Department of Labour
TE TARI MAHI



WATCH YOURSELF IN THE STOCKYARD

STAY SAFE AND CHECK

Before you start:

- ✓ Check emergency equipment is handy
- ✓ Use the 3-step plan for managing hazards
(you'll find this in the 'Always Have a Plan' section)
- ✓ Secure objects that move and can spook livestock
- ✓ Plan your emergency escape routes
- ✓ Make sure the yard is well lit.

When working in the stockyard:

- ✓ Wear the right gear - including steel-capped boots and good gloves
- ✓ Make sure the animals can hear and see you
- ✓ Carry a stick or prodder to make you look bigger
- ✓ Don't have too many animals in the yard at once
- ✓ Watch what's happening around you
- ✓ Keep children and untrained people away
- ✓ Handle stock quietly and calmly
- ✓ Don't frighten or hurt moving stock

- ✓ Limit the use of electric prodders
- ✓ Close gates behind you so animals can't enter unexpectedly.

Around races and ramps:

- ✓ Never put your arms between the rails and into a race or pen
- ✓ Never stand in front of a bar being used as a slip rail behind the last animal
- ✓ Stand clear of the bar when inserting or removing it.

Loading livestock:

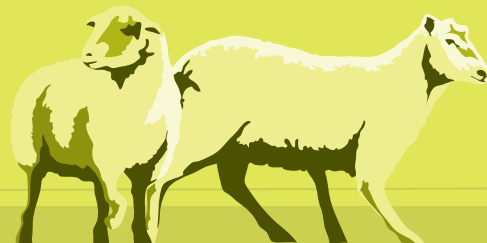
- ✓ Don't load unfit animals
- ✓ Make sure the truck is lined up with the race with no gaps
- ✓ After loading, secure gates, crates and any moving objects
- ✓ Before you leave, check truck doors and yard gates are secured.



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KNOW HOW TO
HANDLE YOURSELF
WHEN YOU'RE
HANDLING LIVESTOCK



LIVESTOCK HANDLING INJURIES HURT EVERYONE



Working with livestock can be a risky business. Everyone has a story about a kick in the kneecap or worse. In fact, nearly one in ten livestock handlers report some sort of injury every year.

It's a problem that hurts everyone:

As a **truck driver** or **farmer**, you risk painful injuries that mean time off work and reduced earnings.

Recovery can be slow, and you may end up not being able to do everything you did before. There are many cases where people have

had to give up their job because of a livestock handling injury.

If you're injured, it can put all sorts of stress on your business. There's a huge disruption to workflow, workforce morale suffers and in some cases there may even be a Department of Labour accident investigation. Plus, by keeping injury free we can stop **Truck operators** and **farmers** from having to pay higher ACC levies.

They're the sorts of reasons everyone needs to do more to improve safety when handling livestock.

Being safer about handling livestock will help you, and the industry reduce injuries. It will also make your work easier because when it comes to handling livestock, the safe way is almost always the most efficient way.



EVERYONE HAS A JOB TO DO

Truck drivers and livestock handlers need to:

- Follow safety rules
- Ask to be involved in health and safety programmes
- Ask for training
- Wear the right safety clothing and gear

Farmers and employers need to:

- Keep the workplace safe for yourself, your workers and 'visitors' including drivers
- Inform workers and visitors of the safety procedures
- Ensure they have and use the right safety clothing and gear
- Involve employees in health and safety issues
- Respect their right to refuse.



KEEP THE STOCKYARD SAFE



SAFETY IN THE STOCKYARD

Check:

- ✓ There aren't more animals in a pen than you can handle safely
- ✓ It's clean, with no rocks, timbers or rubbish to trip over
- ✓ You have an escape plan in an emergency
- ✓ Livestock are calm, settled and healthy
- ✓ Gates, hinges and locks are secure and in good condition
- ✓ The head bail is in good working order
- ✓ There are no sharp objects that can injure or frighten livestock.



KEEPING YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE

Check:

- ✓ The truck can get on and off the public road safely
- ✓ The truck has room to manoeuvre
- ✓ Low power lines won't cause problems
- ✓ There's gravel for safe footing around truck areas
- ✓ Stock being transported is held off feed
- ✓ There are enough people to do the job safely
- ✓ There's a way to call for help
- ✓ The yard is well lit or there are torches for night work
- ✓ Rear race gates are used
- ✓ A good first aid kit is available
- ✓ Catwalks are secure and safe.

