



Property of \_\_\_\_\_

# FARM SAFETY

## STARTER GUIDE



**WORK SAFE**  **HOME SAFE**



**Disclaimer**

This publication may contain occupational health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include some of your obligations under the various legislations that WorkCover NSW administers. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation.

Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website ([www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au)).

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

# INTRODUCTION

The Farm Safety Starter Kit is a recommendation of the NSW Workplace Safety Summit, which brought together over 200 representatives of business, unions, and the community to focus on making safer workplaces.

The Farm Safety Starter Kit can assist to make your farm a safer place to work and live, and help you meet your legal obligations.

Good farm safety relies on:

- understanding and dealing with the dangers on your farm
- talking with workers to manage the dangers of each job
- making sure everyone knows how to do their job
- having the right tools for the job.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Farm Safety Starter Kit is an initiative of WorkCover's Rural Industry Reference Group and the OHS Division Rural Industry Team.

WorkCover NSW extends its thanks to those agencies and individuals that assisted in the development of the Farm Safety Starter Kit through review and comment during the draft stages:

FarmSafe NSW

NSW Farmers (Industrial) Association

Employers First

Rice Growers Association

Shearing Contractors Association of NSW

The Australian Workers Union

Southern FarmSafe Action Group

Unions NSW

Australian Lot Feeders Association

| <b>CONTENTS</b>                                                    | <b>PAGE</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>MAP THE HAZARDS ON YOUR FARM</b>                                | <b>3</b>    |
| <b>IDENTIFY THE DANGERS ON YOUR FARM</b>                           | <b>4</b>    |
| <b>RISK ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE</b>                                     | <b>5</b>    |
| <b>BLANK RISK ASSESSMENT FORM</b>                                  | <b>6</b>    |
| <b>USING FARM CHEMICALS SAFELY</b>                                 | <b>7</b>    |
| Purchasing                                                         | 7           |
| Safe use                                                           | 7           |
| Hazardous Substances and Dangerous goods                           | 7           |
| <b>USING FARM CHEMICALS SAFELY — SITE (or SUBSTANCES) REGISTER</b> | <b>8</b>    |
| <b>FARM MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT</b>                                | <b>9</b>    |
| <b>FARM MACHINERY AND INSPECTION REGISTER</b>                      | <b>10</b>   |
| <b>ELECTRICAL</b>                                                  | <b>11</b>   |
| <b>KEEPING WORKERS SAFE</b>                                        | <b>12</b>   |
| OHS induction                                                      | 12          |
| Training                                                           | 13          |
| Supervision                                                        | 13          |
| Emergency response and first aid                                   | 13          |
| Reporting                                                          | 14          |
| Amenities                                                          | 14          |
| Workers compensation                                               | 14          |
| Injury management                                                  | 15          |
| <b>FURTHER INFORMATION</b>                                         | <b>16</b>   |

