



Health and Safety in Farming

HSNO brief for farmers – Emergency management on farms



What is emergency management?

On the farm, you need to take all practicable steps to prevent accidents, including those involving hazardous substances.

As well as preventing accidents, you must be prepared to respond if anything goes wrong. This is known as “emergency management”.

Where do I start?

To be prepared for an emergency, you need to know the quantities of agrichemicals, fuels and other hazardous substances you have on the farm, and the hazards associated with these products.

Product labels and safety data sheets will provide you with the information you require on the hazards of each product.

How much preparation do I need?

Risks from hazardous substances are influenced by a combination of the hazards and quantities of the products that are held.

The amount of risk to people, property or the environment determines the amount (level) of preparation required for emergency management.

HSNO separates emergency management preparation into 3 “Levels”. Each level is in addition to the previous level and requires additional preparation. Level 3 involves the highest level of preparation.

Level 1 – Labelling

Every container that holds a hazardous substance, such as an agrichemical, needs to be properly labelled. The label tells the user what’s inside and the hazards of that product.

Labels need to inform people of the steps they need to take to avoid incidents and the actions required in an emergency.

You need to read product labels and understand what emergency response is required before using any product. You should never use a product out of a container that is not labelled.

Level 2 – Safety data sheets

Your supplier of fuels and agrichemicals is required to provide you with safety data sheets. These documents tell you how to prepare for emergencies and what to do if one occurs.

You need to have a safety data sheet for each of the different products you have on the farm, and these sheets must be readily available to your staff.

Level 2 – Fire extinguishers

You are required to have at least **one** fire extinguisher where more than 50 litres of petrol is stored.

If you have more than 200 litres of petrol or 500 litres of diesel you will need a **second** fire extinguisher.

Fire extinguishers should have a rating of at least 30B such as a 2 kg dry powder extinguisher or a 9 litre foam extinguisher.

Fire extinguishers may be required when you store flammable agrichemicals. Whether you need one or more depends on the flammability of the individual products and the total quantity of all the flammable products in the store.

If you are likely to have several different products with varying levels of flammability, adopt a cautious approach and always have at least one fire extinguisher available.

For further information, see Fire extinguishers (Brief 9).

Level 3 – Signage

Where large amounts of certain hazardous products are stored signage is required. Signs must state what the hazards are and what to do in an emergency.

For further information, see Signage for agrichemical stores (Brief 2) and Signage for fuels on farms (Brief 4).

Level 3 – Controlling spills

Good emergency preparation also means having systems in place to contain a spill (such as bunding) as well as being prepared to clean up a spill.

If a spill occurs, you will need to safely dispose of any wastes, including any materials used in the clean-up. Staff should be trained to deal with spills, and having a spill kit handy is important.

For further information, see Storage of agrichemicals on farms (Brief 1), Secondary containment on farms (Brief 10), Spillage procedures (Brief 11) and Spill kits (Brief 12).

Level 3 – Emergency response plans

Where you store large amounts of hazardous products, you need to have in place an emergency response plan. This plan must give information on how to contact trained staff, as well as the emergency services who would respond to any call for assistance.

The plan should state where to find any equipment or product information required for each emergency response.

An emergency response plan must be tested annually and records of these tests need to be kept for at least 2 years.

Further information

Emergency management for fuels can be found in the *Approved Practice Guide for Safe Above-Ground Fuel Storage on Farms*, available from: <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/ER-APG-03-1.pdf>

Emergency management for storing agrichemicals can be found in the New Zealand Standard NZS8409:2004; *Management of Agrichemicals*.

The hazardous properties of fuels and agrichemicals will be given on product safety data sheets, which you can get from your fuel or agrichemical suppliers.

For a copy of an emergency response plan template, call 0800 376 234 or download it from: <http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/industry/farming/>

Information is also available from the ERMA New Zealand Hazardous Substance Compliance Line 0800 376 234.

