



Safe Sheep Shearing

AUGUST 2016



These good practice guidelines will help everyone involved in the shearing industry comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- > The ShearNZ programme and the New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association (NZSCA)
- > The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC)
- > The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA)
- > The Primary Industry Training Organisation
- > Taylored Ltd
- > Otago University
- > Canterbury University
- > Southern District Health Board.

These guidelines have been adapted from the publications:

- > Best practice guideline for the New Zealand shearing industry, Department of Labour et al, 2008
- > Best practice guideline for travel in the New Zealand wool harvesting industry, New Zealand Shearing Industry Health & Safety Committee, 2012.

Further reading

- > Prevention and management of discomfort, pain and injury for shearing and wool handlers (ACC)
- > Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 - Special Guide (WorkSafe New Zealand)
- > Health and safety recommendations for fasting sheep prior to shearing (WorkSafe New Zealand)
- > *Your safe driving policy* (NZTA and ACC)
- > *Code of practice for clip preparation* (New Zealand Wool Classers Association)
- > Health and safety manuals (NZSCA)
- > Tectra shearing handbook
- > Safe Sheep Handling Guide (WorkSafe New Zealand).

Photo on page 15 supplied by Beef + Lamb New Zealand.

SHEARING KEY POINTS:

Be aware of your responsibilities in and around the shearing shed.

Check shearing and crutching equipment regularly.

Use correct techniques when manually handling and shearing sheep.

Always wash and dry hands after contact with sheep to avoid diseases humans can catch from animals (zoonoses).

KEY CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND BEFORE READING THESE GUIDELINES

WHAT AND WHO IS A PCBU?

A 'PCBU' refers to a person conducting a business or undertaking. A PCBU can be an individual such as a farmer or independent shearer, or an organisation (eg a company).

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PCBU AND A WORKER

There is a clear difference between a PCBU and a worker when the PCBU is a company or organisation. However, when an individual person is a PCBU, (eg self-employed) the difference may be less clear.

When a self-employed person is working for themselves, eg a self-employed shearer (who dictates how their work is done and creates, and controls, risks) they are a PCBU. However, if a self-employed person is working for another PCBU (eg a contractor who controls what they do and how and when they do it) then they are a worker under that PCBU.

Example: Zac, a self-employed shearing contractor, has agreed to help out his mate Fabian who runs a shearing team. Both are PCBUs. Because Zac is going to be working for Fabian and Fabian will be controlling what, when, and how he works, even though he is a PCBU himself, Zac would be treated as a worker because Fabian is determining the work and controlling the risks that arise from that work.

WHAT DOES REASONABLY PRACTICABLE MEAN?

The term 'reasonably practicable' appears throughout HSWA. 'Reasonably practicable' is used to qualify duties to ensure health and safety.

There is no such thing as zero risk. The PCBU is not expected to guarantee the safety of their workers and others from work activities. Instead, PCBUs are held to a 'reasonably practicable' standard.

It is a judgement call the PCBU must make. It involves weighing a risk against the resources (time and cost) needed to manage it.

Something is reasonably practicable if it is, or was, at a particular time, reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, having weighed up and considered all relevant matters, including:

- > How likely is a hazard or risk to occur?
- > How severe could the harm that might result from the hazard or risk be?
- > What the person concerned knows or ought to reasonably know about the hazard or risk and the ways of eliminating or minimising the risk (eg by removing the source of the risk or using control measures such as isolation or physical controls to minimise it).
- > What measures exist to eliminate or minimise the risk (control measures)?
- > How available and suitable is the control measure(s)?

Lastly weigh up the cost:

- > What is the cost of eliminating or minimising the risk?
- > Is the cost grossly disproportionate to the risk?

For more information see the WorkSafe website: www.worksafe.govt.nz

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

These guidelines provide advice on how to keep people safe in the shearing industry. They also outline the risks involved in working in woolsheds and recommend ways to eliminate or minimise those risks.

WorkSafe considers these recommendations to be current industry good practice that aligns with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (HSWA).

SCOPE

These guidelines apply to farmers, farm staff, wool classers, shearing contractors, shearers, wool handlers, pressers, those who pen-up, neighbouring farmers who borrow or hire a woolshed and any other person involved in the shearing industry. Each person involved in shearing has different responsibilities. This document is broken into three main sections by responsibility.

WORKING IN WOOLSHEDS

This section is for people actually working in woolsheds and using equipment supplied by farmers or their own specialist gear. PCBUs also need to understand this information.

EVERYONE INVOLVED

Everyone needs to read this section: workers, shearing contractors and farmers. Everyone in the team needs to work together to address challenges like lack of skills, poor health, travel and workplace stress.

FARMERS

This section explains what farmers need to do to provide: well-maintained woolsheds, appropriate facilities and fixed equipment. This section also explains how to present sheep for shearing.

DEVELOPMENT

Industry experts helped WorkSafe develop these guidelines. WorkSafe also did a thorough review of accident statistics and published academic literature, and looked at how overseas health and safety regulators manage the same issues.

WorkSafe has done its best to make sure the risk controls in these guidelines reflect current good practice.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

IN THIS SECTION:

- 2.1 The farmer**
- 2.2 Shearing contractors**
- 2.3 Woolshed operations**
- 2.4 Woolshed workers**

Farm owners, managers, shearing contractors and everyone involved in the shearing team have a responsibility to make sure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that their work does not harm themselves or anyone else, including visitors.

This summary gives everyone a broad overview of their roles and responsibilities.

2.1 THE FARMER

The farm owner is a PCBU because they manage or control a workplace. The farm owner will be referred to as 'the farmer' or 'the farm owner' within these guidelines. The farm owner may not be actively farming, but may employ a farm manager or have a share farming arrangement to manage the day-to-day operations. The farmer's responsibilities include:

- > making sure the woolshed is in good working order – this includes the shearing machines, grinder, wool press, wool table, wool bins and the basic amenities needed
- > making sure their contractors have good health and safety processes
- > giving contractors and workers information about any significant risks, particularly any unusual aspects of machinery or equipment
- > preparing sheep for shearing
- > supplying satisfactory accommodation, where needed.

The farmer will have overlapping health and safety duties with other PCBUs in the shearing shed (such as the shearing contractor). In this case, the farmer and contractor must consult, cooperate and coordinate with each other to determine their influence and control over identified hazards and risks.

If the farmer directly employs people to do woolshed work (paying the PAYE and ACC levies on their behalf), this is called an 'open shed'. In this situation, the farmer as a PCBU has a responsibility for the health and safety of their workers. Farmers' other health and safety responsibilities include:

- > including workers in the development of health and safety procedures
- > having a systematic approach to check that woolsheds are safe and healthy working environments
- > identifying risks and eliminating or minimising them so far as is reasonably practicable
- > giving workers information, training and supervision as needed
- > having procedures in place to deal with emergencies
- > monitoring worker health and workplace exposure levels, so far as is reasonably practicable.

2.2 SHEARING CONTRACTORS

A contractor can be considered both a PCBU and a worker depending on the circumstances, but will be referred to as a 'contractor' within these guidelines.

Contractors must identify overlapping health and safety responsibilities with the farmer to make sure the woolshed and equipment are in good working order and the sheep are prepared correctly. This should be managed

through consultation, cooperation and coordination between the contractor and farmer. Contractors may also rely on their team leaders for day-to-day management of the team and communication with the farmer. Contractors' other health and safety responsibilities include:

- > identifying risks and eliminating or minimising them so far as is reasonably practicable
- > having a systematic approach to check that woolsheds are safe working environments
- > including workers in the development of health and safety procedures
- > monitoring worker health and workplace exposure levels, so far as is reasonably practicable
- > giving workers information, training and supervision as needed
- > providing procedures for safe travel
- > having procedures in place to deal with emergencies.

2.3 WOOLSHED OPERATIONS

The PCBU in charge of woolshed operations has a duty to keep people safe in the woolshed so far as is reasonably practicable.

2.4 WOOLSHED WORKERS

Everyone involved in the shearing process has a responsibility to make sure good health and safety practices are followed. These include:

- > following the PCBU's health and safety policies and procedures
- > reporting work hazards, risks and incidents
- > complying with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU to comply with health and safety
- > ensuring that their actions do not adversely affect the health and safety of others
- > taking care of their own health and safety
- > using personal protective equipment, such as safety glasses and ear plugs.