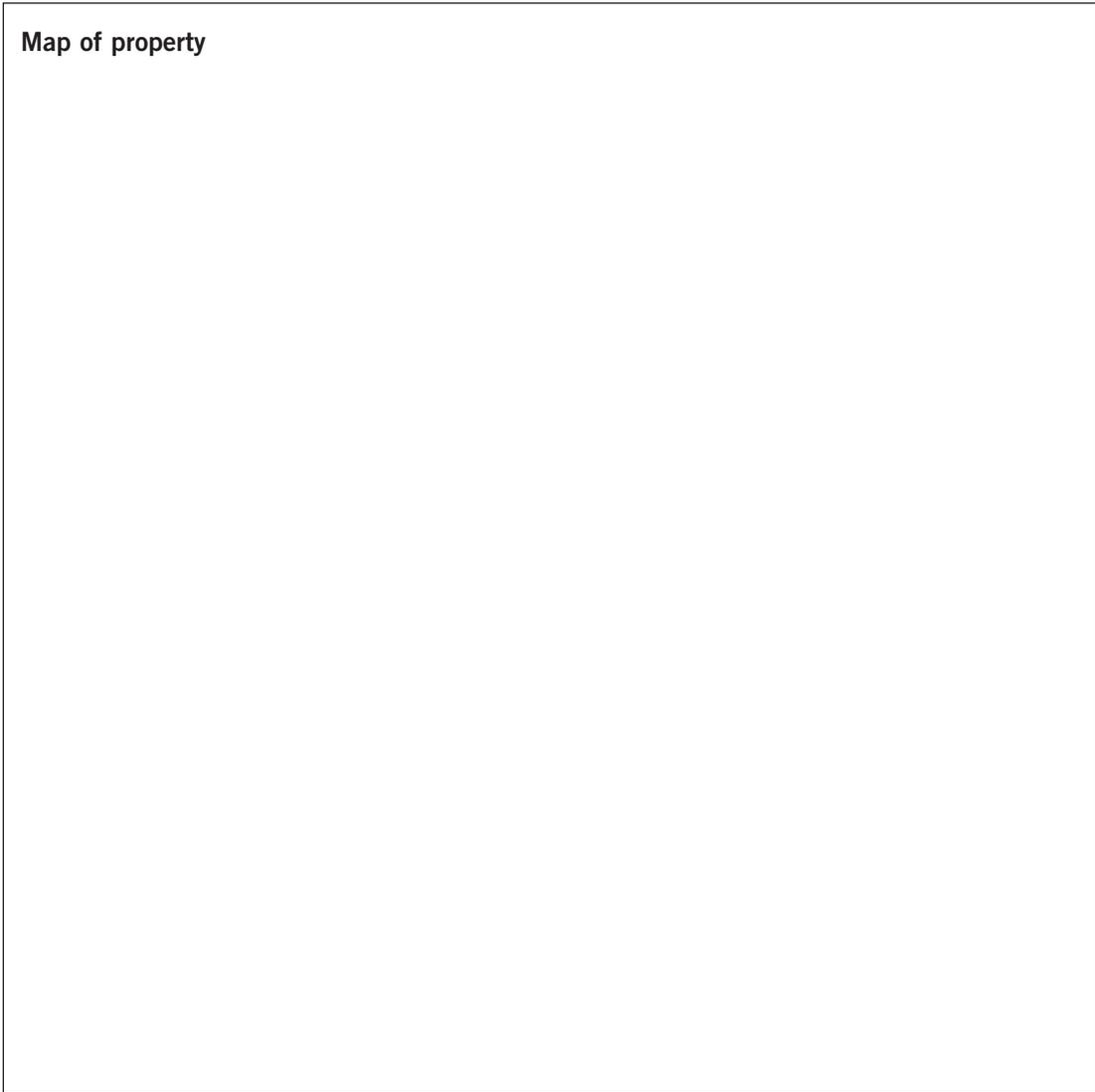
## MAP THE HAZARDS ON YOUR FARM

To begin to plan for safety on your farm, you should identify the features of your property. You can do this by drawing an outline of your property and highlighting the following locations:

- your residence and all other farm buildings
- GPS locations of house, front gate, farm buildings
- fences and gates
- access roads and tracks
- transport vehicle loading/unloading locations
- overhead and underground power lines
- dams and watercourses
- terrain where it is unsuitable to ride ATVs or use tractors, such as ditches or uncleared land
- any areas prone to flooding
- any other features that should be highlighted.

This map can be used as an induction tool for new employees and casual workers or contractors who come on to your property.

**Map of property**



# IDENTIFY THE DANGERS ON YOUR FARM

To make your farm a safer place to work and live, a simple four step approach can be taken:

1. identify the dangers (**identifying hazards**)
2. work out what harm the hazard can cause (**assessing the risk**)
3. get rid of the hazard or control it (**controlling the risk**)
4. review your risk assessment on a regular basis (**review**).

These four steps are known as 'risk management'. As you carry out each step, talk to your employees and working family members who can assist you in covering all the details of the work you are reviewing. When something on your farm changes, repeat the above four steps.

To assist in identifying dangers and developing safety controls around your farm, it is a requirement that you involve your workers by talking to them (consultation) on a regular basis about the jobs they do. As they are experienced in the jobs they do they will be able to identify the dangers and will likely have ideas on how to fix them.

Consultation may involve an informal 'shed talk', where workers can discuss safety issues. It may include a talk about specific safety issues or near misses, buying new equipment, or talking to new employees about the dangers around the farm.

It may be useful to keep a record of the safety talks (consultation) you have with your employees. This can be simply done by noting it in your diary, or recording it on your risk assessments that are carried out with your employees.

For each danger (hazard) identified, it is necessary to assess the risks involved. This will help you determine what needs to be fixed first. Where a problem cannot be fixed straight away, you should put temporary measures in place to make it as safe as possible.

