

****ASK THE TAFE TEAM****

13 July, 2016

Linking Communication and Safety with Resources & Infrastructure Faculty Director, Debbie Jackson

Question: *We've just relocated from the city to a large rural property, and I need some advice around basic safety rules with all members of the family when they are working around the property or travelling in a rural area.*

Answer: Safety covers such a broad area in the rural industry. But, some of the key points you should discuss with your family include communication, basic safety supplies, the safe use of equipment, what to do in during breakdowns, and dealing with different weather conditions.

Communication

- Set ground rules around letting someone know when and where you are going somewhere, how you are travelling, and when you should be back by.
- Encourage having a message board that the family use to put details on, just in case the family member they've told isn't around should concerns about your whereabouts start to arise.
- When working on the property make use of technology like mobile phones if you have service, two way radios or, in particularly isolated areas, have an EPIRB or satellite phone.

Basic Safety Supplies

- When working on the property ensure you always have an adequate water supply with you.
- Dress appropriately for the environment – hat, long sleeved shirt, long pants, work boots, sunscreen.
- Have a well-stocked first aid kit in the vehicle or equipment you are using.
- It is always a good idea to have a fire extinguisher in farm vehicles such as 4WDs, tractors, graders, dozers, and others.

Safe Use of Equipment

- Tractors are required to have a Roll Over Protection System, and should not be used if they don't.
- When using motorbikes, quad bikes or horses, you should wear a helmet and the appropriate clothing.
- When using motorbikes or quad bikes, ride safely to the conditions, to the terrain, and to your ability.
- When using horses, ensure that the horse you are riding matches your riding capability.
- Beware of power lines when operating equipment.
- Ensure you do a pre-start safety check before using any piece of equipment (including checking fuel and fluid supplies).

Breakdowns

- Stay with the vehicle, keep calm and relaxed.
- Protect yourself from weather elements by staying in or near the vehicle where possible.
- If you have followed the rules around communication, you shouldn't need to wait long, and it is easier to find you with the vehicle than if you wander off.

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Weather Conditions

- Before you plan work on the property, be aware of what the weather forecast is for the day.
- Weather can change quickly and with little warning, so take note of these changes and act accordingly and responsibly.

Above all else, it is better to be safe than sorry.

For more information about TAFE Queensland South West's agriculture, rural or any other courses, please visit www.tafesouthwest.edu.au or call 1300 914 754.

Disclaimer: The comments provided in this article are general in nature only and are not a substitute for professional advice. The author accepts no responsibility for any action taken by a reader in relation to this article.

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