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WORKING IN WOOLSHEDS

IN THIS SECTION:

- 3.1 Demands of the job (physical and psychological)**
- 3.2 Animal handling**
- 3.3 Using tools and equipment**

3.1 DEMANDS OF THE JOB (PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL)

Shearing and wool handling are very physical jobs that involve long hours of work. The physical demands can change throughout the day for any number of reasons. Weather, different sheep types/breeds, machinery failure, lack of clarity on what's needed for the current job and even conflict with fellow workers, the contractor or the farmer can all affect the work schedule.

There are also other physical and psychological reasons outside the workplace that can affect how well people work. Sleep deprivation, poor diet, relationship problems, money problems, alcohol and drug abuse, health problems and the uncertainty about the continuity of work are examples of issues that can affect people's ability to work safely.

Key steps to dealing with these issues are:

- > eliminating the risk, so far as is reasonably practicable
- > if the risk cannot be eliminated then minimising it, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Tools to keep people healthy and safe

PCBU:

- > **Communication:** Good communication is vital for a safe working environment.
 - Effective planning between the contractor, farmer and any other PCBU is essential.
 - Current market requirements and the farmer's individual needs will set what size shearing team and skills are needed.
 - Planning should include preparation of the woolshed, equipment and sheep.
- > **Team leadership:** Having a team leader means there are clear lines of communication and someone has the

power to act on behalf of the contractor and the farmer. Every team should have a team leader.

- > **A supervisor/mentor:** This arrangement is recommended for inexperienced workers or where stress factors exist.
- > **Hours of work:** Woolsheds usually run between the hours of 5.00 am and 6.00 pm. To make sure a job is finished a late cut-out may be agreed. People should work no longer than two hours non-stop, followed by a rest for a fixed and known period, such as morning tea (30 minute break) and lunch (45-60 minute break).
- > **Rest periods:** PCBUs have a duty to eliminate or minimise factors causing worker fatigue to stop burn out occurring. This includes monitoring workers to ensure they have sufficient recovery time between shifts and regular rest days.

Worker:

- > **Communication:** Anyone with health or other non-work related problems should tell the team leader or relevant PCBU as soon they can.
- > **Physical fitness:** People doing shearing and shed work need a reasonable level of fitness. Workers are responsible for keeping themselves fit. Doing exercises reduces the chance of injuries. People should do exercises for strength, to improve the cardiovascular system and increase flexibility. Workers should do adequate warm up and warm down exercises at the start and end of each run, such as going for a brisk walk to raise body temperature.
- > **Back care:** In addition to general fitness, shearers should take special care of their backs. A good shearing technique avoids unnecessary pressure on the back and keeps the spine relatively straight while under load.

Shearers should:

- do exercise programmes that include strengthening and extension exercises (seek professional advice)
 - keep their lower back warm, particularly in draughty woolsheds, for example use a back-warmer and wear extra layers during breaks
 - take every chance to straighten and extend their back beyond vertical while standing or lying down
 - use a lumbar support while sitting at break times, in vehicles or chairs
 - use a back support (bungy) to support the upper body (making sure any back support is securely fixed and avoiding electrical wiring).
- > **Hydration:** Drink clean water often to avoid dehydration.

3.2 ANIMAL HANDLING

Injuries such as bruising, back and knee strains can be caused when handling sheep. Sheep are unpredictable and have a tendency to charge when they see a chance to escape, particularly when held in pens. Always be aware that sheep can cause injuries, especially to knees.

PCBU:

- > **Penning-up sheep:** Well-designed pens can improve safety.
- > **Shearing and crutching:** These jobs are highly skilled. Training gives people ways to reduce physical stress and make the job easier. Mentoring from senior members of the team and experience help people develop the technique and approach to the job that is needed.
- > **Rams:** Due to their size and strength, a second person should be available to assist with shearing rams. Particularly if they manage to get free on the board.

Worker:

- > **Penning-up sheep:** Suitable footwear should be worn when yarding, to protect from injury (eg if a sheep stands on a foot).
- > **Lifting sheep:** Lifting sheep should be avoided. However, if they must be lifted, make sure knees are bent and leg muscles used. For further information on safely lifting sheep see WorkSafe's Safe Sheep Handling Guide on the Safer Farms website: www.saferfarms.org.nz
- > **Catching and dragging sheep:** To save energy and avoid back strain, handlers should use the right techniques when catching and dragging sheep for shearing or crutching. The preferred method for sheep is to:
 - turn the sheep's head onto its shoulder
 - hold the sheep against braced knees with one hand under the chin and one on the rump
 - turn the sheep's head to the rear while the other hand forces the hindquarters down
 - when the sheep is no longer standing on its feet, lift the front leg while walking backwards and sit the sheep on its rump.

For further information see the *Safe Sheep Handling Guidelines* on the Safer Farms website: www.saferfarms.org.nz

3.3 USING TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

This section focuses on the responsibilities of people using tools and equipment.

Generally, the farmer provides the fixed equipment (like shearing machines, wool press and grinder) and is responsible for keeping this equipment in working order. However, users should always check equipment before using it.

Shearers generally bring their own shearing handpieces, combs, cutters and other equipment (as agreed with the farmer).

They need to keep their own equipment in working order and use all equipment safely.

HANDPIECES

A worn out, poorly adjusted or maintained handpiece will vibrate, heat up, cut poorly, create more noise and put more physical strain on the shearer, particularly their hands and arms. It can also cause a mechanical lock-up. A lock-up can cause broken bones and severe wounds to the shearer and people nearby.

Shearers must keep handpieces in good working order and replace worn parts.

Regular safety checks should include:

- > The correct set-up of the comb and cutter on the handpiece. Screws tight, fork pins secure in the cutter holes and tension on. In short, screws tight | pins in | tension on.
- > The tension spring, fork yoke retaining bar and tension spring retaining pin should be in position and working.
- > The spline drive (connecting the handpiece to the down tube) should release easily.
- > The leather guard protecting the cogs must be effective.

SHEARING MACHINES

All users should check shearing machines before using them. Check that the:

- > machine is secured to the wall
- > electrical switch and wiring is in good condition
- > downtube is correctly set and lubricated.

Many modern machines have an automatic cut-out function but most older models do not. This helps to stop lock-ups and injuries from occurring. If older model machines without automatic cut-outs are being used,

users should always check to see that the spline (worm) drive will come off the downtube easily.

STORAGE OF TOOLS

Loose tools and equipment on the shearing board are a hazard that can cause bad cuts, slips and trips.

- > Workers should store their tools and equipment clear of the work area.
- > Shearers must position their handpieces appropriately while catching each sheep to avoid blocking or tripping anyone.
- > Wool handlers should keep their sweeps out of the way to avoid blocking or tripping anyone.

USING THE GRINDER

Grinders can cause serious injuries when used incorrectly or without care and attention. Users also face damage to their eyes and hearing. The user and others nearby can be hit by flying combs, cutters and even grinder disks. Grinders should only be operated by persons with appropriate training or supervision.

Grinder users should:

- > check that the grinder is in working order and:
 - is well lit and securely anchored in place
 - is in a dedicated area, away from high traffic areas or only used when others are not in the area
 - has secure guards to reduce the risk of anything flying up and hitting the person using the grinder
 - there are effective guards in place covering any drive belts (if applicable)
 - the emery papers are securely glued onto the disks, with no air bubbles under the paper.

- > before starting the grinder up, manually check that the disks are secured by trying to turn disks in opposite directions at the same time
- > check that the pendulum pins are long enough to hold the comb or cutter in place
- > check that the pendulum pins are in the holes before grinding each comb or cutter
- > make sure the disks have stopped spinning before leaving the machine or make sure the next person to use the grinder knows they are still spinning
- > use safety glasses (which allow good vision) and ear protection. Users must keep glasses and ear protection in good condition
- > keep the floor area clear of obstacles (eg shoes, clothing or bags)
- > avoid loose clothing and tie back long hair
- > eliminate or minimise the risks by creating exclusion zones around the grinder for any workers nearby.

USING THE WOOL PRESS

Poorly maintained or modified wool presses pose significant hazards. Inexperienced users and taking shortcuts can cause accidents and injuries. The most common serious injuries include trapped limbs, bad cuts, broken bones, damage to teeth and electrocution.

Wool presses vary in make, model and type. PCBUs should ensure:

- > users are skilled in the use of each wool press they operate, or are supervised by someone who is
- > that the location of the wool press is safe and convenient. This includes consideration of the strength of the floor, accessibility for everyone in the team and access to electricity if required (if there are doubts about relocation, check with the contractor or farmer)
- > block and tackle or double action ratchet wool presses are not used.

