

# Workplace Hazards in Horticulture

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

**Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.**

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Powered mobile plant including tractors, slashers, 2-wheel motorcycle, 4-wheel all terrain vehicles (ATV)	Operators, passengers, bystanders being rolled on or pinned underneath could lead to death or serious injury Crush injury to fingers, hands	<b>Students must NOT operate mobile plant</b>	<b>Students must NOT operate mobile plant</b>
Unlevelled terrain	Falls Cuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Place appropriate safety signs</li> <li>◆ Require appropriate PPE including safety footwear</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Observe safety signs</li> <li>◆ Wear PPE including safety footwear</li> </ul>
Dust	Foreign body in eye Respiratory effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide eye and respiratory protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Wear eye and respiratory protection provided</li> </ul>
Fertilisers Pesticides Herbicides Fuel	Skin contact may result in allergic reaction Swallowing or inhalation of fumes can lead to headache, nausea, dizziness, vomiting - poisoning, loss of consciousness and fatality.  Long-term exposure may result to chronic (ongoing) illness, including cancers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use least hazardous product for the task</li> <li>◆ Provide Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)</li> <li>◆ Dispense and mix in well-ventilated areas</li> <li>◆ Store and label chemicals appropriately</li> <li>◆ Ensure First Aid arrangements</li> <li>◆ Provide emergency eyewash bottle and/or shower</li> <li>◆ Provide appropriate PPE</li> <li>◆ Clean up spills immediately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use PPE provided</li> <li>◆ Follow safe working procedures when handling chemicals</li> <li>◆ Clean up spills immediately</li> </ul>
Noise and vibration	Hearing loss Musculoskeletal disorder, including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Maintain powered tools to reduce noise and avoid excessive vibration</li> <li>◆ Provide hearing protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Wear hearing protection provided</li> </ul>
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting, repetitive motions, awkward posture)	Musculoskeletal disorders, including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide mechanical aids</li> <li>◆ Document safe system of work</li> <li>◆ Provide training in safe manual handling techniques</li> <li>◆ Encourage team lifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use mechanical aids provided</li> <li>◆ Seek help when you think a team lift is required</li> <li>◆ Exercise: warm up/stretch before starting work, and cool down/stretch at end of the shift or working day</li> </ul>
Heat, or cold/wet weather conditions  Fatigue	Heat rashes, heat cramps, heat stress, dehydration, loss of fine motor controls, sunburn, numbness, frostbite, hypothermia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide regular rest breaks</li> <li>◆ Provide shade where practicable</li> <li>◆ Re-schedule work if extreme weather conditions present risk</li> <li>◆ Assess work hours in difficult conditions</li> <li>◆ Provide water in hot weather</li> <li>◆ Provide appropriate clothing / PPE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Be aware of potential for hot or cold weather conditions to cause illness – rest and seek assistance if you feel that heat or cold may be affecting you</li> <li>◆ Wear appropriate clothing and take regular rest breaks</li> </ul>
Handling soil Potting mixes	Legionnaire's disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Minimise dust</li> <li>◆ Provide appropriate clothing and PPE</li> <li>◆ Establish hygiene procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Follow hygiene procedures</li> <li>◆ Wear appropriate clothing and PPE</li> </ul>
Fertiliser store / silos	Falls from heights Suffocation	<b>Students must NOT work in confined spaces such as silos</b>	<b>Students must NOT work in confined spaces such as silos</b>
Contact with fungi, viruses and bacteria. Insects, snakes, vermin	Dermatitis Infectious diseases Snake or insect bite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide appropriate PPE</li> <li>◆ Provide First Aid kit and training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Wear appropriate PPE</li> </ul>
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Establish work place policy</li> <li>◆ Provide staff briefings or training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Report any concerns immediately</li> </ul>