You can identify the level of risk for a problem by referring to the categories below.

|                     |                                                                                                               |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>High risk:</b>   | Does the hazard have the potential to kill or permanently disable you?                                        |
| <b>Medium risk:</b> | Does the hazard have the potential to cause a serious injury, or illness, which will temporarily disable you? |
| <b>Low risk:</b>    | Does the hazard have the potential to cause a minor injury that would not disable you?                        |

# RISK ASSESSMENT EXAMPLE

The following is an **example only** on how to set out the risk assessments you carry out around your farm. The hazards and controls are not limited to those provided in the example, there may be many hazards for each activity that you will have to identify. Writing down your risk assessments will help you plan the safest way to do your work.

| <b>RISK ASSESSMENT</b>                                |                                                               |                   |                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Conducted by:</b>                                  |                                                               | <b>Date:</b>      |                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>To be reviewed on:</b>                             |                                                               |                   |                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Work Activity</b><br>Break the job down into steps | <b>Potential Hazards</b><br>What can harm you                 | <b>Risk Level</b> | <b>Controls</b><br>What you are going to do to make the job as safe as possible                                                                               |
| <b>Example:</b><br>Using a grinder                    | Unstable grinder – can fall and hit someone - bodily injuries | Medium            | 1. Anchor the grinder to a stable base<br>2. Obtain purpose built grinder stand                                                                               |
|                                                       | Grinder in walkway – contact with grinding wheel              | Medium            | Relocate grinder so that it is out of the way                                                                                                                 |
|                                                       | Flying particles – eye injuries                               | High              | Provide eye protection for operators and make sure it is used                                                                                                 |
|                                                       | Noise – hearing loss                                          | Low               | Provide hearing protection for operators and make sure it is used                                                                                             |
| Driving tractor                                       | Rollover – death/serious injury                               | High              | Ensure drivers are competent to use the tractor and attachments<br>Fit Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS)<br>Don't drive the tractor on unsuitable terrain |
| Filling silos                                         | Grain auger entanglement – loss of limbs/death                | High              | Fit adequate guarding to auger & Power Take Offs (PTOs)<br>Ensure workers can do the job safely                                                               |
| Working near powerlines                               | Contact with overhead power lines – electrocution             | High              | Identify power line locations on your Farm Hazard Map<br>Move the work to another location<br>Install warning signs near powerlines                           |

On the next page a blank risk assessment form is provided for your ongoing use.



# USING FARM CHEMICALS SAFELY

## PURCHASING

When purchasing chemicals for your farm, you should:

- buy the safest chemical that can do the job. Seek guidance from your supplier.
- make sure you receive the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The supplier must provide you with the MSDS on request. The MSDS will detail all you need to know about the chemical, such as directions for use, storage and emergency procedures.
- ensure all containers are correctly labelled.

## SAFE USE

To make sure chemicals are used safely on your farm you should:

- ensure anyone using chemicals has been trained/instructed in how to do so safely
- ensure anyone using chemicals wears the personal protective equipment (safety footwear, eye protection, gloves, respirator, etc) specified in the MSDS
- determine if the user needs to undertake specific training for some chemicals – seek guidance from your supplier
- ensure you have the first aid facilities to deal with splashes and other incidents
- contact the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50** if your supplier cannot provide you with the information you need.

## HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES AND DANGEROUS GOODS

Some chemicals are classified as hazardous substances or dangerous goods. Information that covers the notification, signage, purchasing, storage and use of hazardous substances and dangerous goods can be obtained from your supplier, or by contacting the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50**.



# FARM MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT

Equipment used on farms can pose serious dangers to operators and people near-by.

The following information on machinery is a guide to help you use your machinery safely.

- Ensure that you and your employees use machinery for the purpose it was designed for, and within its specified capacity limits.
- Before using any machinery make sure all safety features, such as guards and warning devices, are in place, clearly visible, and are operative.
- Ensure all operators have been adequately trained/instructed to use the machinery safely.
- Some equipment used on farms, such as an excavator, requires the operator to obtain a certificate of competency.
- Make sure your farm workers are supervised until they are competent (ie they have the knowledge and skills to carry out a specific task acquired through training, qualification or experience, or a combination of them.)
- Make sure users of farm machinery have been provided with, and understand, all available information on the machinery – special consideration should be given to employees with low literacy levels or those from non-English speaking backgrounds. The first source of information on your farm machinery is the operator's manual.
- Check that a competent person has carried out maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

Some types of hazardous plant may require registration and certification with WorkCover. Registrable plant includes boilers, pressure vessels, mobile cranes and dangerous goods such as bulk fuel vessels.

Information on registration and certification can be obtained from the WorkCover Assistance Service on **13 10 50**.