Hydraulic and electrical presses are powered by mains electricity (or similar). Neglected or poor electric maintenance can be lethal. Electrical parts of wool presses should be currently certified by a qualified person.

PCBUs need to ensure that electrical presses have properly secured leads and cables clear of any moving parts, such as the ram, monkey, doors, press wheels and bale barrow wheels. This reduces electrical risks. Any sprockets and chains on electric presses must be fully guarded.

The user of the wool press or people working near wool presses should:

- > accept advice on any different type/brand/model of wool presses and follow the manufacturer's instructions for each different make and model
- > take reasonable steps to keep themselves and others safe.

USER CHECKS:

Users should always check that all powered wool presses have a safety stop mechanism. This is a switch that stops the press if it is 'tripped'. The switch must be easy to reach for the user or a bystander.

Hydraulic presses: users should always check hydraulic lines before using the press and make sure any worn lines are replaced. Hydraulic hoses that burst under pressure can cause serious burns or injuries.

Manual presses: many older manual presses have worn mechanisms that fail suddenly due to their age, increasing the risk of serious injury to the user.

Users' safety checks before use should include:

- > the condition of the boxes
- > the operation of the hoist brake
- > the condition of the wire and nylon ropes (replace any that are frayed or worn).

KEEPING SAFE

Users should ask for help:

- > when lifting fadges or large amounts of wool into the wool press
- > to stack or load the bales when needed
- > cranking down the handle on a manual press, where necessary.

Users should use the right tools:

- > Use bale hooks and trolleys to reduce the risk of injury.
- > Make sure bale hooks are always facing away from the operator and other people when clipping bales.
- > Wear appropriate footwear and take care to get a firm foot hold to avoid injuries caused while climbing in and out of the wool press.
- > Use the correct tool for clipping bales and always make sure that the points of wool bale clips are not sticking out of wool bales.



04/

EVERYONE INVOLVED (WORKERS, SHEARING CONTRACTORS AND FARMERS)

IN THIS SECTION:

- 4.1 PCBU's Responsibilities**
- 4.2 Worker Exposure and Health Monitoring**
- 4.3 Capability and Training**
- 4.4 Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)**
- 4.5 Woolshed Noise**
- 4.6 Stress**
- 4.7 Depression**
- 4.8 Drugs and Alcohol**
- 4.9 Health**
- 4.10 Travel**
- 4.11 Emergencies**

4.1 PCBU'S RESPONSIBILITIES

PCBUs have a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their workers and other workers whose activities they influence or direct.

PCBUs must eliminate risks so far as is reasonably practicable and where this is not possible they must minimise them.

PCBUs have a duty to monitor the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace to ensure that workers are not injured or made ill by their work.

4.2 WORKER EXPOSURE AND HEALTH MONITORING

EXPOSURE MONITORING

Exposure monitoring means the measurement and evaluation of exposure to a health hazard experienced by a person and includes:

- > monitoring of the conditions at the workplace
- > biological monitoring of people.

It is a way to measure if workers are potentially being exposed to a hazard at harmful levels.

It can also show if control measures are working effectively.

PCBUs have a duty to monitor workplace exposure and the conditions at the workplace to ensure that workers are not injured or made ill by their work, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Follow the recommendations of an occupational health practitioner with experience in exposure monitoring when determining what type of exposure monitoring is required. Results from exposure monitoring should be used to improve controls.

For information about substances hazardous to health and prescribed exposure standards, see WorkSafe's website: www.worksafe.govt.nz

HEALTH MONITORING

Health monitoring, in relation to an individual, means monitoring of the individual to identify any changes in his or her health status. It's a way to check if workers are getting sick from being exposed to hazards while carrying out their work. Health monitoring aims to detect early signs of ill-health or disease, and can show if control measures are working effectively.

PCBUs have a duty to monitor the health of workers.

Follow the recommendations of an occupational health practitioner with experience in health monitoring when determining what type of health monitoring is required. Results from health monitoring should be shared with individual workers and used to improve controls.

For information about health monitoring, see WorkSafe's website www.worksafe.govt.nz

4.3 CAPABILITY AND TRAINING

Shearing teams are generally made up of a mix of highly skilled individuals and those with less capability.

Appropriate training, mentoring and supervision should be in place to keep the workplace safe and productive. The identification of any skill gaps will help decide what education, training and supervision may be needed so people can do their job safely and well.

Core roles: shearing, wool handling, pressing, penning-up.

Additional knowledge and skills: team leadership, health and safety, first aid, driver training.

Education and training can be in-house or a formal programme. The aim is make sure each person and the team as a whole can deliver a safe and effective service.

Information and training for people is an important part of any effective health and safety system.

MANAGING THE RISKS

STAFF INDUCTION

The PCBU should make sure that no one does any work before they are told about the hazards and risks of the job, and what to do to avoid them.

HEALTH AND SAFETY SYSTEM

PCBUs should have a practical health and safety system and ensure that workers understand it.

It should cover:

- > identification, assessment and management of existing and new risks
- > worker health and exposure monitoring.
- > reporting any incidents and injuries
- > travelling to and from work
- > dealing with emergencies in each workplace.

INFORMATION AND TRAINING

Jobs in the woolshed need a high level of skill.

The PCBU must ensure the provision of any information, training, instruction or supervision that is necessary to protect all persons from risks to their health and safety at work.

PCBUs must make sure:

- > workers have enough skill to do their job
- > learners and junior workers are supervised
- > each team has a leader
- > formal training is completed as required.

4.4 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

PPE should not be the first or only control considered when managing a risk. PCBUs must try and eliminate a risk before considering controls such as PPE to minimise it. In addition to other workplace controls wearing the right PPE is an important part of staying safe in the workplace. Wear the right clothes for the job being done. Footwear needs to cover the whole foot and give good grip and stability.

PPE INCLUDES:

- > shearing – Suitable clothing, moccasins, ear plugs
- > wool handling, pressing and penning-up – Suitable clothing, footwear and ear plugs
- > grinding – safety glasses and ear plugs or muffs.

Workers have a responsibility to wear or use PPE provided by the PCBU.

4.5 WOOLSHED NOISE

Hearing loss caused by noise in the woolshed is a significant problem. Volume is not the only problem; it's also the length of time people spend exposed to noise in a woolshed. Over time, people will lose their hearing, to some degree, because of the noise.

Most of the noise in woolsheds comes from the handpiece, cogs and the down tube; but radio, crashing of gates, the press and noise from the sheep all add up to a harmful level of between 86 dB(A) to over 90 dB(A). An increase of 3 dB is actually doubling the noise level. The recognised maximum exposure to noise over eight hours each day is 85 dB. Working more than eight hours per day means the maximum noise exposure level would be less than 85 dB.

MANAGING THE RISKS

Farmers and contractors must eliminate or minimise noise, so far as is reasonably practicable. If the noise cannot be eliminated then people working in woolsheds should minimise noise by:

FARMERS

- > Create exclusion zones around noisy machinery.
- > Keeping the motors and downtubes well maintained:
 - set up and lubricate moving parts in the downtubes to manufacturer's specification

- shave shearing machines maintained by a professional on a regular basis
- make sure that motors are well mounted.
- > Implementing a 'buy quiet' policy when replacing or buying new machinery so far as is reasonably practicable.
- > Taking reasonable steps to reduce noise from banging gates, etc.
- > Providing a high central location (with power) for the radio.

WORKERS IN THE SHED

- > Be aware of exclusion zones around noisy machinery.
- > Talk to the farmer or get the contractor to talk to the farmer about ways to reduce noise in the shed.
- > Keeping their gear sharp and lubricated and in the wool while running. Blunt gear = more tension = friction = noise.
- > Putting the radio high in the shed in a central location so everyone can hear it but no one gets blasted.
- > Using ear plugs or muffs.

4.6 STRESS

Stress can develop as a result of a worker being unable to cope with the demands placed on them. Stress affects everyone differently, including how well they can do their job. In a safe and healthy workplace, PCBUs must manage the demands on workers to eliminate or minimise the risk of stress.

Demands come in a number of forms:

- > physical factors, such as heat, noise and cold
- > physiological factors, such as shift work, inadequate rest time (caused by work, such as unrealistic deadlines)
- > work factors, such as lack of control/ autonomy, work relationships and/or job insecurity
- > personal factors, such as health.