IF YOU'RE IMPROVING OR BUILDING A YARD

Check:

- ✓ The yard and access are positioned on raised areas
- ✓ There's good drainage for working areas
- ✓ It's a good design that will 'draw' livestock through smoothly
- ✓ It's structurally strong
- ✓ There are catwalks along forcing pens, races and loading ramps
- ✓ There are escape points and gates for emergency getaways
- ✓ All surfaces are non-slip
- ✓ There's a way to hold movable ramps in place securely
- ✓ There's water for stock.



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VITAL SAFETY TIPS
THAT TRUCK
DRIVERS WORKING
WITH LIVESTOCK
NEED TO REMEMBER

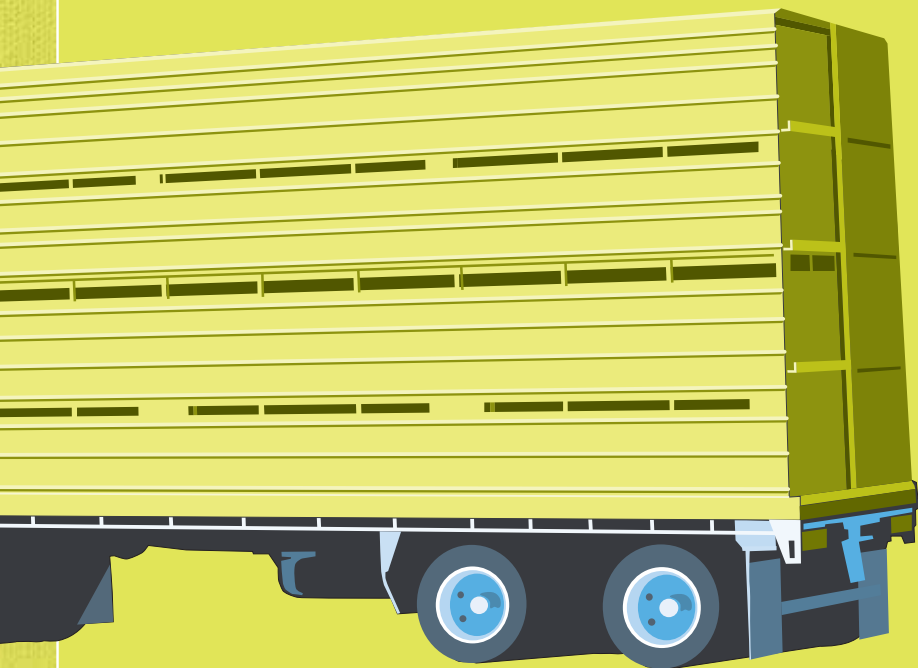
KEEP YOUR STOCK TRUCK SAFE



MAKE SURE YOUR TRUCK IS AS SAFE AS POSSIBLE FOR CARRYING STOCK: **CHECK**

- ✓ There are no sharp objects that could make animals take flight or bolt
- ✓ The crate and floor are sound, not rotten or rusted
- ✓ Crates are properly secured to the vehicle
- ✓ Hinges, bolts, accessways and gates can be locked shut





OWNERS/OPERATORS:CHECK

- ✓ The truck has the paperwork required to be legal
- ✓ It's maintained regularly
- ✓ It's designed to prevent animal's legs from sticking out
- ✓ The driver is trained and has the correct licence.



✓ There's a first aid kit in the truck

✓ There are torches and a fire extinguisher

✓ There's a way for contacting someone else for help

✓ Crate and truck surfaces are clean



LOAD, UNLOAD AND WORK LIVESTOCK SAFELY

These tips will help keep you safe when you're loading, unloading and working livestock.

CHECK

Loading and unloading:

- ✓ Use all available gates and lock bars to stop livestock reversing
- ✓ Remember that driving the mob from the rear won't speed up loading (dominant livestock in the middle won't be pushed along by tail-enders)
- ✓ Walk down the ramp or catwalk to encourage livestock to go up (and up the ramp to encourage them to go down)
- ✓ Give livestock time to unload. They will naturally follow each other.

CHECK

Working livestock through the race:

- ✓ Give livestock 30 minutes to settle down in the yards
- ✓ Don't overfill the forcing pen - about three quarters full gives livestock room to turn towards the race mouth
- ✓ Pack the race as tightly as possible to prevent livestock moving back and forth
- ✓ Don't get in a race with large livestock. They can roll you along the race wall or crush you against it
- ✓ Never put your arms, head or legs through race walls
- ✓ If there's a catwalk, use it
- ✓ To get livestock to move forward, walk along the catwalk from the front of the race to the back.