The following table will assist you to keep track of what farm machinery you have and its maintenance history.



# ELECTRICAL

Electrical hazards are one of the major problems on farms. The following checklist is a guide to help you reduce electrical dangers on your farm. If you mark a NO box you need to take action to make your workplace safer. WorkCover advises that any faults identified with electrical fittings and equipment should be referred to a qualified electrician.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Date checklist completed:</b> ___/___/___                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                          |
| <b>Date checklist to be reviewed (annually or when there is a change in electrical equipment or an electrical incident):</b> ___/___/___                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                          |
| <b>Electrical switchboards and equipment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are switchboards, electrical equipment in a safe condition?<br>Is portable electrical equipment protected by safety switches?                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                          |
| <b>Power points, light fittings and switches</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are all power points, light fittings and switches in a safe place and free of obvious defects?<br><i>Check if they are mounted securely, there are no loose covers or wires, broken or damaged fittings, or signs of overheating.</i><br>Are main and isolating switches clearly labelled and accessible? |                                                          |
| <b>Power tools, flexible leads and power boards</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are power tools, extension leads and power boards maintained in a safe operating condition?<br><i>Check for damaged insulation, water leaks, burn marks, bent or loose pins and fittings.</i><br>Are extension leads and power boards located in a safe position to prevent mechanical or other damage?   |                                                          |
| <b>Inspection and maintenance of all electrical equipment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are the electrical fittings and electrical equipment, including portable power tools, regularly inspected and maintained?                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                          |
| <b>Overhead powerlines</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has the location of powerlines been assessed relative to the work activity carried out on the farm? eg loading or unloading of mobile near powerlines.                                                                                                                                                    |                                                          |

# KEEPING WORKERS SAFE

## OHS INDUCTION

When you hire a new employee to work on your farm you need to provide them with the instruction, training and information they need to be able to do the work they are to perform. It should not be assumed that new employees have any prior knowledge, training or experience.

An OHS induction should be carried out for each new employee. Induction for new workers will help make your farm a safer and more productive workplace. The induction, training and information you must provide includes:

- who is responsible for health and safety and the arrangements for reporting hazards
- health and safety procedures relevant to the employee, including the use and maintenance of risk control measures
- how employees can access health and safety information.

The following is an occupational health and safety checklist to assist you with new employees.

|                          |                                                                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain when and how you talk about health and safety on your farm                                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Detail the hazards on the farm and what controls are in place (use Farm Hazard Map)                                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain the roles and responsibilities for health and safety on your farm                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain how to report hazards                                                                                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain what to do in case of emergency (you may need to consider employees who work in isolation or remote locations.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain how to report incidents or injuries                                                                                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Detail the location of the first aid kit and who is a first-aider                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ensure the worker has the skills and knowledge required to do the work (you may need to verify qualifications and/or past experience) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Show where the workplace amenities are located                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain personal protective equipment (PPE) to be provided, its use, maintenance and storage                                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain the rules at your farm for using farm machinery, equipment and vehicles                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain the procedures for the safe use and storage of chemicals                                                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Explain what an MSDS is and where to find yours                                                                         |                          |                                                                                                                                       |

## **TRAINING**

To be both productive and safe on your farm, employees should be trained to be able to confidently and safely carry out their work (competent).

A competent person is a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience, or a combination of them, the knowledge and skills to carry out a specific task.

Younger workers should be given extra safety consideration as they have little or no experience in a working environment.

The type of training required will vary depending on what your employees will be doing eg. unloading trucks, operating machinery such as tractors and ATVs, spraying chemicals etc.

## **SUPERVISION**

As farms can be dangerous places, it is important that as an employer, you ensure that your employees are following your safe work procedures.

To determine the type and extent of supervision that is necessary, take into consideration the competence, experience and age of each employee.

Supervision must be provided by a competent person.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND FIRST AID**

Everyone on a farm should be aware of what to do in an emergency. You should have a response procedure in place to deal with accidents and emergencies.

In setting up an emergency plan for your farm, you should consider the following:

- who is trained in first aid
- communication arrangements with employees for work carried out in areas isolated by time or distance
- knowing who does what and in what order when an emergency occurs
- emergency services contact details and information such as:
  - directions from the nearest town
  - description of entrance to your property
  - significant landmarks
  - GPS location
- how to provide for the safe and rapid evacuation of the injured person to the nearest hospital or medical centre.

First aid kits must be centrally located and positioned so that they are visible and easily accessible by everyone in the workplace. They should be checked regularly to make sure anything used has been replaced with new stock.

