

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PACK: AGRICULTURE

- **ACOP for roles and responsibilities in agriculture**
- **ACOP for safe farm vehicle operation**

April 2026

Purpose

This pack provides a high-level overview of the two draft approved codes of practice (ACOPs) that WorkSafe is developing. The draft working titles are:

- ACOP for Roles and responsibilities in agriculture
- ACOP for Safe farm vehicle operation

Public consultation on the two draft ACOPs is open from **Monday 20 April** until **Sunday 10 May**.

This first public consultation will be followed by further consultation on the updated draft. WorkSafe will communicate the dates once confirmed.

How we'd like your support

This pack has been prepared for our industry partners to provide key messages to help you:

- inform your stakeholders about the purpose of these ACOPs
- encourage people in your sector to have their say when consultation opens
- explain why feedback from the sector matters
- direct people to the right channels to submit feedback or questions.

Useful links and resources

Item	Link	Description
WorkSafe webpage	Two new draft ACOPs in agriculture WorkSafe	WorkSafe webpage providing background context on these draft ACOPs.
WorkSafe public consultation link	Consultations WorkSafe Full URL: www.worksafe.govt.nz/consultations	When the public consultation webpage is published, it will show under the 'Open' tab at the bottom of the page. We don't yet have the specific webpage URL to share.
YouTube video	ACOP - agriculture discussion	Hear from ACOP Reference Group contributors Jane Fowles (Ever Safe and NZISM) and Debbie Robertson (Rural Safe) alongside WorkSafe DCE Insights and Engagement, Kelly Hanson-White talk to the development and value of this ACOP and why the sector should provide feedback.
WorkSafe Facebook	WorkSafe New Zealand Facebook Full URL: https://www.facebook.com/nzworksafe	We encourage you to publicly share your thoughts and commitment to the ACOP development and consultation. If on this channel, please follow and reshare any posts WorkSafe makes about the public consultation.
WorkSafe LinkedIn	https://www.linkedin.com/company/worksafe-new-zealand	If on this channel, please follow and reshare any posts WorkSafe makes regarding the public consultation.
WorkSafe Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/worksafe_nz/	If on this channel, please follow and reshare any posts WorkSafe makes regarding the public consultation.

Public consultation FAQs

When can the public provide feedback?

The first round of public consultation runs from **Monday 20 April** to **Sunday 10 May 2026**.

This first public consultation will be followed by further consultation on the updated draft. The dates will be communicated once confirmed.

Why should I take part in the consultation?

Through providing feedback your views, experience and knowledge will help ensure this draft ACOP:

- is clear and easy to understand
- is practical and workable in everyday situations on New Zealand farms
- provides certainty about roles, responsibilities and expectations
- helps reduce preventable harm in this high-risk sector.

How do I participate in the public consultation?

- Visit the [WorkSafe public consultation webpage](#).
- Read the draft — even just the sections relevant to your work.
- Look at the examples and consider whether they match real work scenarios.
- Think about how the draft ACOP might apply in your business or part of the sector.
- Discuss the draft with others if needed: co-workers, contractors, other business owners, health and safety advisors or industry groups.
- Use the online form on the consultation webpage to provide feedback on:
 - what you found useful
 - if any key information is missing or wrong
 - the practicalities of the actions described in the ACOP
 - any practical examples that you think would be useful for inclusion within the ACOP
 - any suggestions to ensure the ACOP will be workable for the sector.

Do I need to give feedback on the whole document?

You don't need to provide feedback on all sections, just the parts that relate to your work, business or interest. Real-world experiences and honest feedback are exactly what we're looking for.

Is this the final version?

This is still very much a draft. This first public consultation runs until 10 May 2026 and will be followed by further consultation on the updated draft.

Can I talk to someone if I have questions during the consultation period?

If you have questions about the draft ACOP or the consultation process, please email: ACOPConsultation@worksafe.govt.nz. Please include the name of the relevant ACOP in the subject line.

What happens after the consultation closes?

- WorkSafe will collate and consider all feedback received.
- A high-level summary of the feedback received and the changes made to the draft ACOP as a result of the feedback, will be published on the WorkSafe website.
- This first public consultation runs until 10 May 2026 and will be followed by further consultation on the updated drafts. Finalised drafts will be provided to the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, who is responsible for deciding whether or not to approve the ACOP.