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VITAL SAFETY TIPS THAT ALL LIVESTOCK HANDLERS NEED TO REMEMBER

The next few pages explain what to look for in a good, safe stockyard and the steps people in the industry should be taking to reduce injuries. It's for everyone involved:

- Farmer: it's for you as an employer, and also as a worker on your own farm. Even experienced livestock handlers can get injured!
- Farm workers
- Truck drivers and truck operators employing drivers
- Stock and station agents/saleyard operators.



BUILD SAFETY INTO YOUR STOCKYARD

Making these improvements around your yard, as and when time and budget allows will pay off. Well-designed, well-maintained yards save injuries and help you put through more livestock with less stress all round.



CHECK

Make your races safe:

- ✓ Make sure they're structurally strong
- ✓ Put down concrete or gravel surfaces
- ✓ Make them around 700mm wide
- ✓ Install non-slip catwalks for handlers.

Make your catwalks safe:

- ✓ Install catwalks alongside forcing pens, races and loading ramps
- ✓ Make sure the construction is solid
- ✓ Put down non-slip surfaces like chicken wire
- ✓ Raise them slightly above ground level.

CHECK

Make loading ramps safe:

- ✓ Make them 3-4.5m long with a loading height about 1m for trucks
- ✓ Allow a 75mm spacer, flush to the race to allow truck doors to open
- ✓ Ensure they're structurally strong
- ✓ Concrete posts into the ground and pack them underneath
- ✓ Make sides high enough to stop stock climbing out
- ✓ Put down non-slip scored or stepped surfaces so stock don't slip
- ✓ Grain on rough sawn timber should run towards the front of the race.

CHECK

Make head bails safe:

- ✓ Install them where there's a view to open space
- ✓ Make sure they close quickly, quietly and gently
- ✓ Avoid bars or gaps that could trap hooves
- ✓ Ensure they're solidly built, well maintained and can be removed easily for servicing

Make gates, hinges and latches safe:

- ✓ Gate latches should be secure, spring-loaded and fail-safe
- ✓ Top hinges should be threaded with adjustable bolts through the posts. Fit strong, galvanized hinges designed for heavy gates
- ✓ Bolt a metal pin into each lunge hug securely to stop the gate from lifting out
- ✓ Invert safety hinges so the gate can't be moved.



BUILD SAFETY INTO YOUR STOCKYARD

CHECK

Make rear race gates safe:

- ✓ Fit them with self-closing latches to stop stock backing out of the race
- ✓ Make gates strong enough to stand up to stock movement
- ✓ Don't use slide rails
- ✓ Slide the slip rail completely through, in front of two adjacent posts
- ✓ For the rail, use a 50mm pipe (2 inch) no more than 1.2m long.

Make pens safe:

- ✓ Board out corners and/or provide access gaps (flaps are ok) for a quick escape. Make them adjustable so you can isolate stock in manageable numbers
- ✓ Install escape flaps for emergency exits.

Use safe materials:

- ✓ Posts should be tanalised and 200-250mm round
- ✓ Rails should be tanalised and 150-50mm
- ✓ Latches and hinges should be heavy duty and galvanized.

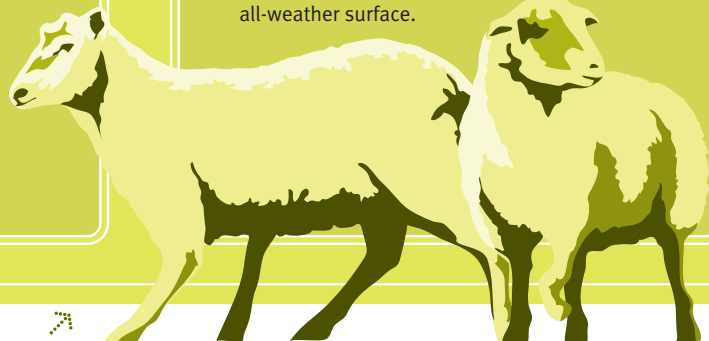
CHECK

Improve drainage:

- ✓ Vehicle access ways and stock areas should have a 100-150mm layer of coarse metal laid over a raised, well-drained base
- ✓ Install field or plastic drains. Alternatively, dig a drainage trench and fill it loosely with rubble. Whatever drains you use, make sure they're below the surface to avoid trips and slips.

