

HSE calls on farmers to make safety a priority after a series of serious incidents

Britain's workplace regulator says more must be done to improve farm safety after being notified of four fatalities on farms in just over a fortnight.

Fatal incidents the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has become aware of include the death of a three-year-old boy in Wales and a suspected cattle-trampling in Chippenham earlier this week.

There has also been a report of a separate incident involving members of the public being attacked by cattle.

The incidents come just three weeks after Farm Safety Week, when HSE issued its [Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain 2020/21](#) report highlighting the high fatality rate in the industry.

The figures showed that agriculture has the worst rate of fatal injuries of all the major industrial sectors, around 20 times higher than the average five-year annual rate across all industries.

HSE's acting head of agriculture Adrian Hodkinson said: "While we must respect the ongoing investigations following these tragic incidents, most injuries or deaths that we've historically seen on farms have been both predictable and preventable.

"Despite the efforts of the Farm Safety Partnership in particular, an industry-wide change in attitude is needed for farmers to take action to protect themselves and others to the well-known risks they face.

"At this time of year, we have additional factors such as the school holidays and higher numbers of members of the public enjoying the summer weather and walking along public footpaths through fields with cattle.

"But we ask that farmers, farm workers and farming contractors take the right steps to stop these incidents. At this time of year, it's important to manage risk from livestock and, with harvest well underway, to work safely with farm machinery.

He added: "The fatality rate within the sector is high, but there are simple measures workers can take to reduce risk including making sure to switch off the power to vehicles or machinery before attempting to carry out repairs, keeping people away from moving vehicles; and ensuring dairy bulls, and cows with calves are not in fields with public footpaths.

"We are urging people who work on farms to make safety a priority and help us to reduce the number of deaths and injuries in the industry."

Guidance in [managing livestock](#), [reducing the risks to children and the public](#), and [maintaining farm vehicles and machinery](#) is available on the HSE website.

Workers within the sector are also encouraged to seek help and advice from any of the Farm Safety Partnerships or leading farming organisations if they require guidance and support for specific tasks or activities.

Fatal incidents:

- Tuesday 27 July 2021: An investigation, led by Police Scotland with support from HSE, is ongoing after a man died in an apparent fall from height at a farm in Angus, Scotland.
- Tuesday 3 August 2021: An investigation, led by Dyfed Powys Police with support from HSE, is ongoing after a three-year-old boy died following a collision with a vehicle at a farm in Carmarthenshire, South Wales.
- Monday 9 August 2021: An investigation, led by Hampshire Police with support from HSE, is ongoing after a man died in a crushing incident involving a ramp falling from a truck at a farm in Hampshire.
- Tuesday 10 August 2021: An investigation, led by Avon and Somerset Police with support from HSE, is ongoing after a man was found with fatal injuries and surrounded by cattle at a field in Chippenham.

Notes to editors

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. The Fatal injuries in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Great Britain 2020/21 report highlights trends and provides summaries of each fatality involving employees, the self-employed and members of the public. The full report along with summaries of the circumstances of the individual fatal injuries can be read [here](#)
3. HSE continues to work with stakeholders across the farming and forestry sector to keep up the pressure to manage risk in the workplace to reduce the likelihood of serious injury, ill health and death. In relation to our response to Covid-19, this includes working with others e.g. public health authorities and government departments.
4. For information on how to stay healthy and safe in agriculture see HSE guidance [What a good farm looks like](#) and [Farmwise: Your essential guide to health and safety in agriculture](#).
5. Work related injuries must be reported to HSE by law. For information on the criteria for Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 visit: [\(RIDDOR\)](#)

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