What happens after Ministerial approval?

Once the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety approves a code of practice under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015, several formal steps follow before it becomes active.

- **A notice is published in the New Zealand Gazette**
After approval, official notices are gazetted to formally announce the new or revised ACOP.
- **The ACOP comes into force**
The gazetted notice specifies the commencement date. A newly approved ACOP may not come into force until at least 28 days after it has been notified in the Gazette.
- **WorkSafe publishes the new ACOP on its website**
The newly approved ACOP is made publicly available on WorkSafe's website so businesses and workers can begin using it.
- **WorkSafe may run implementation activities in conjunction with the sector**
WorkSafe will work with industry to look at the best way to implement and embed the new ACOP. The exact details are to be confirmed.

Communications resources to help promote participation with your audiences

WorkSafe YouTube video

Hear from ACOP Reference Group contributors Jane Fowles (Ever Safe and NZISM) and Debbie Robertson (Rural Safe) alongside, WorkSafe DCE Insights and Engagement, Kelly Hanson-White talk to the development and value of this draft ACOP and why the sector should provide feedback.

Please share the video with your team, business and stakeholders.



WATCH VIDEO: [ACOP - agriculture discussion](#)

Example newsletter / email copy

We have drafted some copy you may like to share with your stakeholders. Please feel free to tailor it to your organisation/personal writing style.

Have your say: WorkSafe's public consultation on draft ACOPs for agriculture is now open

WorkSafe has opened public consultation on two draft approved codes of practice (ACOPs) that will support health and safety on our New Zealand farms. Finalised drafts will be provided to the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, who is responsible for deciding whether or not to approve the ACOP.

Their working titles are:

- ACOP for Roles and responsibilities in agriculture
- ACOP for Safe farm vehicle operation

Public consultation: 20 April – 10 May 2026

Public consultation webpage: [Consultations | WorkSafe](#)

Why these ACOPs matter for our sector

Agriculture continues to experience a disproportionate share of work-related harm, despite making up only a small part of the national workforce. Acute injuries and fatalities remain especially high in dairy, sheep, beef and arable operations. Farm vehicles such as quad bikes, side-by-sides, motorbikes, tractors, utes and attached machinery such as mowers and trailers, remain a leading cause of fatalities and serious injuries.

Through WorkSafe industry surveys and ministerial consultation, farmers, workers and contractors have said they want clear and practical farming-specific expectations that help reduce harm and remove uncertainty around important health and safety decision making.

These draft ACOPs are here to do exactly that.

Why your voice matters

We want to see a huge response from agriculture sector, because no one understands the realities of our sector better than the people doing the work every day.

Your feedback will help ensure these draft ACOPs:

- are clear and easy to understand
- are practical and workable in everyday situations on New Zealand farms
- provide certainty about roles, responsibilities and expectations for health and safety
- help reduce preventable harm in our high-risk sector.

You don't need to comment on the whole document, it can just be the sections that are relevant to your work, business or interests.

You bring unique insight into how these ACOPs should work on the ground. This is your chance to help ensure everyone can return home healthy and safe from the farm every day.

How to have your say

Taking part is simple:

1. Visit the [WorkSafe public consultation webpage](#).
2. Read the draft ACOPs — even just the sections that are relevant to your work, business or interests.
3. Look at the examples and consider whether they match real work scenarios.
4. Think about how the ACOP would apply in your business or sector.
5. Discuss the draft with co-workers, contractors, owners or health and safety advisors, if needed.
6. Complete the online feedback form on the consultation webpage — share what works, what's missing or wrong, and what could be improved.

This first public consultation will be followed by further consultation on the updated draft. WorkSafe will communicate the dates once confirmed.

Further information and questions

If you have questions about the consultation, you can email: ACOPConsultation@worksafe.govt.nz.

Further information on this draft ACOP can be viewed at: [Two new draft ACOPs in agriculture | WorkSafe](#)

Shorter messaging

Have your say: Make sure WorkSafe's two draft ACOPs work for you

WorkSafe is inviting the agriculture sector to help shape two new draft ACOPs: *Roles and responsibilities in agriculture* and *Safe farm vehicle operation*.

These proposed codes set out clear, practical expectations to reduce harm in a sector that continues to experience disproportionately high rates of serious injuries and fatalities. Public consultation runs from **20 April to 10 May 2026**, and feedback from those working on the ground is essential to ensure the drafts reflect real-world farming practices and day-to-day realities.