MANAGING THE RISKS

PCBUs should take reasonable steps to prevent the occurrence of work-related stress, these include:

- > giving workers a good induction to employment and ongoing training when needed
- > keeping the lines of communication open
- > keeping worker's confidence, unless the wellbeing of a staff member is threatened
- > keeping the workplace safe and functional
- > having policies and procedures for monitoring work hours and demands so they aren't excessive
- > encouraging everyone to take scheduled breaks and annual leave
- > giving people a chance to rest and relax
- > not tolerating workplace bullying
- > recognising that staff members can have personal problems that affect their work sometimes (talking with them can help)
- > helping staff deal with stress, such as letting them take leave, giving them training and/or access to professional counselling.

4.7 DEPRESSION

Depression is an illness that affects every part of someone's life, and they may not even know they have it. It makes it much harder for people to cope with everyday stresses in life.

Key signs are:

- > constantly feeling down or hopeless
- > not interested in things they used to enjoy
- > irritability or restlessness
- > feeling tired all the time, or general loss of energy
- > feelings of emptiness or loneliness
- > sleep problems – too much, or too little
- > weight loss or gain
- > low self-esteem
- > problems with concentration
- > reduced sex drive
- > thinking about death a lot.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK YOU MIGHT HAVE DEPRESSION

- > Talk to someone you trust about how you feel.
- > Talk to your doctor or a health professional – make sure you have a say in your choice of treatment.
- > If you have thoughts of harming yourself ask someone you trust to stay with you so you can get help quickly.

'Hardening up' isn't the answer. Keeping things to yourself or turning to alcohol and drugs do not help. The hardest thing to do is the only way to get better: ask for help, and keep asking until you get the help you need.

It is unusual to recognise depression if you are affected by it, so we all have a role to play, by watching out for its effects on our work mates.

You can call 0800 111 757 or visit: www.depression.org.nz for help.

4.8 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Drugs and alcohol can impair workers and make them more prone to accidents. Chronic overuse can also lead to serious ongoing health problems.

MANAGING THE RISKS

- > Set up and run a drug and alcohol policy.
- > Recognise when something compromises a workers' ability to work safely and do something about it.
- > If there are rules to help manage these issues, they need to be made clear, well known and applied consistently.
- > Workers must take reasonable steps to be fit for work.

HOST RESPONSIBILITIES

PCBUs should manage how their staff drink alcohol at work functions. They must not let people work when they are under the influence of alcohol.

PCBUs should, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- > approve the function
- > have a sober driver if work-related travel is needed after the function
- > have food and non-alcoholic drinks available
- > secure the keys of work vehicles.

4.9 HEALTH

GASTROENTERITIS

Stomach bugs (such as gastroenteritis and campylobacter) can be caught in woolsheds. They are caught from infected water, food and people.

MANAGING THE RISKS

Avoid getting sick with these simple steps:

- > make sure drinking water is clean – workers should bring their own if they are unsure of the supply at the woolshed
- > do not share drinking bottles or mugs with others
- > prepare food in a clean place
- > always wash and dry hands thoroughly and use own towels.

DISEASES FROM ANIMALS (ZOOSES)

Zoonoses are serious diseases that humans catch from animals. They can be life-threatening. Working in a woolshed can expose workers to infection. Sheep can have diseases that humans can catch, such as leptospirosis, listeriosis, orf, ringworm and salmonella.

Workers can catch diseases from animals in a number of ways:

- > having blood, urine, or dung splashed in eyes, nose or mouth
- > through cracked skin or open cuts
- > breathing in dust or micro-organisms in the air
- > eating or drinking infected animal products
- > being bitten by a fly, mosquito, tick or flea that has also bitten a sick animal.

Some diseases caught from animals, like leptospirosis or E. coli infections, will need to be reported to WorkSafe.

For more information on notifiable events see WorkSafe's website: www.worksafe.govt.nz

MANAGING THE RISKS

Farmers and contractors can eliminate or minimise the risk of catching diseases from animals by encouraging workers to:

- > wash their hands thoroughly using soap and always drying their hands well. (waterless alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to kill germs on clean hands.)

This is particularly important:

- before eating and drinking
 - after any contact with sheep, after removing work clothes, and when leaving work areas
 - after touching sheep blood, urine and body substances
- > make sure visitors wash their hands properly
 - > eat meals away from animal areas, where possible
 - > cover cuts and scrapes where possible – clean all wounds properly.

Workers need to be particularly careful about the above when working with sick or injured sheep.

WOOL ABSCESSSES

There are two main types of wool abscesses. The first, 'wool worm' is most likely to occur on hot days when fine wool fibres get through clothes and work their way under the skin. They usually form in breasts, legs, forearms or between fingers; but can be anywhere. The second, 'grease boils' are more likely to form when the wool is wet, greasy or dirty.

MANAGING THE RISKS

- > Wash thoroughly at every break.
- > Wash and change working clothes immediately after work.
- > Women can wear a bra made of material that stops the wool fibres, or put plastic wrap or nursing pads in their bra.

4.10 TRAVEL

Car crashes are the most likely cause of severe injury or death for people working in the shearing industry. Poor roads, time of travel and fatigue all make driving dangerous.

Everyone in the industry has a responsibility to ensure safe transport.

PERSON CONDUCTING A BUSINESS OR UNDERTAKING (PCBU)

PCBUs have legal responsibilities for the people they employ (pay wages to). Shearers, wool handlers and pressers are not employed as drivers, but many take on this responsibility so PCBUs must take reasonable steps to avoid accidents.

PCBUs must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- > make sure all vehicles taking employees to work are safe, clean, roadworthy and meet NZTA rules
- > make sure workers are safe and drivers hold a current driver licence
- > consider how tired someone is before letting them drive (think about how many days in a row the person has worked and how many hours were worked that day). People should aim not to drive for longer than an hour at the end of a day's work (consider sharing the driving if possible).

PCBUs should, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- > offer drivers training, such as defensive driving courses or advanced driver training
- > talk to drivers often about the:
 - status of their licence
 - condition of vehicles
 - weather and road conditions
 - local conditions, such as ice, sun-strike, dust, shingle road
- > have an emergency information sheet in the vehicle, with emergency services contact details and what to do if there's an accident. It should include directions and the typical travel time for each destination
- > have a back-up driver if teams need to travel more than one hour, to or from work
- > develop and enforce a safe driving policy as part of their health and safety programme
- > check workers driver licences when they are hired, if they are likely to be used as a driver

- > give this information to all drivers and display a summary for workers in vehicles, shearing quarters and business offices
- > tell all workers that they must:
 - wear their seatbelts
 - help the driver and not distract them.

VEHICLE OWNERS

This section applies to anyone who owns a vehicle used for getting shearing teams to and from work.

Vehicles owners' (or lessees') responsibilities are:

DRIVERS

- > Must be fully licensed while driving others to and from work (and hold additional endorsements as legally required).
- > Must wear a seat belt.
- > Must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

VEHICLES

- > All vehicles must have a current warrant (or certificate) of fitness (WoF and CoF) and registration (vehicles with 13 or more seats need a CoF).
- > If larger passenger service vehicles (like a bus) are used, the business must:
 - have a passenger service licence
 - obey the work time and logbook rules
 - display a transport service licence (TSL) label in the front window of the vehicle.
- > Any design changes to fitted seats, or extra seats, must be certified.
- > All seats should have working seatbelts, whatever age or type of vehicle. Even though, legally, some older vehicles with more than nine seats can be warranted without seat belts, if provided seatbelts should be worn.
- > Everyone in the vehicle must have a seat.
- > All vehicles should have a secure storage area (a separate compartment in the vehicle

- or a customised trailer to transport boxes, sweeps, appliances and other equipment).
- > All vehicles should have a fire extinguisher and first aid kit.
- > It's a good idea to fit vehicles with high visibility seat belt slippers, torches and triangles – in case of an emergency.

CHECK AND MAINTAIN VEHICLES

The vehicle owner (or their representative) should:

- > fix or report any problems
- > do weekly checks for things like tyre pressure, clean and working headlights, brake lights and signal lights and clean windows
- > service the vehicle, as recommended by the vehicle manufacturer. Keep an up-to-date vehicle-specific maintenance schedule
- > never let an unsafe vehicle be driven.

DRIVERS

This section applies to anyone who drives vehicles to get people to or from work. Driving and the safety of passengers is a major responsibility.

Drivers must:

- > be fully licensed while taking others to and from work (and hold any additional endorsements as legally required)
- > wear a seat belt
- > not drive drunk or while under the influence of drugs
- > not drive tired (pull over or swap drivers)
- > drive at a safe speed for the road, considering the conditions
- > report all accidents, close calls, vehicle maintenance issues and driving infringements to the vehicle owner.

