

WATER SAFETY AROUND THE FARM AND RURAL PROPERTY

It's no secret that farms, as agricultural factories and yes, even small hobby farms, are dangerous environments. Not only are adults killed by much publicised tools such as quad bikes, but on average, every year 4 children under the age of five drown and 3 are hospitalised from events in farm dams.

A few minutes reading this sheet and following up the advice provided could be life-saving.

3 Simple steps to making your farm a safer place

Step 1 - Identify drowning hazards

In addition to the drowning hazards present in homes (see our Water safety around the house sheet), farms present an additional range of potential drowning hazards, including:

- Dams – the most common location for toddler drownings
- Stock drinking troughs and animal bowls
- Irrigation channels and drains
- Water tanks
- Rivers, creeks, streams and lakes
- Post holes and excavations

Step 2 - Reduce the hazards

Once you've identified all the potential hazards around the farm, create a checklist and minimise them by using the following strategies:

- Fence off large water bodies, or limit access to them (e.g. specific stock lanes) wherever possible
- Have a well maintained fenced backyard with child proof gates so children can play safely and not wonder off on the

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property. Easy access to water environments is the leading cause of drownings on farms and rural properties

- Ensure there is nothing a child can use to climb into water tanks and troughs
- Place secure lids or mesh covers on the openings of any water sources or containers, including water troughs
- Don't place water troughs (especially old baths, which are often slippery and slimy and impossible for a young child to climb out of) near the house
- Don't leave post holes, bore holes or trenches unfilled during heavy rain

Step 3 - Eliminate the risks

Supervision should be your number one priority on your property. Identify areas in which children are potentially at high risk and ensure that they are always supervised when in them.

- Create safe play areas in which there are no known drowning hazards
- Talk to older children - especially visitors - about the dangers of swimming in dams and rivers. Keep the language age appropriate so they understand
- Learn CPR and resuscitation techniques
- Give young children 100% of your attention when they are near or around water



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