

Australian Fertiliser Services Association, Inc.

Code of Practice For Members



AFSA

Australian Fertiliser Services Association

August 2008

Fourth Edition

www.afsa.net.au

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Introduction

The Australian Fertiliser Services Association (AFSA) was established in 1972 to support and represent individuals and companies involved in the manufacture, sales, storage, distribution and spreading of fertilizers and soil ameliorant products. AFSA members are mainly from small business and their success is dependant not just upon their business acumen, but their ability to develop effective relationships with all of their business stakeholders and their ability to demonstrate excellence in workmanship and in the quality of their service.

In recognition of the importance of promoting professional conduct and a professional image for its members, AFSA developed a Code of Practice. The Code establishes benchmarks for operators and standards of service aimed at enhancing the confidence of clients in the service they can expect to receive from an AFSA member.

To support the development, promotion and implementation of the Code, the Federal Government, through the National Landcare Programme, provided funding in recognition of the national importance of the Code in improving natural resource management.

The adoption of the Code by our industry contributes significantly to improved environmental conditions, improved service levels to our clients and increased enterprise sustainability and profitability.

Definition

The definition of a fertilizer for the purpose of this Code is:

Any substance that is manufactured, represented, sold or used as a means of:

- *directly or indirectly fertilizing the soil, or supplying nutrients to plants; or*
- *conditioning the soil by altering the chemical, physical or biological composition of the soil.*

Legislation

This code identifies some issues for which there is relevant state legislation. AFSA members should be aware that the areas of legislation identified in the Code is not exhaustive, and that it is their responsibility to understand all legislation relevant to their operations.

The Code

The Code establishes an industry standard for operator performance and acknowledges that members have a 'duty of care', which requires them to ***take all reasonable care to prevent or minimize harm to the health and safety of human beings, and the broader environment.***

While fertilizers are essential to productive and efficient farming systems in Australia, unfortunately they have the potential to cause environmental harm, particularly to water quality. As these impacts are most likely to originate at the point of use (on farms), special care needs to be taken in all aspects of the use of fertilizers – including storage and transport. The AFSA Code is based on applying ***the right amount, of the right fertilizer, in the right place and at the right time.***

By following the Code of Practice, AFSA members can assist farmers to optimize productivity and minimize environmental degradation. The Code covers the key operational areas of:

- Product knowledge
- Spreading
- Transport
- Storage

To ensure adherence to the Code, AFSA members are strongly encouraged to discuss with their clients, any issues which may bring them into conflict with the Code, prior to commencing a job or before a problem is created.

Business Ethics

As part of demonstrating a high standard of professionalism within the industry, AFSA members need to ***demonstrate fair and just business standards, as well as excellence in workmanship, to earn a reputation for honesty and quality of service.***

To assist members in this way, AFSA has developed Business Ethics guidelines which will be refined over time to reflect industry best practice.

Compliance with the Code

All AFSA Members are expected to comply with the Code. Members who act honestly in their business dealings and who follow the Code can expect the support of the Association when it is needed, such as when unfair allegations are made against a member.

For the purposes of this Code, the definition of “AFSA Member”, means a financial member of the AFSA, and any of their staff.

Fertcare

The AFSA Code of Practice has provided the basis for the Australian Fertilizer Industry’s product stewardship program Fertcare. The code is instilled in the Fertcare Level A training program and the national competency standards for that training.

AFSA members are strongly encouraged to undertake the appropriate level of Fertcare training, and attain accreditation as a formal and practical means of proving their ability to meet the AFSA Code of Practice.

Further information on Fertcare can be found at www.fertcare.com.au.

1. PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE

This applies to all AFSA members who advise, supply, handle and spread fertilizer products. In addition, there are state, federal and local government regulations related to fertilizer products, and these must be observed. Members should pay particular attention to the relevant State laws and regulations that address Product Security and Dangerous Goods.

PRINCIPLE
Members will explain to clients where they are able and qualified to give advice, and where advice needs to be sought from other professionals – such as an agronomist.

TOPIC	PRACTICE
Product appearance	Members will be able to visually identify the products they handle.
Labels and MSDS	Members will understand the information contained on product labels and material safety data sheets (MSDS).
Handling and storage characteristics	Members will be aware of the factors that affect product quality, and how to avoid product degradation.
Dangerous Goods	Members will be aware of which products are classified as Dangerous Goods, Hazardous Substances or Poisons, and the protocols associated with handling those products.
Security	Members will be aware of which products are considered as 'chemicals of security concern', and the protocols associated with handling those products.
Risk Management	Members will understand the basic characteristics of the fertilizer products they handle, supply and spread – including any associated risks, and have procedures to minimize risks to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the environment • food safety • occupational health and safety.
Oversupply	Members will be familiar with the fertilizer rates commonly advised in the district, and be able to query rates if they appear too high.
Communication	Members will be able to discuss all of the above issues with their customers.