Drivers should:

- > be authorised to drive by the PCBU
- > tell the vehicle owner immediately of any change in their driver licence status
- > tell all passengers to wear safety belts

- > avoid distractions while driving
- > take extra care when towing trailers (maximum speed for towing is 90 km/h).

PASSENGERS

While vehicle owners, workers and drivers take the most responsibility; passengers must play their part to keep themselves and others safe.

This includes:

- > wearing seat belts
- > not distracting the driver, especially when they're in the front seat
- > putting gear in a separate compartment.

4.11 EMERGENCIES

Most shearing is done in remote locations, where communication can be difficult. It is vital that workers can call for help as soon as possible in an emergency.

MANAGING THE RISKS

- > Display gathering points and emergency contact details. These should include:
 - where the nearest landline telephone is
 - where there is mobile phone reception
 - contact details for emergency medical services
 - the physical address or GPS location of the woolshed
 - contact details of the contractor and the farmer.
- > Make sure all workers know the emergency procedures.
- > Put signs up on emergency exits and keep them clear.
- > Have working fire extinguishers.
- > Have first aid kits handy for all workers in vehicles, woolsheds and quarters and keep them well stocked.

Most workplace injuries are cuts, strains and sprains. First aid kits should be equipped to deal with these. A first aid kit is for stabilising an injured person until professional help is received.

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FARMERS

IN THIS SECTION:

- 5.1 Woolsheds
- 5.2 Woolshed equipment
- 5.3 Conditions in the woolshed
- 5.4 Sheep preparation
- 5.5 Fasting sheep before shearing

5.1 WOOLSHEDS

ACCESS

Farmers need to make it healthy and safe, so far as reasonably practicable, for everyone entering the workplace or property.

- > **Access to property:** Make sure roads to the woolshed are safe for vehicles to use.
- > **Car park:** Have a clear area for parking so vehicle access is safe. Any car park should be gravelled so it's safe to use in winter.
- > **Steps and landings:** Steps and landings should be provided for access to elevated sheds or raised boards as required, and they should:
 - be properly designed for their purpose
 - be sound
 - have wide treads
 - have a non-slip surface (eg chicken netting stapled to wooden steps can make steps safer)
 - have a handrail if the shed is over one metre off the ground
 - have good lighting (a sensor light is the preferred option above outside steps).
- > **Emergency exits:** Check that doors are easily opened and closed. Big sliding doors can be a problem if they are difficult to move. Keep exits clear of obstacles so people can get out safely.

SHEEP PENS AND GATES

People can be injured by slips, trips and falls in sheep pens, races and gates. Farmers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that hazards and risks in pens are eliminated or minimised. The presser, or person penning-up, is not responsible for yarding sheep other than inside the woolshed.

Farmers should:

- > keep gate hinges, catches, railings and stops in good working order
- > make sure pen gates can swing easily
- > check pens and gates for any sharp edges, anything sticking out or splinters before each shearing season and remove them
- > enclose any counterweights fitted to gates
- > block light coming from under the grating if it is causing sheep to hesitate or turn back during penning.

Below are some risks and how to manage them:

- > **Catching pens, gateways and doors:** Catching pens, gateways and doors can injure people if not well maintained or designed.
- > **Pen size:** Very large pens mean people have to drag sheep too far. Small pens make it harder to move when catching sheep and frequent penning-up creates disruption. Ideally, catching pens should hold 12–15 adult sheep.
- > **Grating:** Any grating should run towards the catching pen doors, making it easier for the shearer to tip the sheep back towards the door. Grating that runs across the catching pen allows sheep to get a foothold, making it harder to control the sheep, making twisting and other back injuries more likely.
- > **Pen doors:** The size, weight and action of the catching pen doors can create risks.
 - Keep spring resistance of pen doors to a minimum so the top edge of the pen door does not impact severely on the shearer in the lower back.
 - Put broad padding on the inside of doors at the height of the lower back, about 1.2 metres.

- Make doors from light material that is smooth on both sides; make sure nothing is sticking out of the door.
 - Ensure pen doors close by themselves after catching each sheep.
 - Canvas flaps may be required at the bottom of doors to prevent light coming through and sheep escaping onto the board.
- > **The drag:** Catching pens and doors that are located too close or too far away from the shearing down tube add strain on the shearer. The shearer should be able to walk backwards from the catching pen door to the down tube without needing to twist or turn more than 90 degrees (right angles). Keep the distance from the back of the catching pen to the down tube to a minimum.

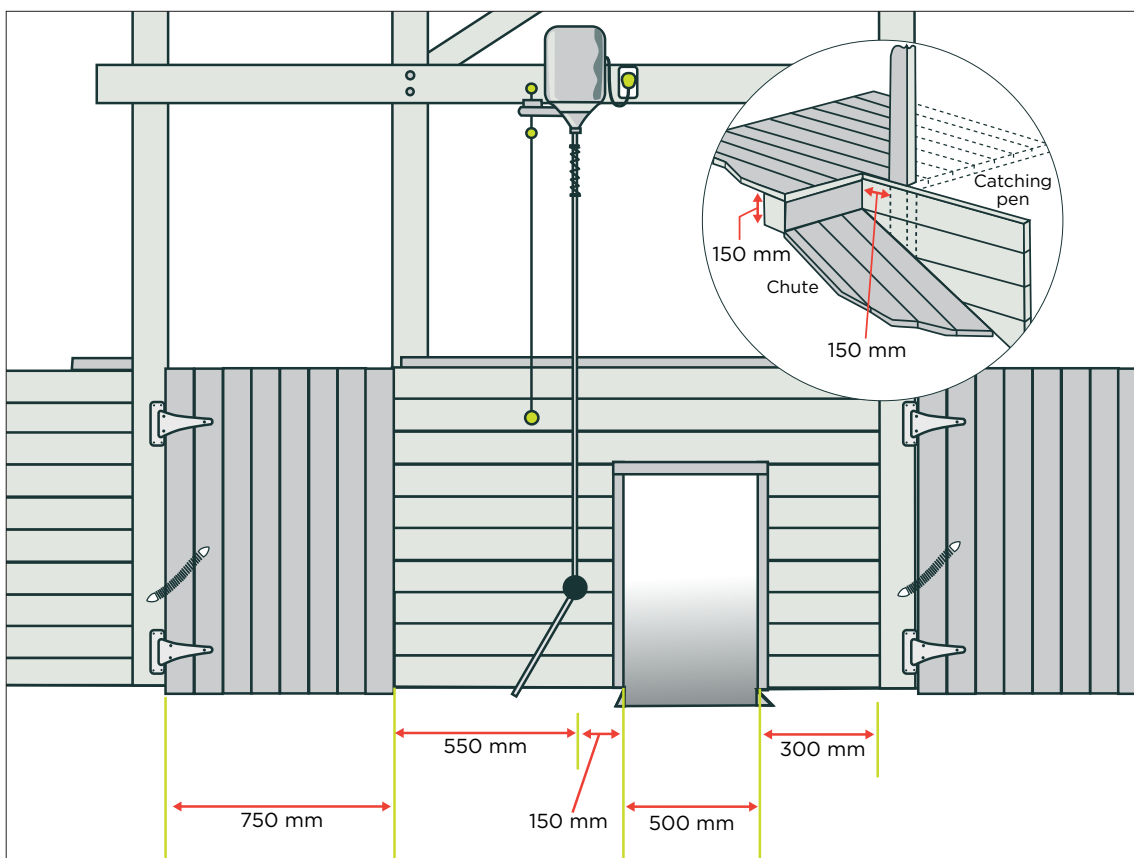


Figure 1: The shearing stand: picture shows correct chute construction. Inset shows 150 mm indent into shearing board and 150 mm immediate drop

THE SHEARING BOARD

The floor of the shearing board is a very busy place. Farmers must make sure steps are taken to reduce hazards and risks and the chance of injury so far as is reasonably practicable. Below are some risks and how to manage them.

- > **Floor:** A slippery shearing board makes it harder for shearers to keep control of the sheep and increases the risk of slipping over causing injuries. Farmers need to keep the floor in good condition. Do not varnish the shearing board. Tongue and groove wood makes a good floor; it gives good grip, is strong and slow wearing.
- > **Space:** Without enough floor space people can get in the road and collide with each other. Farmers need to make sure there is enough space for all workers to do their job safely and properly. The shearer must be able to work without going into the next shearer's work space or path to the catching pen. When building or changing a shed allow 2.3 metres between downtubes and take the size of sheep into consideration.
- > **Back harnesses (bungy) fixing point:** Shearers need a suitable fixing point above the board for their back harnesses. The fixing point should be clear of any machinery, lights and wiring.
- > **Chutes/portholes/count-out pen:** The sheep should have a clear exit from the shearing board that needs the least effort from the shearers. When building or renovating, indent the entrance of the chute into the shearing board by 100–150 mm, with the front edge lower than the floor, for easy release of sheep. Ensure that chutes and doorways are big enough so large sheep can exit more easily. When changing the count-out pen, think about where chutes and doorways are put to limit drafts or glare on the board.

