



Fertiliser spreading involves hazardous tasks, including, tractor and machine operation, mechanically or physically lifting loads and handling chemical substances. Identifying hazards and controlling risks is crucial to prevent injury and ill health

Injury risk

Tractors, vehicles and machinery account for about 50% of farm workplace fatalities. Spreading fertiliser is highly mechanised and is a high risk activity. Fatal or serious injuries can occur due to being crushed, struck or becoming entangled in a power drive. Safety attention is particularly needed when operating in the farmyard and on roads

Planning spreading

Planning how fertiliser is spread in a safe way must take first priority. Identifying hazards and controlling risks is crucial to prevent injury and ill health. Examine hazard controls in the Farm Safety Code of Practice Risk Assessment Document

Managing your time

Doing farm work in a hurry is a major injury factor. Fertiliser is spread at busy times. Consider using a contractor to spread some, or all, of your fertiliser. Bulk or 'big bag' options minimise the need for manual lifting and saves time. Use safe lifting equipment. If manually lifting small fertiliser bags, use safe lifting techniques

Maintenance

It is important to carry out a thorough check of your fertiliser spreader. Follow the operator's manual and make sure the PTO shaft, PTO cover, safety chains and O guard are in good condition. Check the general structural integrity of the machine. Ensure that a contractor has safe equipment and operates safely

Mounting a spreader on the three point linkage

When attaching a fertiliser spreader to a tractor three-point linkage avoid crush injuries. Position the fertiliser spreader on a stable base. Quick attach mechanisms simplify the attachment task. Engage the tractor handbrake properly before leaving the cab. Tractor controls should only be used when people are known to be safely outside crush zones

Spreading on sloping ground

Due to the loads involved, particular attention needs to be paid when operating on slopes, to avoid vehicle and spreader overturn. Avoid dangerously steep slopes. Use suitable equipment. Driver competence and experience are very important

Protect eyes and skin

Take steps to avoid direct contact of fertiliser products with skin and eyes. The corrosive nature of fertiliser can irritate skin especially where you have cuts or grazes. Always wear protective gloves

It is also good practice to wear a mask to prevent dust entering the lungs. Protect sharp knives to prevent cuts when not in use

Accelerated capital allowances for farm safety equipment

When purchasing eligible farm safety equipment, farmers can currently claim an accelerated capital allowances of 50% p.a. over two years

This eligible equipment includes, for example, systems to enable the hitching of implements to an agricultural tractor three-point linkage without having to descend from the agricultural tractor as well as adaptive equipment to assist farmers with disabilities. Lifting systems for bags of fertiliser or seed of 500kg or greater are also included

Contact your agricultural advisor for more information