Make the site safe:

- ✓ Clear overhanging trees and relocate telephone/power lines
- ✓ Ensure there's good access and space for trucks and trailers to get right off the road safely, turn and back into the race
- ✓ Make sure there's enough space to handle stock safely
- ✓ If you're re-siting, choose a site with a slight uphill gradient, good drainage and dry ground and put down a good layer of gravel or other all-weather surface.



ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN

➤ Apply the 3-step hazard management plan

In and around your truck, or around your stockyard and farm, use the simple 3-step plan to manage and reduce your risks:

1 Identify:

keep your eyes open and identify hazards

2 Rate:

decide how important hazards are and which ones to tackle first

3 Act:

take action to eliminate, isolate or minimise the risk.

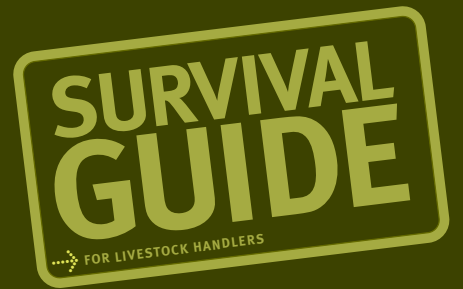
Have a working plan

Truck drivers, farmers and all livestock handlers should remember to:

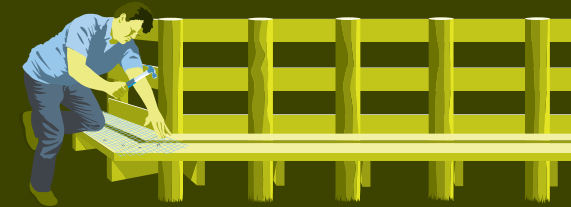
- Check the yard or truck before using them and remove any obstructions
- Have no more than two people in the pen. One at the gate and the other directing traffic
- Stand well back or up close
- Wear the gear that's right for the job
- Mind your head, arms and legs – never poke them through boards or lean over animals
- Know what to do in an emergency – have a planned escape route under or over a gate or fence.



Use the simple 3-step plan to manage and reduce your risks.



ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN



FOLD IN HALF ALONG LINE AND KEEP HANDY

Keep up your maintenance plan

If you're responsible for a stockyard, you're responsible for keeping up a regular programme of maintenance. Make sure:

- ✓ Nails are hammered home and flattened off
- ✓ Bolts are sawn down so they're flush
- ✓ Loose timbers on catwalks or rails are fastened down or replaced
- ✓ The head bail is kept lubricated
- ✓ Gates are kept well oiled and free-swinging
- ✓ Catwalks are covered with chicken wire
- ✓ 'Look up'. Make sure there are no branches and wires where the truck parks
- ✓ Gravel is laid down in the approach-way.

Plan long-term improvements

It may take time but if you're responsible for a yard you need to make sure safety is built in. Work out what needs doing and set up a programme. For example:

- ✓ Replace or rehang gates so they swing freely. Reverse the top gudgeon to prevent them being lifted off
- ✓ Build catwalks on forcing pens, races and loading ramps
- ✓ Build in access slots, especially between the forcing pen and working area
- ✓ Make the race gate self-closing. Install self-closing latches and a tail bar



- ✓ Board up the forcing pen at both sides of the race mouth, and corners in pens
- ✓ Put a shelter over the working area and a ceiling over the weighing platform
- ✓ Divide large, square pens into longer, narrower ones
- ✓ Divide a long race by installing gates
- ✓ Concrete the race and forcing pen
- ✓ Install a good head bail and crush. Reposition it if necessary so livestock are drawn through by a clear view ahead
- ✓ Put a water trough into the yard
- ✓ Re-position the entrance gate at right angles to the fence-line, uphill or on level ground so livestock aren't moving into the sun as they enter the yards.

ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN

PLAN AND CHECK

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WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION

Farm workers:

For more information on good livestock handling visit www.fedfarm.org.nz or www.acc.co.nz

Farmers and employers:

For more information about training, your responsibilities as an employers and opportunities for reducing your ACC levies, visit www.dol.govt.nz or www.acc.co.nz

Truck drivers and transport operators:

For more information on livestock handling, and issues that affect rural transport generally visit www.rtfnz.co.nz or www.acc.co.nz

More Information:

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www.fedfarm.org.nz
www.dol.govt.nz
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