Your voice matters because no one understands farming better than the people who live and work it every day. By sharing your experience – whether that's about responsibilities on farm, vehicle use, or how the draft examples match real scenarios – you'll help ensure the final ACOPs are clear, workable and genuinely useful for the sector. Even small insights can make a big difference in shaping practical standards that support safer decision-making and help everyone get home safely.

Have your say now at: [Consultations | WorkSafe](#).

Further information on this draft ACOP can be viewed at: [Two new draft ACOPs in agriculture | WorkSafe](#)

Overview: ACOP for safe farm vehicle operation

Purpose

WorkSafe is developing a draft approved code of practice (ACOP) for **safe farm vehicle operation**. Finalised drafts will be provided to the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, who is responsible for deciding whether or not to approve the ACOP..

This ACOP will provide farmers, workers and contractors with clear practices for the safe use of farm vehicles and attached machinery associated with the highest levels of harm. For example, quad bikes, side-by-sides, motorbikes, utes, four-wheel-drive vehicles, tractors, and attached implements like mowers or trailers that affect vehicle stability or function. It clearly sets out legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) and supporting regulations. It also clarifies expectations for young workers as operators and children as passengers or bystanders in a work context.

Intended audience

- Farmers and farming businesses (including self-employed farmers, partnerships, trusts and companies).
- Farm owners, operators, and managers.
- Agricultural contractors and subcontractors.
- Labour-hire businesses supplying workers using vehicles or machinery.
- Workers and others involved in farm activities.
- Other industries using similar vehicles may also find it useful.

In scope

The draft ACOP covers safe operation of farm vehicles and attached machinery used for agricultural work, including:

- Quad bikes
- Side-by-side vehicles
- Two-wheel motorbikes
- Tractors
- Utes and other 2WD/4WD vehicle
- Machinery attached to farm vehicles. For example, trailers, mowers, spray units.
- It also outlines legal duties, operating environment checks, training requirements and safe operating practices.

Out of scope

This draft ACOP does not cover:

- domestic or recreational activities unrelated to farm work
- non-mobile farm plant or infrastructure, such as fixed farm buildings, yards, sheds, fences or stationary equipment
- hazardous substances and chemical exposure risks, including spraying, storage, mixing or handling of agrichemicals – these risks are covered by separate hazardous substances legislation and guidance
- horticulture specific vehicles or machinery, although the sections on common farming vehicles and attached machinery that are also used in horticulture will be relevant.

Overview: ACOP for roles and responsibilities in agriculture

Purpose

This draft ACOP explains the legal health and safety duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) relating to roles and responsibilities in agriculture. The draft ACOP focuses on what farmers must do when their health and safety duties overlap with the duties of others, and it outlines the steps they need to take to meet these responsibilities.

It will provide practical examples for everyday scenarios within the farming sector, helping to reduce uncertainty and improve health and safety.

Intended audience

- Farmers and horticulture growers.
- Farm workers.
- Contractors and subcontractors.
- Manufacturers, suppliers, and installers who provide goods and products to farms.
- It is also useful for safety advisors and consultants.

In scope

This draft ACOP will apply to all types of farms including:

- livestock
- dairy
- arable
- horticulture
- mixed farming operations.

Focus will be on the agriculture sectors with the highest levels of harm where the need for clear expectations on roles and responsibilities is strongest. This includes dairy, sheep and beef farming.

It will cover:

- how health and safety duties apply across agricultural roles
- actions required to comply with legal duties
- practical examples of common farm scenarios demonstrating what to do to meet the legal duties
- responsibilities when children are present in a work context
- the roles and responsibilities rural contractors should be aware of when they come on to a farm and share health and safety duties with the farmer.

Out of scope

- Purely domestic or recreational activities unrelated to farm (or other) work.
- General risk management practices.

Additional FAQs

What is WorkSafe's role?

WorkSafe is New Zealand's primary workplace health and safety regulator, responsible for ensuring workplaces are safe, preventing harm, and leading the health and safety system. WorkSafe acts as the main regulator under the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA), ensuring businesses and workers meet their legal responsibilities for managing workplace risks.

What is an ACOP?

ACOPs set out standards for how duty holders can comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA) and regulations, by providing the detail on how to meet the standard of "reasonably practicable" in managing specific risks. They do not introduce new legal duties or require people to do anything beyond what the Health and Safety at Work Act already expects.

