

Is my farm safe for visitors?

Health and safety is important but it should not overshadow your day. We do not live in a risk free world, so don't think you have to create one, particularly on a working farm. But you must assess what risks there may be to your visitors and take appropriate action.

Insurance – You must tell your insurer what you are doing. Most companies will not increase premiums as long as they are told in advance, so talk to them or your broker. You need a minimum of £5 million public liability insurance (if you regularly host school visits you will probably need £10 million).

Carrying out a Risk Assessment

The **host farmer** should be reviewing hazards on an on-going basis and employing risk assessment techniques as part of good business practice.

A **friend** or **neighbour** should help you make a pre-event check on your location's risks. This is important as you host may not be familiar with hazards which may present themselves to visitors, or recognise hazards in the farmyard, especially if the farm does not regularly open to the public. It is more likely these will be spotted by a fresh pair of eyes.

A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm (for example a slurry lagoon).

Risk expresses the likelihood that the harm from a particular hazard will be realised (the risk of slipping on some slurry). Is the chance of risk high or low and how serious it would be if this happened.

Hazards only present a **risk** when there is human interaction (someone treading in the patch of water).

A **risk assessment** involves identifying the hazards present then evaluating the extent of the risks involved, taking into account any precautions already in place (identifying the patch of water as a potential problem; noting that it will be walked past; a verbal or written warning).

Identify the hazards:

- What hazards are the visitors likely to face?
- What kinds of behaviour will increase the risk?
- Which hazards pose a significant risk if they are not managed?
- How can these risks be controlled?
- Might these measures create other hazards?

Assess the risk:

- How serious is the risk? (i.e. the potential injury or consequence).
- What might increase the severity of injury? (e.g. running, the age of the person).
- Who and how many are exposed to the risk?
- How likely is it to occur? (previous accidents/incidents and the frequency of exposure to the hazard).

Controlling the risk:

- Can the risk be avoided or minimised? Is the activity necessary? Does the educational or social advantage outweigh the risk? Are warnings provided – written, verbal?
- Can the hazard be eliminated, avoided or substituted? Can environmental controls – alterations to physical surroundings or features, mechanisation etc – minimise or remove exposure to risk?
- Can safer systems of work/play/activity be adopted? (e.g. by establishing a procedure or set of rules, providing better information, providing skills through training).
- Is the use of personal protective equipment indicated where risk remains?

You should complete a risk assessment before your event – see Appendix 4 (page 22) for a generic risk assessment LEAF has developed to help you.