Unloading Bulk Solid Fertilizer on Farm

Below is a summary of the key aspects covered in the Fertcare® A Transport Module training. These can be used as a guide to help deliver bulk solid fertilizer on farm safely for people, products and the environment.

Several businesses are often involved in organising bulk fertilizer farm deliveries e.g. manufacturer, dealer, carrier and farmer. To manage the risks, each person in the supply chain needs to take appropriate responsibility for gathering and passing on relevant information.

Businesses are encouraged to develop or review their own work procedures, checklists, and other systems based on the information below.

Access considerations:
- Check the proposed route is appropriate for the vehicle i.e. vehicle permits / B-Double access, bridge & road load limits, height restrictions etc
- Check farm road conditions are suitable i.e. road base and width, land slopes, creek crossing, ditches, overhead obstructions (e.g. trees & powerlines) or too wet and warning notices.
- Inform the delivery driver of all safety and environment concerns
- Confirm with customer delivery date, estimated time of arrival and location to discharge.

Unloading considerations:
- Check the ground is flat and suitable for tipping
- Check the ground under the rear trailer wheels is firm and stable
- Check the unloading area is free from overhead obstacles e.g. powerlines, trees, buildings
- Check the truck has adequate space to unhitch trailers and maneuver
- Is the area free from livestock, fencing, irrigation, troughs etc?
- Check weather and wind conditions to ensure they are suitable
- Check to see if the load has shifted during transit and is still suitably positioned for tipping
- Position chocks at the rear wheels prior to tipping into conveyors if required
- Release relevant tailgate / hatches before tipping
- Check if the load is “sticking / holding up” on one side during tipping
- Check no one is standing in a position where the tipper could fall on them while unloading
- Avoid driving through fertilizer spills
Considerations when dumping fertilizer on the ground:
- No long grass or rocks
- Clear of obstructions e.g. fences
- Not near a watercourse (even if currently dry)
- Not a low spot or high ground
- Site run off – where will storm water go?
- Cover the dump site with a tarp soon after unloading if requested

Considerations when unloading into conveying equipment:
- Check the conveying equipment is appropriate for fertilizer, in good working order and safe to use e.g. guards in place etc
- If fertilizer is going into a silo, is the silo suitable? (refer to Australian Standards AS 3773 – Bulk Solids Containers Safety Requirements and AS 3774 - Loads on Bulk Solids Containers)
- Control the fertilizer flow rate out of the tipper to ensure the conveyor does not overflow
- Contain spills and clean up promptly

Considerations after the load has been tipped:
- Remove residual fertilizer from the tipper, tarps, truck body and wheels etc before leaving the unloading site
- If the fertilizer has been treated with chemicals e.g. fungicide, follow the pesticide label instructions for cleaning i.e. wash the tipper with water and / or appropriate food grade cleaning solutions before loading food products e.g. grain
- Check the tipper is in a suitable condition for the next load i.e. avoiding cross contamination
- Appropriately dispose of residual fertilizer, dust and rinse water
- How will the farmer receive the fertilizer label and associated paperwork?

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