They differ from other types of HSWA guidance in three ways:

- an ACOP can be used as evidence of whether or not a duty or obligation under HSWA has been complied with
- ACOPs are approved by the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety
- developing ACOPs must include consultation with people affected.

What does WorkSafe want to achieve with these ACOPs?

To make it easier for farmers, workers and contractors to:

- reduce preventable harm by clarifying responsibilities and expected practices for everyday scenarios
- have some certainty about "what good looks like" under the HSWA
- support safer, more confident decision making in these high-risk sectors.

Are ACOPs mandatory?

While this ACOP is developed by WorkSafe (the regulator) and approved by the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety, it is not mandatory to follow. However, ACOPs may include legal requirements which are mandatory.

What an ACOP does, is set a standard for compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA). You can meet your duty another way as long as it is equivalent or better than the standard set out in the ACOP.

Do these ACOPs create new obligations?

No. They clarify what is reasonably practicable under HSWA in the covered contexts. They do not introduce new legal duties or require people to do anything beyond what the Health and Safety at Work Act already expects

Is an ACOP new law?

No. An ACOP does not create new legal duties. It provides one way of meeting existing duties under HSWA. The ACOP shows what good, compliant practice looks like.

Is an ACOP a paperwork-heavy requirement?

No. ACOPs do not require excessive forms, registers or documentation. The focus is on practical actions that manage real risks.

What do the proposed 'safe harbour' changes in the Health and Safety at Work Amendment Bill mean for the draft ACOPs?

As you may have heard, the Minister for Workplace Relations and Safety has introduced the Health and Safety at Work Amendment Bill (the Amendment Bill), which is currently being considered by Parliament.

The draft ACOPs will align with the Amendment Bill, and WorkSafe is ensuring the draft ACOPs are consistent with any changes to legislation.

As part of the Bill, following an ACOP would provide a form of legal protection known as 'safe harbour'. This means that a business that complies with what the ACOP sets out would be treated as having met the relevant legal duty.

Although an ACOP isn't mandatory to follow, it sets a standard for compliance with work health and safety duties.

How do these ACOPs work alongside other WorkSafe guidance in this area?

WorkSafe already has guidance developed for the agriculture sector, and will be reviewing what needs to be updated, or in some cases removed, to align with these ACOPs. There is also other WorkSafe guidance that will support the ACOPs. For example, generic guidance on HSWA and risk management. This can be found on the WorkSafe website at

[Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – special guide | WorkSafe](#)

[Agriculture | WorkSafe](#).

What is the timeline for development?

This first public consultation runs until 10 May 2026 and will be followed by further consultation on the updated drafts.

Who is leading this work?

A dedicated ACOP Delivery Team has been set up at WorkSafe.

Who is being engaged to support the development of these ACOPs?

Farmers, contractors and workers, alongside key agriculture industry bodies, will engage in workshops, testing and consultation to ensure the draft ACOP reflects real farm practices. WorkSafe is engaging with different groups at different phases development of the draft ACOPs through the following forums.

- **Reference Group:** Made up of people representing key industry organisations in the agriculture sector. The group also includes WorkSafe subject experts and people directly engaged in the work, such as farmers and contractors.
This group provides an extra layer of robustness in the ACOP development by testing assumptions and providing sense checks during the content development process.
- **Working groups:** Sector-specific groups for detailed engagement, enabling timely feedback and real-world content validation. Members have practical agriculture experience, contribute on specific topics, and attend workshops to discuss and resolve issues, as well as shape and provide feedback on draft content.
- **Industry Guidance Advisory Group:** Our team regularly checks in with WorkSafe's Industry Guidance Advisory Group to gather early feedback on the draft ACOP's development. This

group is made up of representatives from across the wider Health and Safety System, with a strong industry focus. They provide constructive insights throughout the process, including examples of consultation approaches that have worked well in other contexts.

- **Subject matter experts:** WorkSafe subject matter experts work across all these groups to ensure the ACOPs meets the needs of the sector.
- **Public consultation:** both formal and informal consultation opportunities to gather broad and detailed input from the sector.

Why is the ACOP for roles and responsibilities in agriculture being developed?