2. SPREADING

This applies to all AFSA members who ground-spread fertilizer products. In addition, there are state, federal and local government regulations related to fertilizer spreading, and these must be observed. Members should pay particular attention to the relevant State laws and regulations related to Road Safety, Environment and Water Quality Protection, and Occupational Health and Safety.

PRINCIPLES
Members will ensure that their spreading operations are performed to optimize application efficiency, and minimize risk to human and environmental health. AFSA Members will refuse any job that would result in breaching any law, regulation or safety factor that may be applicable to the spreading task.

TOPIC	PRACTICE
Product Knowledge	Members involved in the spreading of fertilizers will follow the practices for Product Knowledge.
Customer requirements	Members will ensure all instructions are provided in writing by (or checked with) the client, and cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • product type • total quantity • application rate • spreading site details (ideally maps or GPS coordinates, or other clearly understood directions) • any other conditions.
Site features	Members will have processes in place to mitigate topographic and other risk features of the spreading site, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • steep slopes • machinery hazards (fences, pickets, rocky outcrops etc) • adjacent areas where product must not be allowed to drift or run-off to (including waterways, wetlands, neighbouring properties etc).
Weather conditions	Members will consider the weather conditions prevailing on the day of the spreading job to limit adverse off-site impacts, particularly in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wind strength and direction (drift risk) • rainfall (run-off risk and ground conditions).
Farm hygiene	Members will ensure that their trucks and machinery are 'clean on and clean off' the job site – where requested by the client.

<p>Environment protection</p>	<p>Members will make all reasonable efforts (including by maintaining appropriate buffer zones) to spread fertilizers to avoid loss of product to waterways and wetlands.</p> <p>Members will avoid spreading in conditions that will damage the soil, especially through compaction and rutting.</p> <p>Members will only spread fertilizer products on the contracted land area.</p>
<p>Occupational health and safety</p>	<p>Members will undertake routine maintenance of their spreading machinery, and operate machinery only within established safety limits.</p> <p>Members will obtain and follow the safety information periodically distributed by the AFSA, including the ground spreading safety dvd sponsored by OAMPS.</p> <p>Members will advise the client if and when the spreading job would result in exceeding those limits.</p>
<p>Spreading accuracy</p>	<p>Members will be familiar with the capacity of their spreading machines and know the total spreading-width and bout-width for a range of products. They are encouraged to have their spreading machines calibrated regularly. The AFSA has developed the Accu-Spread program for spreading machinery accreditation, under Fertcare.</p>
<p>Record keeping</p>	<p>Members should establish and maintain a Job Sheet for each spreading job, that provides details on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the client • the product and spreading instructions • the site conditions – including location, hazards, weather • actions taken to address any specific concerns • any problems or issues that require follow-up action.

3. TRANSPORT

This applies to all AFSA members who transport bulk fertilizer. In addition, there are state, federal and local government regulations related to the transport of fertilizer products and these must be observed. Members should pay particular attention to the relevant State laws and regulations related to Transport of Dangerous Goods, Road Safety, Environment and Water Quality Protection, Occupational Health and Safety and hours of driving.

PRINCIPLES
Members will ensure that the right quantity of the right product will be safely loaded, transported and delivered to the right location, at the right time and in the right condition – without causing any human or environmental harm. AFSA Members will refuse any job that would result in breaching any law, regulation or safety factor that may be applicable to the transporting task.

TOPIC	PRACTICE
Product Knowledge	Members involved in the transport of fertilizers will follow the practices for Product Knowledge.
Customer requirements	Members will ensure all instructions are provided in writing by (or checked with the client), and cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • product type • quantity • delivery site details (ideally maps or GPS coordinates, or other clearly understood directions) • any other conditions.
Product contamination	Members will ensure that the tray or bin used to transport fertilizers is cleaned between loads of different products and materials. Members will ensure all loads are covered to minimize the risk of any contamination during transport – including by water.
Spillage	Members will inspect their equipment to ensure they are in suitable condition to contain the load, and free of leaks. Members will ensure that every load is covered with a tarpaulin or similar cover to prevent any loss via wind or spillage.
Farm hygiene	Members will ensure that their trucks and machinery are 'clean on' to the delivery site – where requested by the client.

