



Business Operations Handbook

Version 10, 2021

The Australian Turf Accreditation Program



Business Certification Standards

The AusGAP business certification program is designed for leading turf producers to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements in all facets of business operations. The business compliance framework works in conjunction with AusGAP turf certification practices to increase productivity, efficiency and quality of turf production and products. AusGAP also aims to minimise environmental impact of the turf production system on immediate and surrounding areas.

There are five main components of AusGAP business certification which encompass all facets of turf grower operations to achieve the highest standards in turf production.

1. Business and farm regulatory compliances
2. Environmental stewardship
3. Turfgrass genetic purity practices
4. Customer service and satisfaction
5. Staff welfare and safety

The practices and products of the AusGAP certified farms are audited annually by authorised AusGAP inspectors, with independent audits also a regular occurrence to ensure compliance with all listed requirements.

A system of inspections, reports and on-farm record keeping allow for a smooth and efficient process, from land preparation to the final turf inspection and harvest.

Compliance with the AusGAP program requirements will allow the grower to be awarded an annual AusGAP business certification.

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1. Workplace Health & Safety (WHS)

Each AusGAP certified business must comply with the following standards as a minimum to retain certification. All points must comply with the grower's state's regulated Work Health and Safety Act.

- 1.1.1 A copy of the grower's state's most recent Work Health and Safety Act must be made available to all staff, contractors and business representatives to ensure they are always compliant with this act.
 - 1.1.2 Minimum standards of Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation must be met. This includes complying with WHS regulations, codes of practice and the national compliance and enforcement policy.
 - 1.1.3 A Work Health and Safety policy must be in place and a WHS officer appointed.
 - 1.1.4 Regular staff training and updates on WHS must be conducted and recorded.
 - 1.1.5 Any workplace accidents or near misses must be reported and recorded.
 - 1.1.6 A system of risk assessment and hazard reduction, such as a Safe Work Method Statement, must be in place and employed for tasks on-or off site.
 - 1.1.7 All staff must wear appropriate safety uniforms and personal protection equipment (PPE) to comply with the company's WHS policies.
 - 1.1.8 Safe Operating Procedures (SOP's) based on the information and recommendations in the manufacturers operating manual for each vehicle and machine must be understood and signed by each staff member before use or operation.
 - 1.1.9 All staff must be made aware of their obligations under the Chain of Responsibility Act as legislated in relevant state laws.
- NB:** An AusGAP Workplace Advisor can be contacted to create a custom WHS package to assist with compliance in accordance with both the AusGAP business certification requirements and state and federal laws.

2. Staff Employment & Training

Certified businesses must comply with the following staff employment and development requirements:

Employers must make provisions for all staff in order to properly obtain confirmation that the required understanding has been reached for all training and employment requirements.

- 2.1.1 All state and federal employment laws must be complied with when operating on the grower's premises or on an external site.
- 2.1.2 Regular staff training on current and new products must be carried out and recorded, where applicable.
- 2.1.3 Operator training on vehicles and machinery must be carried out and recorded including the familiarisation with and sign-off on the manufacturers operation manual for each machine or vehicle in use.
- 2.1.4 Regular "toolbox talks" with staff on current WHS issues and advancements, updates and edits made to the company's WHS policies and procedures are to be carried out and recorded as part of the grower's WHS policy.
- 2.1.5 Award wages and conditions must be met by the employer as a minimum.
- 2.1.6 Any other employment conditions as required must be met to comply with relevant state and federal laws.
- 2.1.7 All staff must be made aware of and kept up to date with AusGAP protocols and requirements of certification in line with current AusGAP training requirements.

3. Licensing

- 3.1.1 Growers and staff must hold the appropriate licences, tickets and cards and be adequately trained to perform required duties, both on farm and on-site to comply with relevant statutory laws.
- 3.1.2 All licences must be inspected, copied on file and have currency and expiry dates recorded.
- 3.1.3 No staff member – full-time, part-time, casual, sub-contractor nor any person representing the business – is to conduct any work on or off site without the appropriate licences and training.

4. Motor Vehicle, Plant & Machinery Maintenance

- 4.1.1 All motor vehicles, plant and machinery must be regularly inspected and maintained as per state and federal laws and industry standards.
- 4.1.2 All scheduled maintenance and major repairs carried out on motor vehicles, plant and machinery must be completed by trained and authorised personnel and be documented.
- 4.1.3 Regular staff training on correct motor vehicles, plant and machinery operation and maintenance must be carried out and recorded.
- 4.1.4 Any faulty vehicles, plant or machinery that is deemed to be unsafe for use must be reported and removed from service as per the grower's Work Health and Safety policy requirements.
- 4.1.5 No tagged or out-of-service vehicle, plant or machinery is to be used at any time unless corrections are made and deemed safe by a trained and authorised repairer.
- 4.1.6 All turf harvesting, production and installation machinery and equipment must be kept in a serviceable condition in line with best industry practices to ensure the ongoing harvest is of the highest standard.
- 4.1.7 Modifications or adjustments made to vehicles, plant and machinery must be completed to the required standards and recorded in the relevant manufacturer's operation manual for the information of all current and future operators.

5. Chemical Use & Storage

The grower is to meet the following minimum requirements in relation to the use and storage of chemicals and comply with relevant state and federal legislative requirements.

