

# Health and safety

**CSA farms have to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any employees and volunteers, as well as their members and any other visitors to the farm. Regular health and safety checks need to be carried out and information signs posted to warn of any potential dangers.**

Unlike some other farms, CSAs are accessible to members a lot of the time so the farm will have to be kept tidy and safe. You should keep all tools and machinery clear of the main access points to reduce chances of accidents. Toilets and hand washing facilities need to be provided and ideally a place where members can meet and sit together. Make sure you have a first aid box, that everyone knows where to find it and that at least one of your staff or volunteers is trained as a first aider.

CSA farms have to comply with health and safety laws and have a responsibility to make sure, as far as possible, that people working on or visiting the farm are in a safe environment. Health and safety legislation includes the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Farms can be dangerous places if machinery and tools are not used correctly and there is often lone working. Details of accidents in the agricultural sector can be found here: [hse.gov.uk/Statistics/industry/agriculture/index.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/Statistics/industry/agriculture/index.htm)

## Health and safety policy

If you have five or more employees, you need to have a written health and safety plan or policy. If you are applying for grants, particularly if you want to work with children, many funders as well will require you to have a health and safety policy in place. So although it is not a legal requirement with less than

five employees, this is best practice whether you are applying for grants or not. You can find some examples of health and safety policies adopted by other community farms by searching online.

This is a general policy document from Canalside Community Food [canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Canalside-Health-Safety-Policy.pdf](http://canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Canalside-Health-Safety-Policy.pdf) This is a detailed policy from Sutton Community Farm including a risk assessment <http://bit.ly/2hlnT4d>

## Risk assessments

Risk assessments should be carried out at least twice a year and whenever circumstances change significantly, for instance changes to site layout, introduction of livestock or new activities for volunteers or visitors. You should have at least two people carry out risk assessments as people perceive risk differently. You need to walk around the CSA identifying potential risks e.g. fire hazards, trip hazards, or risks of injury.

You should do an assessment for the whole site but may also need to do individual risk assessments for particular events or use of equipment. You do not have to start from scratch. You can find templates and examples of risk assessments on the Health and Safety Executive website for all types of farming, for example using machinery: [hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/machinery/riskexample.htm](http://hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/machinery/riskexample.htm)

A risk assessment lays out the potential risks, how likely they are to happen and how to avoid them. Most of this is common sense, but having it down on paper will ensure you consider all the risk elements, how to avoid danger and how to give the right information to staff and volunteers on tackling





each task. Don't forget to take the weather into consideration. Wet and slippery ground can cause different hazards and risks to when working on hot, exposed sites in a heatwave.

## Volunteers

All volunteers should undertake a health and safety induction. They should also have a briefing at the start of each session and new task, pointing out the particular hazard, despite how regularly those volunteers may carry it out. Basically, don't forget about it. You may work on the farm daily but volunteers and visitors to the site don't! Avoid the temptation to take short cuts and make sure all equipment is in good working order. Some CSAs ask volunteers to sign a disclaimer. Accidents do happen, despite your best efforts. So make sure you have adequate insurance in place (see Insurance section) and that you can show you did all you could have reasonably done to prevent them happening.

## Children and vulnerable adults

Most CSAs welcome children on site in particular when families pick up their shares and/or at special events. If you do, it's sensible to insist that they be under the supervision of a parent or appropriate adult at all times up to a certain age.

Children are less aware of risk and more likely to have accidents, so you may need to write a risk assessment specifically aimed at reducing risks for children on site. See the farm through their eyes and address hazards they might encounter. If you are running lots of sessions for schools or pre-schools you may need to put in more safety measures to protect them e.g. fences around ponds. The same situation applies to vulnerable

adults, so you may need to ask some people to be accompanied by their carers at all times.

## OTHER USEFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

- ▶ This website provides essential information and guidance on health and safety in agriculture. [hse.gov.uk/agriculture/index.htm](https://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/index.htm)
- ▶ The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) have written a comprehensive fact sheet on health and safety. [farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/hscommgrowingsites.pdf](https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/system/files/hscommgrowingsites.pdf)
- ▶ The FCFCG has designed a set of free-to-use signs to encourage farm visitors to wash their hands. [farmgarden.org.uk/resources/clean-hands-zone-toolkit#ISPjgEImfMTRdkSh.99](https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/resources/clean-hands-zone-toolkit#ISPjgEImfMTRdkSh.99)
- ▶ The Health and Safety Executive have produced an information sheet on preventing or controlling ill health when visitors are interacting with farm animals. [hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/committees/acdp/080211/acdp\\_96\\_P6\\_Annex\\_1.pdf](https://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/committees/acdp/080211/acdp_96_P6_Annex_1.pdf)