<p>Dumpsites</p>	<p>Members will understand what constitutes a safe dumpsite in terms of human and environmental safety, and the protection of product quality, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only deliver to such sites • be able to discuss the suitability of any proposed dumpsite with the client • refuse to unload if the dumpsite is unsuitable. <p>In particular, members will consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proximity of the dumpsite to waterways and other no-go zones (neighbouring properties etc) • the condition of the dump pad (free from debris etc) • the need for any covers for the fertilizer pile • proximity to hazards including overhead power lines.
<p>Environment Protection</p>	<p>Cleaning of machinery should be done in such a way to ensure all waste is collected or contained in an appropriate area and disposed of in an appropriate manner.</p>
<p>Occupational health and safety</p>	<p>Members will ensure all transport equipment will undergo regular inspection and maintenance.</p> <p>Members will be aware of and abide by all safety limits associated with their transport machinery.</p> <p>Members will take whatever precautions are necessary to minimize contact with fertilizers – including the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).</p>

4. STORAGE

This applies to AFSA members who work in or manage fertilizer storage depots. In addition, there are state, federal and local government regulations related to the storage of fertilizer products and these must be observed. Members should pay particular attention to the relevant State laws and regulations related to Storage of Dangerous Goods, Product Security, Environment and Water Quality Protection, and Occupational Health and Safety.

PRINCIPLE
Members will ensure that all fertilizer products are confined within dedicated storage perimeters, so as to minimize the uncontrolled loss of any products.

TOPIC	PRACTICE
Product Knowledge	Members involved in the storage of fertilizers will follow the practices for Product Knowledge.
Depot location and design	Storage facilities should be located and constructed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid any loss of fertiliser products to waterways, wetlands and groundwater • minimize the risk of drift from prevailing winds • be clear of overhead power lines in truck tipping areas.
Housekeeping	<p>Members will ensure any spilled fertilizer is contained and disposed of in an approved manner, and where facilities and equipment are washed, all wastewater must also be collected and disposed of in an approved manner.</p> <p>Members will ensure that all vehicles are loaded in such a way that there is no accidental spillage once the vehicle leaves the premises.</p> <p>Members will not load vehicles that do not have appropriate load covers.</p>
Product Security	Members will adhere to all regulations related to the safe storage of all 'chemicals of security concern'.

<p>Product quality and contamination</p>	<p>Members will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their equipment and handling procedures maintain product-quality standards • the contents of storage bays, bins and hoppers are clearly labeled • when changing from one product to another, all storage, loading and blending equipment is clean of residues. <p>Members will manage their stock in such a way that fertiliser products are stored and used within a sufficiently short time to comply with manufacturers' specifications, especially regarding moisture content.</p> <p>Members will take all possible precautions to ensure fertiliser products are not contaminated by any biologically active products such as seeds and insects.</p>
<p>Weights and measures</p>	<p>Members will ensure that all load cells, scales and weighbridges conform to statutory requirements and are checked in accordance with state regulations, and that proof of such checking will be made available for inspection.</p> <p>Members will ensure that documentation is maintained to prove that the amount of product supplied matches the amount ordered.</p>
<p>Occupational health and safety</p>	<p>Members will have processes in place, and will take all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of staff, customers and visitors to the storage area, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to ensure that direct contact with fertilizers and inhalation of fertilizer dust is minimized • the display of warning signs regarding constant and periodic hazards, and exclusion zones • the regular inspection of all plant and equipment used in the depot, and maintenance in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

5. BUSINESS ETHICS

This applies to all AFSA members. In addition, there are state, federal and local government regulations related to business practices and these must be observed. Members will need to have particular regard to regulations related to Fair Trading laws, that may be different in each state.

PRINCIPLE
AFSA Members will stand out – not just for the excellence of their workmanship, but for the quality of their service to their clients, their honesty and integrity in all their business dealings.

TOPIC	PRACTICE
Legal and ethical behaviour	Members must be familiar with, and abide by, all Commonwealth, State and Territory laws relevant to their operations. Members will demonstrate ethical behaviour in all their dealings e.g. by reducing and preventing nuisance and harm arising from their operations.
Integrity	Members should treat all customers and stakeholders with respect, providing timely advice and information that is honest and sound at all times. AFSA members will act in accordance with the Code and can be relied upon to do what they say they will do.
Accountability	Members will take responsibility for their actions, bringing to notice failures to do so, and acting to address them.
Quality of Service	Members will maintain a high standard of service for all customers, specifically in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • machinery condition and accuracy of spreading • record keeping • timely completion of services • maintenance of customer privacy.
Employees	AFSA members will strive to be employers of choice, and be known for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treating their employees fairly • using employees who are trained in safe work practices and who work safely • ensuring their staff are familiar with the AFSA Code and reflect it in the way they work.

Excellence	Members will demonstrate excellence in workmanship by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seeking innovative and improved ways of operating• sharing their experiences and expertise with other members• working to strengthen the AFSA.
Governance	Within their own businesses, members will implement sound systems of values, policies, processes, risk management and controls to meet their legal, financial and ethical obligations.
Compliance	Members are expected to adhere to the AFSA Code of Practice.
Sub-contractors	Sub-contractors to AFSA members should be made aware of, and abide by, the AFSA Code of Practice.



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