THE WOOL ROOM

Farmers must make sure steps are taken to reduce hazards and risks and the chance of injury in the wool room so far as is reasonably practicable. Below are some risks and how to manage them.

- > **Board:** Continual bending and reaching to pick up fleeces can cause injury. Raised shearing boards reduce the risk of back strain when picking up. However, flat boards may be more appropriate for second shears and lambs where a swivel sweep is used.
- > **Wool room space:** Without enough space in the wool room, workers may collide with each other or machinery, increasing the risk of injury. Keep at least one metre of clear space around the shearing board end and working sides of the wool table. Keep at least two metres between any machine and the wool table. Remove any obstacles between the board and the wool table.
- > **Wool table:** Wool tables that are the wrong height or size for current fleeces can cause back strain. A well-designed wool table is essential for safe work. The table height should be adjustable. There should also be no broken slates or protruding objects around the side of the table.
- > **Floor surfaces:** Uneven floors increase the risk of trips, slips and falls. Keep floors clear and in good condition. Any nails sticking out should be counter sunk. Repair or replace any uneven, loose or slippery boards. If there is a concrete floor, some impact absorbing material is required considering the amount of speed and movement required of wool handlers.
- > **Wool bins:** Wool handlers should be able to get to wool bins easily. Wool bins should be light and easy to move. Cover or remove anything sticking out on a wool bin. Keep wool bins well maintained.

- > **Bale trolleys:** Where a bale trolley is used, the floor must be level and strong enough to take the trolley and a heavy wool bale.
- > **Tidiness:** Keep the wool room tidy and clean.
- > **Lighting:** Make sure all work areas are well lit at all times of the day and year.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

The electrical wiring and fittings of machinery connected to the mains supply (or similar) must meet the Electricity (Safety) Regulations 2010. All electrical portable or hand-held machinery should be used with an isolating transformer or residual current device (RCD). Get information from your power company or electrical inspector on the right types of device and how to use them.

Given the nature of shearing sheds in particular, WorkSafe recommends the use of a portable RCD. This will protect those using electrical equipment from serious harm caused by possible electric shock.

Electric tools which plug into the mains are considered equipment and must be safe. The tool and its supply lead and plug should be visually checked for obvious damage before use every day. Where any damage to the cord insulation is found the tool must not be used until repaired. This includes any excessive looseness where the cord enters the equipment or plug, especially where the visible coloured conductors can be seen.

In addition to a daily check, the equipment should be regularly verified for safety. One recognised method for this verification is to have the equipment tested and tagged by a 'competent person' (a competent person is someone who is recognised as having appropriate training and experience), in accordance with *AS/NZS 3760 In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment*.

Test intervals vary from three months upwards depending on usage, explained in AS/NZS 3760.

All electrical equipment used in a shearing shed must be safe. This includes extension leads, and electric appliances as varied as kettles and wool presses.

Electric tools brought by contractors or workers must also be electrically safe.

WOOLSHED AMENITIES

Amenities are provided so people can keep clean, reducing the risk of getting sick. Eating areas should also be separate from the working area in a woolshed.

All woolsheds must have:

- > clean drinking water
- > clean toilet facilities (including soap and toilet paper)
- > clean washing facilities.

5.2 WOOLSHED EQUIPMENT

Make sure all machinery is well maintained to meet minimum safety standards. Anyone using machinery must be trained or supervised by someone who is competent/qualified.

SHEARING PLANT

- > **Guards:** Have guards in place so clothing, towels or fleece cannot get caught in machinery.
- > **Portable stands:** Make sure portable shearing machines are securely fitted to the wall.
- > **Power points:** Power points should be accessible but not located in exposed work areas. Power points must be regularly checked and replaced as necessary.
- > **Down tube position:** Set the down tube height so that the lower end of the short tube makes a circle of 200–280 mm across on the floor, when the long tube is hanging straight. The long tube should be 600 mm away from the wall or any obstruction.

- > **Down tube maintenance:** Keep down tube parts in good condition and correctly installed. Weak or worn springs at the top of the down tube should be replaced. Fit guards to all joints.
- > **Spline Drive:** Always use spline (worm) drives because they reduce the risk of a lock-up, which can cause a serious injury.
- > **Automatic cut-outs:** Electronic cut-out technology is built into all new shearing machines sold in New Zealand. This is recognised as preferred practice.
- > **Bale Hooks:** Should be supplied by the farmer.

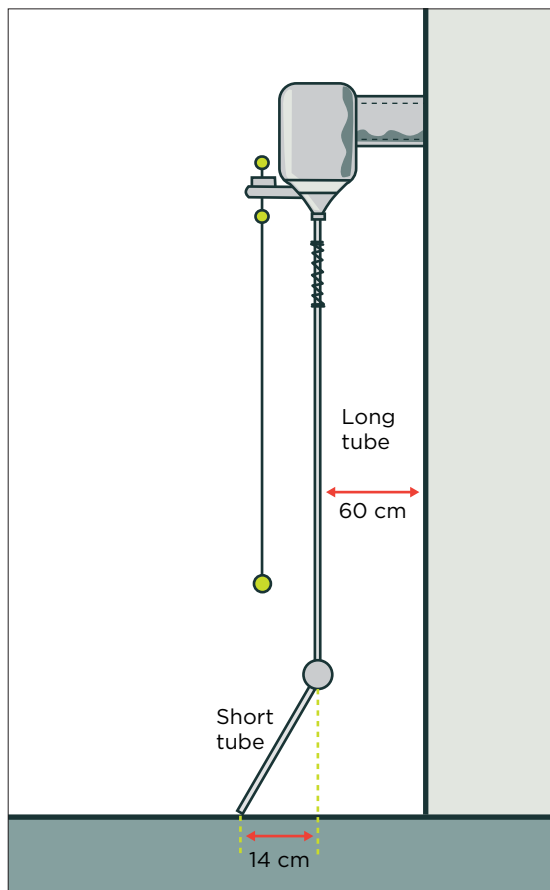


Figure 2: Down tube height set up¹

STORAGE FOR SHEARERS' TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

Loose tools and equipment on the board can cause slips and trips. Any accidents can also damage tools and equipment.

Farmers need to provide shearers with enough space to store their tools and equipment near the work area.

THE WOOL PRESS

Poorly maintained or modified wool presses pose significant risks. Inexperienced users and taking shortcuts can cause incidents and injuries. The most common serious injuries include trapped limbs, bad cuts, broken bones, damage to teeth and electrocution.

Repair or replace guards if they are lost or broken.

Capability of users: Users must be skilled in the use of each wool press they need to use, or be supervised by someone who is. Contractors and farmers must ensure that users are experienced and provide information, training and supervision on any different type/brand/model of wool press. Users should follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Farmers must provide:

- > manufacturer's instructions for their wool press
- > information and training, on any operational differences, with their wool press.

Farmers must make sure:

- > That all powered wool presses have a safety stop mechanism. This is a switch that stops the press if it is 'tripped'. The switch must be easy to reach for the user or a bystander.

¹ Source: www.fao.org/docrep/v9384e/v9384e07.htm

- > That the wool press is appropriately positioned, the floor is strong enough, there is enough space for everyone in the team to work comfortably and electricity is accessible if required.

Hydraulic presses: Check hydraulic lines before using the press and make sure any worn lines are replaced. Hydraulic hoses that burst under pressure can cause serious burns or injuries.

Electrical presses: Leads and cables must be properly secured and clear of any moving parts, such as the ram, monkey, doors, press wheels and bale barrow wheels. This reduces the risk of electrical risks. Any sprockets and chains on electric presses must be fully guarded.

Manual presses: Many older manual presses have worn mechanisms that fail suddenly due to their age, increasing the risk of serious injury to the user. Farmers must make sure that:

- > the press boxes are in good condition
- > a hoist brake is fitted and in good working order
- > wire and nylon ropes are in good condition, replace any that are frayed or worn
- > a rope or handle is secured to the roof of the woolshed for balance when the presser needs to manually tramp the wool.

