Fall response checklist for farms, warehouses and field sites

Why a fall response plan matters for outdoor and industrial work

Working alone in a farm shed, a warehouse aisle or a remote field site carries risks that are different from those in an office. A slip from a ladder, a trip over loose stock, or a fall from a vehicle can leave a worker unable to call for help. In New Zealand, where many operations are spread over large areas and mobile reception can be patchy, the time between an incident and someone noticing can stretch dangerously long. A fall response checklist helps you think through what happens in those first minutes after a worker goes down, and what equipment and procedures need to be in place before that moment arrives.

This checklist covers the key points to review for farms, warehouses and field sites. It is meant for managers, safety officers and solo workers who want to make sure their current setup is ready for the most common fall scenarios. The focus is on practical checks that can be done without expensive consultants, and on understanding how a lone worker alarm with motion detection and fall alert fits into the picture.

Check 1: Does the worker have a way to signal a fall if they are unconscious?

The biggest danger in a solo fall is that the worker cannot press a button. A standard panic alarm only works if the person is conscious and able to activate it. For falls, the real need is automatic detection. This is where a worker motion alarm comes into play. Many modern lone worker devices include an accelerometer that senses a sudden impact followed by a period of no movement. If the device detects that pattern, it raises an alert without the worker having to do anything. When reviewing your setup, confirm that the device your team uses has this automatic fall detection, not just a manual SOS button. The Mercari Lone Worker Alarm NZ worker motion alarm is one example of a device that combines manual and automatic alerting, so a worker who is knocked out still gets a call for help sent.



In a warehouse with concrete floors and racking, a fall from a pallet or a ladder often produces a sharp impact. The same is true on a farm where a worker might slip on wet grass or a muddy ramp. Automatic detection is not a luxury; it is the difference between a quick response and a delayed one that could turn a broken leg into a life-threatening situation.

Check 2: Is the alarm system tested regularly for the actual working environment?

A device that works perfectly in the office may fail in a metal-clad shed or a gully with poor line of sight to a repeater. Test the alarm at the farthest point of the site, inside buildings with heavy steel framing, and in areas where the worker might be lying on the ground. The motion sensor and fall detection rely on the device being worn correctly, usually on the waist or chest. If the worker tucks it in a pocket or leaves it in a vehicle, the detection will not trigger. Make it a habit to check that the device is worn and that the test function works from the actual work locations. Some devices, including those from Mercari Lone Worker Alarm NZ, include a test mode that simulates a fall so you can confirm the alert reaches the monitoring service or designated contacts without triggering a real emergency. Run that test at least monthly, and after any change to the site layout or mobile coverage.

Check 3: Who receives the alert, and how quickly can they act?

An alarm that goes nowhere is useless. Your checklist must include who is on the notification list, what their response time is, and whether they have access to the site after hours. For a farm, the contact might be the farm manager or a nearby neighbour. For a warehouse, it could be a security company or a supervisor who lives close by. The plan should state what happens when the alert arrives: do they call the worker back, drive to the site, or dispatch a colleague? The response needs to be quick enough that a worker with a head injury or severe bleeding gets help before shock sets in. If the alert goes to a monitoring centre, confirm that the centre has the correct location details and a map of the site. If it goes to a mobile phone, make sure that phone is carried by someone who will answer even at night.

In remote field sites, the response may involve a 4WD trip or a helicopter. In those cases, the checklist should include a backup communication method, such as a satellite phone or a second device, because a single point of failure in the alert chain can be fatal.



Check 4: Is the device rugged enough for the environment?

Farms and warehouses are hard on electronics. Dust, moisture, vibration from machinery, and temperature swings can degrade a device that is not built for industrial use. When you review your lone worker alarm, check its ingress protection (IP) rating. A rating of at least IP65 means it is dust-tight and can handle rain or hose-down. The device should also survive a drop from waist height onto concrete, because that is exactly what happens in a fall. The Mercari Lone Worker Alarm NZ worker motion alarm is designed for these conditions, with a robust casing and a clip that stays attached during movement. But even a tough device needs a visual inspection: look for cracks in the casing, worn clips, or moisture inside the screen. Replace any unit that shows damage, as a compromised seal can let dust or water reach the electronics and cause a false alarm or a dead battery at the worst moment.

Check 5: Does the worker know how to reset or cancel an accidental alarm?

One of the most common complaints about fall detection alarms is false alerts. A worker who climbs into a truck cab and drops the device on the seat can trigger a fall alert. A sudden jolt from a forklift hitting a pothole can do the same. If the worker does not know how to cancel the alarm within the preset window, the response team gets called out for nothing. That wastes

time and breeds complacency. Your checklist should include a quick refresher on the cancel procedure: usually pressing a button or speaking a voice command within 15 to 30 seconds of the alert starting. Practice this during the monthly test. If the device uses voice communication, as some lone worker alarms do, the worker should know what to say and how loud to speak. In a noisy warehouse or a windy field, the microphone may not pick up a mumble, so a clear, loud command is essential.

If false alarms are frequent, the sensitivity setting may be too high. Some devices allow you to adjust the fall detection threshold. A setting that is too sensitive will trigger on a hard step; one that is too low may miss a real fall. Work with the supplier to find the right balance for your site. The ideal is a setting that catches a genuine fall but ignores the normal bumps of the workday.

Check 6: Is there a backup for when the device battery dies?

No alarm works if the battery is flat. Most lone worker devices charge via a cradle or USB, and they give a low-battery warning. But in a busy farm or warehouse, a worker might forget to charge the device overnight. Your checklist should include a spare charged unit at the site, or a charging station that is checked each morning. For field sites without power, consider a device with a long battery life, or carry a portable power bank. The procedure should also cover what to do if the device fails mid-shift: the worker should have a secondary way to signal distress, such as a whistle, a two-way radio, or a pre-arranged check-in call to a supervisor. This is not a replacement for the alarm, but it is a safety net for the hours when the primary device is out of action.



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Putting it together

A fall response checklist is not a one-time document. It needs to be reviewed whenever you introduce a new piece of equipment, change a work process, or move to a new site. The goal is to close the gap between a fall and a response, and to make sure that the people and the technology work together. For farms, warehouses and field sites in New Zealand, where the distances and conditions can delay help, a well-planned fall response is one of the most effective ways to protect a solo worker. Start with these six checks, and build from there based on the specific hazards of your operation.

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