

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Information guide – Rural industry

27. Construction work at rural places

This guide is about the application of the requirements of the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008* (Regulation) for construction work at rural workplaces.

A new definition of construction work which came into effect on 1 January 2006, brought changes for people performing construction work in any industry, including rural.

The Regulation clearly sets out how certain risks for construction work must be managed. The Regulation covers:

- principal contractor construction safety plans
- work method statements for high risk construction activities and prescribed activities
- demolition work and work to remove friable asbestos containing material
- general and site-specific induction
- signs
- housekeeping practices
- safety of plant provided for common use
- excavations (including trenches)
- working at heights (including work on roofs, from ladders and trestle ladder platforms and work to erect or dismantle scaffolding)
- protecting people from falling objects.

Until 1 September 2009, rural industry is exempt from *part 20, division 3, subdivision 9* of the Regulation (including relevant person's obligation for risk from excavations).

However, risk from excavation work must still be managed. The best way to manage the risk is to follow the requirements of the regulation.

What does this mean for you?

Businesses conducting activities which include construction work have to follow all relevant construction regulations. This may include:

- **Induction training:** all workers performing construction work (other than work to repair a structure that is fixed plant) must have obtained a General safety induction (construction industry) card.
- **Principal contractor appointment:** the client must appoint a principal contractor where:
- demolition work or work to remove friable asbestos containing material (prescribed activities) is to be done, or
- work has an estimated final price of more than \$80 000.
The client must complete a notice of appointment and give this to the principal contractor for signature, and then send to the nearest Workplace Health and Safety Queensland office before construction work starts.
- **Work method statement:** a relevant person doing construction work needs to prepare a work method statement for high risk activities.

How do you know when induction training and work method statements are needed?

When examining activities on a rural workplace, to determine requirements for both General safety induction (construction industry) cards and work method statements, ask the following:

Does the construction activity involve significant risk?

If the construction work involves any of the following, the requirements for induction training and work method statements should be followed:

- (a) construction activity involves a person entering a trench more than 1.5 m deep
- (b) during the construction activity, a person could fall 2 m or more.

Is it a prescribed activity?

If the construction work is demolition work or work to remove friable asbestos containing material the requirements for induction training and work method statements should be followed.

Is it non-routine rural activity?

If the work is not a frequent, cyclical activity or a normal activity inherent to farm production, the requirements for induction training and work method statements generally apply. For example, ploughing a field or repairing a fence does not require either General safety induction (construction industry) cards or work method statements.

Does the construction work generally require specialist tradespeople or specialist equipment?

If the construction work requires specialist tradespeople or specialist equipment, the requirements for induction training and work method statements should be followed. Erecting substantial buildings or constructing a dam are examples.

Examples of construction work in the rural industry that would require induction training and/or work method statement are in the table below.

Work criteria	Induction training required by worker?	Work method statement required?
Erection or significant alteration of a structure (e.g. building, shed, road, dam)	Y	Y
Construction work at height (e.g. windmill or silo above 2 metres)	Y	Y
Deep excavation and trenching work (more than 1.5 metres deep)	Y	Y
Demolition work	Y	Y
Work to remove friable asbestos containing material	Y	Y
Major repairs to fixed plant	N	Y

Definitions

Note: Workers are to hold general induction evidence before starting construction work¹. A worker must not start construction work unless the worker:

- a) holds general induction evidence
 - b) has shown the employer of the worker the general induction evidence.
- Maximum penalty—30 penalty units.

In this section—construction work does not include work to repair a structure that is fixed plant, a ship or a submarine.