Block and tackle or double action ratchet wool presses should not be used.

GRINDER

Grinders can cause serious injuries through mechanical fault or when used incorrectly without care and attention. Users also face damage to their eyes and hearing. The user and others nearby can be hit by flying combs, cutters and even grinder disks. You must keep the grinder well maintained and only let people who are trained or supervised use the grinder. Make sure that:

- > there are exclusion zones around the grinder and it is separated from other work areas, so far as is reasonably practicable

- > the grinder is well lit and securely anchored in place
- > it has a dedicated area, away from high traffic areas or only used when others are not in the area
- > it is placed so the disk rotates away from busy work areas
- > there are secure guards to reduce the risk of anything flying up and hitting the person using the grinder
- > the emery papers are securely glued onto the disks
- > electrical leads and cables can't be damaged by the grinder and that people do not trip over them
- > there are effective guards in place covering any drive belts (if applicable).

Personal protective equipment:

- > **Eyes and face:** Things can fly off the grinder and hit the user's eye or face. Provide appropriate safety glasses in good condition and make sure people use them.
- > **Ears:** The noise from grinders can cause permanent hearing loss. Take reasonable steps to eliminate or minimise the noise by placing the grinder away from other workers. Provide appropriate ear plugs or muffs in good condition and make sure people use them.

5.3 CONDITIONS IN THE WOOLSHED

PCBUs must have controls in place to monitor worker exposure and health. For more information see section 4.2 of this guide.

WORK IN HEAT AND COLD

Working in the heat or cold can affect the health and safety of all shed workers. Farmers need to make sure conditions don't affect the shearing team's ability to work.

- > **Heat:** Reduce the problems caused by heat by improving the ventilation, insulation and shade of woolsheds. Installing vents

on the shed roof increases ventilation and air movement. You can also increase ventilation by putting windows that open and close next to the work areas and on opposite sides of the shed. If you use portable fans, make sure power points, leads and cables do not create electrical and tripping hazards.

- > **Cold:** Reduce the problems caused by cold by making sure chutes do not face the prevailing cold winds. If there is cold wind coming up the chutes, manage the problem by blocking the wind with doors or wind break cloth.

VAPOURS, FUMES AND GASES

The fumes, smoke, exhaust gases and particulates (very fine dust) made by petrol and diesel motors in the shed are a health risk. Use electric equipment where possible. Put any petrol motors outside the shed, making sure exhaust gases and fumes blow away from the shed.

Ammonia from stock urine can affect people's breathing. Clean the manure out from under the shed regularly to limit ammonia fumes. Ensure there is good drainage and keep the area as clean and dry as possible. Good ventilation under the shed helps dry the area and reduces the fumes.

DUST

Dust in the yards and shed can cause asthma attacks and other respiratory illnesses. Spraying yards with water to settle dust is an option at times. Where possible avoid using yards that create dust in the woolshed at shearing time.

If the dust cannot be eliminated consider other controls to minimise the risk including PPE.

CHEMICALS AND HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Many chemicals used in wool growing can have serious and permanent effects on health

and can even kill people. Bear in mind that shearers can be in direct contact with sheep for eight to nine hours a day.

Hazardous substances include:

- > pesticides used in internal and external parasite control
- > chemicals used for blowfly and lice control
- > footrot control chemicals
- > weed and insect sprays used for crop and pasture management
- > solvents
- > rat and mouse poisons.

Inhaling and exposure to chemicals and hazardous substances can lead to illness. Store hazardous substances, protective equipment and clothing away from the woolshed and obey all current guidelines. Some chemicals can be stored in woolsheds if the proper safety procedures are followed. All unwanted, out of date or banned hazardous substances should be removed from the woolshed and disposed of in line with current guidelines. There should be no chemical work done in the shed.

Farmers should treat the sheep for blowfly outside the shed. Shearers should not do this work. Keep sheep away from people after treating them, so workers are not exposed to chemicals on wool. Footbaths must be placed away from woolshed, and designed to stop spray or fumes drifting into the shed.

5.4 SHEEP PREPARATION

Having sheep in good order for shearing helps reduce the risk of injury.

- > **Dry sheep:** Farmers must make sure sheep are dry for shearing. Shearing damp or wet wool increases the risk of wool abscesses and arthritis. Shearing wet wool also lowers the quality and value of the wool.
- > **Dagged:** Dag sheep before shearing.

- > **Drafted:** Draft sheep to separate:
 - breeds
 - sex
 - ages: lambs, hoggets and adult sheep
 - wool lengths: sheep shorn at different times
 - sick sheep, including footrot, lice, ticks and flyblown.
- > **Ram shearing:** Before shearing mobs of rams, farmers and contractor/shearing team members need to make sure there is enough support for the shearer in case help is needed or a ram gets free on the board.

5.5 FASTING SHEEP BEFORE SHEARING

Fasting sheep before shearing benefits both farmers and shearers. Sheep that are emptied out don't struggle as much and cause fewer back injuries and strains. Fasting also reduces the risk of disease to woolshed workers and pen stains in wool.

Make sure no sheep goes without food or water for longer than recommended (see Table 1). Time off feed includes the time sheep spend mobbed up during mustering, when feed intake is minimal. If a full day's shearing is mustered the day before, sheep shorn late in the day will be off feed 10–12 hours longer than those shorn early in the morning. Take extra care when handling pregnant sheep.

TEAM EFFORT

Good communication, careful planning and strong working relationships are key to making these guidelines work in practice. Both farmers and shearing contractors must recognise the variable conditions each faces and the importance of good planning and communication.

YARDING

Before they go into the woolshed, hold sheep in yards or a genuinely bare holding paddock with no water. A bare paddock has pasture cover no greater than 600 kg DM/ha when measured with an electronic pasture probe, or no more than 10 mm in height if measured manually. You may need to graze other stock in the paddock before using it to fast sheep. Getting ewes to stand and move about during yarding may speed up emptying out.

SHEDDING UP

Put sheep in the woolshed as late as is practical on the day before shearing begins. Catching pens should be clean and dry at the beginning of shearing — this may mean keeping catching pens empty overnight.

Take care when handling ewes and hoggets with lambs at foot. Where practical, keep lambs with their mothers until the ewes/hoggets are put in the woolshed.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

Keeping sheep off food and water for longer than recommended can cause health problems and diseases. Farmers are advised not to vaccinate empty sheep against salmonella or campylobacter.

RECOMMENDED MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HOURS WITHOUT FEED AND WATER PRIOR TO SHEARING ANY INDIVIDUAL SHEEP					
	HOURS WITHOUT FEED		HOURS WITHOUT WATER		Special Consideration
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	
Ewes (and adult male sheep)					
Non-pregnant, non-lactating	18	32	12	24	Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or precipitate clinical diseases. Where practical, unweaned lambs should remain with their mothers until ewes enter the woolshed.
Early to mid-pregnancy	18	30	12	24	
Late pregnancy and lactating	12	24	8	20	
Hoggets					
Non-pregnant, non-lactating	18	30	12	24	Use special care when handling pregnant hoggets.
Pregnancy and lactating	12	24	8	20	Exceeding these maximums may induce metabolic problems and/or precipitate clinical diseases. Where practical, unweaned lambs should remain with mothers until hoggets enter the wool shed.
Lambs					
Pre-weaning	6	24	6	20	Exceeding these maximums may precipitate clinical diseases.
Weaned	12	24	8	20	

Table 1: Recommended minimum and maximum number of hours without feed and water prior to shearing any individual sheep

For more information, please see the Good Practice Guide: *Fasting of Sheep Prior to Shearing* available at: saferfarms.org.nz

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ACCOMMODATION

Although most shearing teams travel daily, there are still times when shearer's quarters are used. The applicable PCBU (usually the farmer) must, so far as reasonably practicable, provide workers with a safe workplace; this includes the accommodation and amenities.

BUILDINGS

Buildings must be in sound structural condition, habitable, adequately ventilated and able to cope with temperature extremes. Steps should be in good order with all-weather, non-slip treads and adequate handrails. These areas must have adequate lighting at night. Safe entry and exit from buildings is essential.

FIRE

Fireplaces and heaters need to be properly built and guarded. Fireplaces and heaters must not be used for drying clothes. Adequate smoke detectors, fire alarms, extinguishers, emergency exit procedures and signs need to be in place, as necessary.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

All electrical installations and any electrical modification or maintenance must meet the *AS/NZS 3000:2007 The Australian/New Zealand Wiring Rules*. Wiring and power leads must be safely routed to eliminate tripping and electrical hazards.