Agriculture continues to be a priority for WorkSafe because:

- it continues to carry a disproportionate share of acute fatalities and serious injuries, particularly in dairy, sheep and beef operations
- it accounts for roughly a quarter of all acute work-related deaths and serious injuries, despite representing only 6% of overall employment
- farmers, workers, and contractors often work across variable environments and mixed tasks
- there is frequent uncertainty about how health and safety duties apply when multiple businesses work together.

There was also a ministerial directive for change. Through Workplace Relations and Safety Minister, the Hon Brooke van Velden's 2024 public consultation and WorkSafe's industry survey, the sector expressed strong support for clear practices tailored to farming.

In mid-2025, the Minister announced that WorkSafe would develop an ACOP focused on roles and responsibilities in agriculture, to help farmers navigate shared work activities and responsibilities: [Practical safety changes coming for family farms | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/practical-safety-changes-coming-for-family-farms)

How will the roles and responsibilities in agriculture ACOP help clarify issues around children on farms?

It will include a dedicated section to clarify responsibilities when children are present in a work context. This will cover situations where children are involved in farm work or accompany adults undertaking work tasks. In these cases, children may be considered "other persons in the workplace" or "other persons affected by the work of the business or undertaking," and sometimes even workers themselves.

This will help farming families and employers meet their duties of care in situations where children are present in a work context.

Does the roles and responsibilities in agriculture ACOP cover beekeeping?

The draft ACOP applies to a range of agricultural activities, including beekeeping on farms. We also expect to include a scenario that describes interactions between a farmer or landowner and a beekeeper tending to hives placed on farmland.

Will rural contractors be covered in the roles and responsibilities ACOP?

The draft ACOP will also have a substantial section for rural contractors. It will explain the roles and responsibilities rural contractors should be aware of when they come on to a farm and share health and safety duties with the farmer. It will include real-life scenarios to show what good practice can look like for the interactions between contractors and farmers.

Why has the draft roles and responsibilities scope been revised to include horticulture?

As part of WorkSafe's first stage review, we received strong feedback regarding the exclusion of the horticulture sector from the *Roles and responsibilities in agriculture* ACOP. In response, WorkSafe met with key stakeholders to understand their feedback and suggestions. Their insights were reviewed internally, and it was agreed that horticulture would be included in a limited and practical way.

In practice, this involves adjusting the introductory language to reference horticulture, clarifying that references to the farmer also encompass horticulture growers. Some of the examples will also be horticulture appropriate. This approach ensures horticulture can see itself reflected in this ACOP, extending its reach and relevance across mixed and horticulture-aligned operations.

Why is the draft ACOP for safe farm vehicle operation being developed?

Agriculture continues to carry a disproportionate share of harm. It accounts for roughly a quarter of all acute work-related deaths and serious injuries, despite representing only 6% of overall employment. Farm vehicles and attached machinery remain a leading cause of fatalities and serious injuries. Duty holders frequently report uncertainty about:

- vehicle suitability for tasks and terrain
- load management
- navigating varied farm environments
- required maintenance
- managing work-related health risks (for example, vibration, noise, fatigue).

There is also uncertainty about expectations when children are on farm, specifically when children may:

- operate vehicles
- travel as passengers
- be present around attached machinery.

There was also a ministerial directive for change. Through Workplace Relations and Safety Minister, the Hon Brooke van Velden's 2024 public consultation and WorkSafe's industry survey, the sector expressed strong support for clear practices tailored to farming. In mid-2025, the Minister announced that WorkSafe would develop an ACOP focused on the safety of farm vehicles and attached machinery: [Practical safety changes coming for family farms | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/practical-safety-changes-coming-for-family-farms)

What child safety considerations will be included in the draft ACOP for safe farm vehicle operation?

- It will address the risks children face as users or passengers on high-risk vehicles such as quad bikes, side-by-sides, two-wheel motorbikes, utes, four-wheel drives and tractors.
- It will include advice on when it is appropriate for children to be on or around these vehicles, and what health and safety measures should be in place. It also sets out expectations for managing risks in challenging terrain, adverse conditions and interactions with people, livestock and public roads.
- It will not cover horticulture-specific vehicles and attached machinery. Although horticulture-specific vehicles are out of scope, this ACOP is still relevant for the horticulture sector because it covers common farming vehicles and attached machinery used in horticulture. For example, quad bikes, side-by-sides, tractors, trailers and utes.