Construction work

- a) Work is construction work if it is:
 - i. work to erect, construct, extend, alter, convert, fit-out, commission, renovate, repair, refurbish, disassemble or decommission a structure, or part of a structure
 - ii. work connected with site preparation, excavation and landscaping for work mentioned in paragraph (a)
 - iii. the assembly or installation of prefabricated components to form a structure, or part of a structure, for work mentioned in paragraph (a)
 - iv. the disassembly of prefabricated components for work mentioned in paragraph (a) that, immediately before the disassembly, formed a structure or part of a structure, or
 - v. an activity that is a prescribed activity.
- b) Work is not construction work to the extent it is carried out at a workplace, as part of a business or undertaking, if the work is to erect or construct a structure that, when erected or constructed, is intended to be transported to another place.
- c) Construction work is taken to stop—
 - i. when the construction work at the workplace where the construction work is being performed ends and possession of the workplace is returned to the client, or
 - ii. if the client remains in possession of the workplace where the construction work is being performed while the work is performed—when the construction work at the workplace ends.

¹ Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008, s337.

Structure

- a) a building, a steel or reinforced concrete construction, wall, mast, tower, pylon, structural cable or telecommunications structure
- b) an underground works (including shafts and tunnels) pipe, pipeline, sea defence works, river works, earthworks or earth retaining construction or other construction designed to preserve or alter a natural feature
- c) a road or highway, footpath or driveway, railway line or siding, tramway line, airfield, dock or harbour, water storage or supply system (including a constructed lagoon), sewerage or drainage system, electricity or gas generation facility, transmission or distribution facility, gasholder, park or recreation ground (including, for example, a golf course, playing field, racecourse or swimming pool)
- d) production, storage or distribution facilities for heavy industries; or
- e) fixed plant
- f) a ship or submarine
- g) formwork, falsework, scaffold or other construction designed or used to provide support, access or containment during construction work.

Excavation means a hole in the earth, or a face of earth, formed after rock, sand, soil or other material is removed. *Examples—*

- a trench, ditch, shaft, well, tunnel, pier hole, cutting, caisson or cofferdam
- a hole drilled in the earth.

Excavation work means work to make, fill or partly fill an excavation.

Trench means an excavation where the maximum depth is more than the minimum width.

High risk construction activity means an activity that is part of construction work and:

- (a) the activity involves a person
 - i. entering a trench that is more than 1.5m deep
 - ii. using explosives
 - iii. using a confined space
 - iv. using a hazardous substance
- (b) during the activity, a person could fall
 - i. if the activity is housing construction work-at least 3m
 - ii. if the activity is not housing construction work-at least 2m
- (c) the activity is performed on a roof with a pitch of more than 26°
- (d) the activity is:
 - i. a prescribed activity

- ii. demolition work that is not a prescribed activity
- (e) the activity consists of:
 - i. tilt-up and precast construction work
 - ii. structural alterations that require temporary support to prevent collapse
 - iii. the movement of powered mobile plant at the workplace
 - iv. work on a telecommunications tower
 - v. work in, over or adjacent to water where there is a risk of drowning
 - vi. work on, or adjacent to, a road or railway
 - vii. work on or near a pressurised gas distribution mains and consumer piping
 - viii. work on or near a chemical, fuel or refrigerant line
 - ix. work near an exposed energised electrical installation
 - x. work in an area that may have a contaminated or flammable atmosphere
 - xi. work in an area where there are artificial extremes of temperature, or
- (f) the principal contractor for the construction work reasonably believes the activity could result in death or bodily harm.

Relevant person

- (a) A person who conducts a business or undertaking is considered a relevant person and can include:
 - i. employers
 - ii. self-employed people
 - iii. volunteer organisations.

A relevant person has an obligation to ensure the workplace health and safety of:

- all workers carrying out work for the business or undertaking
- volunteers who perform work activities for the business or undertaking
- all other people including customers, visitors to the workplace, passers by and neighbours
- themselves.

Meeting your workplace health and safety obligations involves:

- providing and maintaining a safe and healthy work environment
- providing and maintaining safe plant
- ensuring the safe use, handling, storage and transport of substances
- ensuring safe systems of work, and
- providing information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure health and safety.

More information

Further information is available from www.worksafe.qld.gov.au or by calling the WHS Infoline on 1300 369 915.

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