Regularly check fire extinguishers and hoses to ensure they are in working order. It may be necessary to undertake training in the use of fire extinguishers, depending on the type of chemicals you store on your farm.

## **REPORTING**

All employees should know how to report an injury or incident to you. When an injury occurs that may result in a workers compensation claim you should advise your insurer within 48 hours.

You should keep a register of injuries or injury report book.

The details of any injuries you need to keep are:

- the name, age, address and occupation of the injured worker
- the place in which the person was working
- the operation in which the person was engaged at the time of injury
- the date and time that the injury occurred
- a brief description of the type, cause and location of the injury and the treatment given
- the name of the first aid person in attendance

Most insurers provide these registers free.

If there is a fatality or serious incident on your farm, you should notify WorkCover immediately on **13 10 50**.

## **AMENITIES**

'Amenities' is the term to describe resources that need to be provided for employees to support them throughout their working day. These resources may include toilets, rest rooms, shelter sheds, seating, meal rooms, change rooms, provision of drinking water, lockers and washing facilities.

### **Range, type and standard of amenities**

When determining what amenities should be provided on your farm, the following must be taken into account:

- the nature of the work undertaken
- the size and location of the premises
- the number of men and women.

All amenities provided must be maintained by the employer to safety and health standards.

## **WORKERS COMPENSATION**

If you employ people on your farm at any time, a current workers compensation insurance policy must be obtained.

If you employ occasional workers or contractors, speak with your insurer about what workers compensation coverage is needed. Where you have subcontractors working on your farm (eg shearing contractors) you should verify that they have a current workers compensation policy. Failure to do so may make you liable for any future claims associated with the work.

If you have any questions about workers compensation, visit [workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://workcover.nsw.gov.au) or contact your insurer.

## **INJURY MANAGEMENT**

Injury management is about ensuring the prompt, safe and durable return to work of an injured worker.

It includes:

- treatment of the injury
- rehabilitation to get back to work
- retraining into a new skill or job
- management of the workers compensation claim
- the employment practices of the employer.

Everyone involved is required to cooperate and participate in injury management, including the employer, injured worker, insurer, treating doctor and all treating practitioners.

For more information about injury management, visit [workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://workcover.nsw.gov.au) or contact your insurer.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### **A.W.U. (New South Wales Branch)**

PO Box 20  
Granville 2142  
Ph: 02 9897 3644  
Fax: 02 9897 1481

### **NSW Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture**

Locked Bag 21  
Orange NSW 2800  
Ph: 1800 808 095  
[dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture](http://dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture)

### **NSW Farmers Association**

GPO Box 1068  
Sydney 2001  
Ph: 02 8251 1700  
Fax: 02 8251 1750  
E-mail: [emailus@nswfarmers.org.au](mailto:emailus@nswfarmers.org.au)

### **Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety**

PO Box 256  
Moree NSW 2400  
Ph: 02 6752 82100  
Fax: 02 6752 6639  
[farmsafe.org.au](http://farmsafe.org.au)

### **WorkCover NSW**

Locked Bag 2906  
Lisarow NSW 2252  
General Inquiries: **13 10 50**  
E-mail: [contact@workcover.nsw.gov.au](mailto:contact@workcover.nsw.gov.au)  
[workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://workcover.nsw.gov.au)

Your local veterinarian, Department of Agriculture/Rural Lands Protection Board or Stock and Station Agent can be sources of information for animal related problems.

### **WorkCover Guides**

The following publications are available from the WorkCover publications hotline on 1300 799 003.

- *15 minute farm safety checklist*. Catalogue no. WC00666
- *Risk management at work: Guide*. Catalogue no. WC00425
- *Risk assessment: Code of practice*. Catalogue no. WC00963
- *Safe use and storage of chemicals (including pesticides and herbicides) in agriculture: Code of practice*. Catalogue no. WC00422
- *First aid in the workplace: Guide*. Catalogue no. WC00121
- *Shearing – Health and safety at work: Guide*. Catalogue no. WC00692
- *Safe use of tractors: Guide*. Catalogue no. WC00604
- *Skin cancer and outdoor workers: A guide for employers*. Catalogue no. WC00116

Electrical testing and tagging information together with electrical equipment inspection information can be obtained from WorkCover's website [workcover.nsw.gov.au](http://workcover.nsw.gov.au)



Catalogue No. **WC01349** WorkCover Publications Hotline **1300 799 003**



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