All electrical appliances and equipment such as extension leads, hair dryers, heaters, and televisions which plug into the mains must be safe. A residual current device (RCD) should be used to ensure electrical safety. The RCD protection in the accommodation should be periodically checked for correct operation by a competent person.

An additional method of verifying the electrical safety of the portable appliances and equipment is compliance with *AS/NZS 3760 In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment*. The recommended inspection interval for accommodation in *AS/NZS 3760* is two years. However, this is a guide and more frequent intervals may be appropriate depending upon the condition of the accommodation concerned.

A person with appropriate training and experience does not need electrical registration but will have access to and be able to competently use test equipment required by the standard.

CLEANING

Regular and proper cleaning, maintenance and, where appropriate, disinfecting of all areas is necessary to ensure good health and hygiene. This particularly applies in eating, cooking, laundry, bathroom, washing and toilet areas. Workers have a responsibility to practice good hygiene and keep areas clean. It is the PCBU's responsibility to ensure areas are properly cleaned. Arrangements for cleaning and maintaining hygiene should be worked out and agreed on before shearing starts.

WATER

Adequate, cool and clean drinking water must be readily available at all times. There should be enough hot water for showers, baths, hand basins, washing clothes and cooking.

EATING AREAS

There should be enough seating and tables for all workers in eating areas. Good seating helps reduce stresses on backs.

There should be adequate lighting and ventilation in eating areas.

KITCHENS, FOOD PREPARATION AND STORAGE AREAS

These areas need to be properly set up and laid out to ensure good hygiene, health and safety. Bench space, sinks, stoves, refrigeration, lighting, ventilation and food storage need to be adequate. Food preparation, handling and storage practices must ensure good health and hygiene. There must be adequate hot and cold water and outflows and drains.

SLEEPING QUARTERS

Workers must be able to get enough rest. Sleeping quarters should be a good size, clean and habitable. Each person should have five square metres of floor space. Each room needs sound insulation, good ventilation and lighting. Adequate beds and mattresses must be provided.

WASHING, TOILET AND LAUNDRY AREAS

Adequate washing facilities and toilets must be provided. Shearing quarters need separate, private and secure flush toilets and bathing/shower facilities. There must be laundry facilities for clothes washing, including washing machines and enough hot water. There must be enough lighting, hot and cold water, and outflows and drains in these facilities.



07/

**WOOLSHED
WoF CHECKLIST**

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES // SAFE SHEEP SHEARING

Farmer:
Farmer's contact number:
Address (for emergencies):
Rapid number:
GPS location:
Closest – Hospital, Medical Centre, Doctor:
Any special emergency information:

SITE CHECK

ITEM	CHECK	NOT YET	PARTIAL	GOOD	COMMENTS
Vehicle access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Parking area > Banks > Power lines 				
Entries and exits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Clear and well-marked > Adequate lighting > Safe steps and landings > Outside light 				
Emergency plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Emergency exit(s) marked > Emergency information on display 				
Floors (wool room, shearing board/ grating)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > No holes > No missing or loose boards > Non-slip surface > No protruding objects 				
Shed design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Drag aligned (pens to stands) > Distance between stands > Harness fixing point > Ventilation 				
Shearing plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Switches on and off > Elbow protector worm drive > Auto cut-out > Well mounted belt guards 				
Electrical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cables/placement > Plugs > Switchboard > Residual current devices (RCDs) 				

ITEM	CHECK	NOT YET	PARTIAL	GOOD	COMMENTS
Lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Wool room > Shearing board > Pens > Grinder 				
Wool press (manual/ powered/ no-tramp)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintained/good condition > Guarding and fittings > Emergency stop > Press brake (manual) 				
Grinder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Guards > On/off switch > Belt guards > Securely anchored > PPE - ear protection, safety glasses 				
Doors and gates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Functioning > Catches and hinges 				
Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Clean functional toilet > Running water > Adequate washing facilities > Clean drinking water 				
Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Secure storage > Separate area for clothing > Separate area for towels 				

COMPLETED BY

Farmer:

Shearing contractor:

Date: DD / MM / YEAR

For more information about accommodation, please see the Worker Accommodation Fact Sheet available on the WorkSafe website: www.worksafe.govt.nz

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GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
Bungy	A sprung back aid that reduces the load on the back from a shearer's upper body weight.
Catching pen	A small pen from which a shearer catches each sheep.
Chute	A slide or race between a porthole and a count-out pen.
Count-out pen	A pen where shorn sheep are put for counting.
Down tube	A tube hanging from a shearing motor to drive a handpiece.
Draft	Separate out different categories of sheep by age, breed, etc.
Fadge	A package of wool in a wool bale that weighs less than 100 kilograms.
Harm	Illness or injury or both; it includes physical and mental harm caused by work-related stress.
Pen stain	Dung stain on wool.
PCBU	<p>A PCBU is a 'person conducting a business or undertaking'. While a PCBU may be an individual person (eg a sole trader) or an organisation, in most cases the PCBU will be an organisation (eg a business entity such as a company).</p> <p>While the terms 'business' and 'undertaking' are not defined in HSWA, the usual meanings of these terms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > 'business': an activity carried out with the intention of making a profit or gain > 'undertaking': an activity that is non-commercial in nature (eg certain activities of a local authority or a not-for-profit group).
Porthole	A hole at each shearing stand through which shorn sheep exit.
Presser	A wool handler responsible for compacting wool into bales.
Reasonably practicable	<p>Reasonably practicable, in relation to a duty of a PCBU, means that which is, or was, at a particular time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring; and (b) The degree of harm that might result from the hazard or risk; and (c) What the person concerned knows, or ought reasonably to know, about - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) the hazard or risk; and (ii) ways of eliminating or minimising the risk; and (d) the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate the risk; and (e) after assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk. <p>For further information regarding reasonably practicable see the fact sheet <i>Reasonably Practicable</i> or the <i>Introduction to the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 - Special Guide</i> on the WorkSafe website: www.worksafe.govt.nz</p>
Risk	<p>Any activity, situation or substance that can cause harm. Risks can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > actual or potential > physical (such as moving machinery, electrical, burning, rotating, environmental and ergonomic conditions) > biological (such as inhaling dust or poisonous vapours, touching toxic chemicals or products) > behavioural (such as temporary conditions induced by stress, fatigue, shock, alcohol or drugs).

TERM	DEFINITION
Run	A period of the workday. Normally either 1.75 or two hours.
Season	The period of work that is relative to a time of year, eg December/January/February is summer, main shear season. July/August/September is the pre-lamb season.
Self-employed	Woolshed workers who work directly for a farmer, 'open operators'.
Shearer	A person who shears wool off sheep.
Shearing	The removal of wool from a sheep. Can also be used to describe the whole process of the removal, processing and packaging of a fleece into bales.
Shearing board	The space where the actual shearing is done.
Shearing contractor	A person who organises, pays and supplies shearing teams to farmers. They are legally responsible for employing people.
Stand	A shearing position on a shearing board. Each stand is equipped with overhead gear so the handpiece may be attached, a holding pen for the unshorn sheep and a 'porthole' or exit for the shorn sheep to leave the shed.
Sub-contractor	A person hired by a contractor to do paid work.
Open shed	An employment situation where a farmer directly employs individuals to undertake the job and pays the PAYE and ACC levies on their behalf.
Wool bale	A package of wool. Average weight of 160 to 180 kilograms.
Wool classer	A member of the shearing team who classes wool (sorting of the fleece by length, colour, quality, soundness and condition).
Wool handler	A member of the shearing team who handles wool. This includes taking wool from the shearing board, skirting it (pulling away the dirty and uneven edges of the fleece to give a clean, even appearance) and classing it (sorting of the fleece by length, colour, quality, soundness and condition).
Wool press	The machine used to compress wool into bales.
Wool room	The space for sorting and pressing.
Woolshed	A farm building that is usually specifically designed and designated for the shearing of sheep.
Worker	Woolshed staff. A person who works directly for a PCBU (eg a farmer, or a shearing contractor who contracts to a farmer). Worker includes an employee, contractor, subcontractor, employee of a labour hire company, an outworker, an apprentice or trainee, a person gaining work experience or undertaking work trial and a volunteer worker.
Workplace	Anywhere someone works, might work, or passes through to get to work, or is under the control of a PCBU. Workplace includes a work vehicle.
Workplace stress	Workplace stress is the result of the interaction between staff and their work environment. The inability to cope with the demands of a work environment leads to a negative emotional response.

DISCLAIMER

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