

Developing Safe Farming Practices



Guide 4: Farm Buildings

National Advice Hub
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The majority of farm businesses carry out works to buildings, from demolition and re-erection to routine maintenance. All such works carry risks so it is important to manage health and safety properly, comply with the law and protect your workers and your business.

The Construction, Design and Management Regulations (CDM) 2015 sets out the health and safety requirements for construction, demolition, maintenance and repair works on all buildings on the farm.

How to work safely around farm buildings:

New Builds

- When designing a new building consider safe movement of vehicles, stock, equipment and people
- Think about what the building will be used for and if this use will change
- When using contractors provide information about the site (existing structures, risks etc), check management plans are in place and make sure suitable welfare facilities are provided
- For self builds make sure you have the skills and competencies to do the work yourself, include safeguards to make sure the job is conducted safely and use appropriate equipment for the task



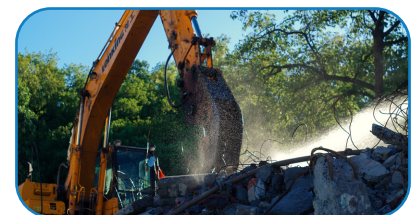
Maintenance

- Keep work areas clean, tidy and free of clutter
- Maintain good drainage and non-slip floors in wet working areas
- Provide adequate lighting
- Install handrails on steps and ramps and safety loops on fixed vertical ladders
- Make sure floors are not overloaded, especially in feed lofts



Demolition

- Demolition works should be planned in writing
- High risk demolition work including dismantling structures containing asbestos should be carried out by qualified contractors
- Leave plenty of time to demolish or dismantle a building
- If any of the structure remains standing ensure that it is left in a safe and stable condition to avoid collapse



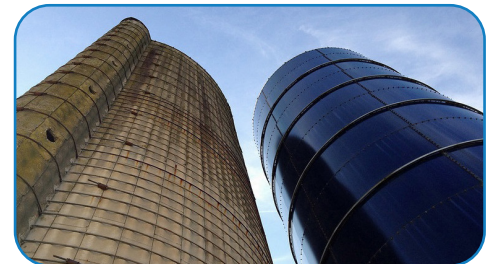
Asbestos

- Identify where Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) are present on the farm
- Assess the risk from asbestos and what measures need to be taken to protect people's health – the survey and action list will form the asbestos management plan
- Clearly label places where asbestos has been identified
- Make everyone working on the farm buildings, especially contractors, aware of presence of asbestos
- Provide training and instruction for anyone likely to encounter ACMs. Specialist training is required for persons expected to work with or disturb ACMs
- Consider leaving well-sealed, undamaged asbestos alone but it may be better to remove damaged ACMs, seek expert help if unsure



Confined Spaces

- Stay out of buildings with slurry storage when mixing or pumping and do not re-enter for at least 30 minutes
- Do not stand on slurry mixing points or reception pits and slats even when located outside
- Use specialist contractors for work inside sealed silos or slurry storage systems
- Plan ahead, follow a safe system of work and make arrangements for rescue in an emergency



Roofs and Working at Height

- Avoid work on roofs or use a specialist contractor where reasonably practicable
- Make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people with the skills, knowledge, experience and equipment for working at height
- Where possible work from underneath the roof or from the ground
- When using Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) work from the basket – do not step onto the roof
- Ensure all operators of MEWPs and scaffolding have the appropriate training
- As a last resort, if work on a roof is unavoidable, prevent falls by using perimeter edge protection, roof ladders, crawling boards and roof light guards. Protection equipment should span across at least three purlins
- Think about safety harnesses and roof nets to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall
- Only use ladders for short duration work



Useful links:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/building.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/falls.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/welfare.htm>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/index.htm>