- 5.1.1 All chemicals are to be used and stored in compliance with Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) requirements.
- 5.1.2 All signage around chemical storage and handling areas must be clearly visible and compliant.
- 5.1.3 Only turf-registered or APVMA-approved minor use permit chemicals or those stipulated by relevant state and federal laws can be used on turf production areas.
- 5.1.4 Chemical usage to be conducted as per recommended rates and methods as described on the label.
- 5.1.5 A chemical application register must be maintained to comply with the latest relevant statutory State and Federal laws and made available to AusGAP on request.
- 5.1.6 Detailed records are to be kept on fertiliser application dates, quantities and methods, and supplied to AusGAP on request.
- 5.1.7 Whenever handling chemicals, operators must have appropriate and current licences and training.

- 5.1.8 All relevant and current Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be accessible to anyone handling chemicals.
- 5.1.9 Equipment used for chemical application must be calibrated, tested and maintained regularly and the grower must document these steps.
- 5.1.10 An up-to-date registry of chemicals stored on site must be kept separate from the storage facility in case of fire or similar emergency.

6. Environmental & Bio-security Measures

To ensure the long-term sustainability and viability of the turf industry, there are a number of environmental and bio-security measures that must be adhered to in a grower's operations including:

- 6.1.1 A documented environmental policy to promote: Environmental awareness, minimal adverse environmental impacts, minimal energy use and responsible waste management. This must be made known to all employees.
- 6.1.2 A farm bio-security policy or statement must be in place that includes measures to reduce weed, disease, insect or other pathogen contamination potential from the movement of people, vehicles and equipment to and from farm operations, including quarantine protocols should they be required.
- 6.1.3 Appropriate farm bio-security signage to be displayed prominently at all farm entrances; no less than stating that visitors respect farm bio-security and should contact the farm manager prior to entry.
- 6.1.4 Any brought-in turf material/fertiliser/manures or other crop inputs must be clearly recorded for their source and application areas should a quarantine area be required by AusGAP.
- 6.1.5 Procedures and facilities in place and clearly displayed for the cleaning of machinery and equipment that has the potential to carry contaminants - e.g. signs at wash down bay.

7. Insurances

AusGAP promotes the fact that all certified growers are fully compliant with insurance requirements and hold all appropriate insurance policies. This requirement is subject to self-assessment, but documentary evidence is to be provided to AusGAP on request.

The insurances required under AusGAP certification include, but are not limited to:

- 7.1.1 \$10,000,000 minimum public liability.
- 7.1.2 Workers' compensation policy as appropriate in the growers state or territory.
- 7.1.3 Legally compliant registration or permits of all relevant vehicles, plant and machinery.
- 7.1.4 All insurances and registrations are to meet relevant statutory requirements and laws.
- 7.1.5 Directors and officer's liability insurance is recommended but not essential.

8. Customer Service

Under AusGAP certification, the following minimum standards of customer service must be met:

- 8.1.1 All staff will brief the customer on turf care, such as watering, mowing and the appropriate fertilisers and other turf care products.
- 8.1.2 All customer enquiries or concerns must be responded to in a timely manner.
- 8.1.3 All staff must have completed and met a minimum standard of basic turf installation and lawn care education for the benefit of customers.
- 8.1.4 In the event of a contractor delivering the product, satisfactory written documentation must be provided to the customer upon delivery to ensure the appropriate information is available for proper installation.
- 8.1.5 A system of management must be in place for all turf that is delivered to resellers and other off farm suppliers. This system is to ensure the turf is handled and stored correctly and no turf is sold in a state that does not meet the AusGAP quality standards. (See AusGAP Turf Certification Handbook)



9. Definitions:

Authenticity certificate	A guarantee provided with the sale of each certified turf product proclaiming the turf is true-to-type.
Authorised AusGAP inspector	A trained and competent person employed by AusGAP to audit the systems and procedures outlined in the AusGAP certification guidelines.
Breeder material	The original strain of a cultivar produced by selective breeding.
Buffer zone	A controlled area intended to prevent contamination or pollution.
Certified paddock	Paddocks planted with material from a registered field. Third generation.
Contaminant	Any grass found in a paddock of certified turf that is of a different species or variety to that of the registered variety under production.
Cultivar	A plant variety that has been produced in cultivation by selective breeding.
Disease damage	Physical and visible damage to turf caused by a pathogen.
Foreign turf varieties	See Contaminant.
Foundation paddock	Paddocks planted from the original breeder material and used to source planting material for further expansion of a cultivar. First generation.
Genetic purity	The plant population conforms to the phenotypic characteristics as described in the breeder's description.
Genetic resource	Breeder material of a selected cultivar kept in pure form in a designated location.
Grow-in-phase	The time in turf production between the planting of a paddock and harvest, or between harvests when the turf is actively covering a paddock.
ITGAP	International Turf Grass Genetic Assurance Program.
Off-Type	Contaminant grasses of the same species as the intended variety under production that should not be present. Off-types will have differing growth habits and/or morphological appearance to the certified crop in production.
Pest damage	Physical and visible damage to turf caused by an insect, grub or other living being.
Pre-emergent herbicide	A chemical applied to prevent the germination of seeds by inhibiting a key enzyme.
Registered paddock	Paddocks planted from foundation material, generally the first paddock of that variety planted on each farm. Second generation.
True-to-type	Pure turf grass showing the expected traits and morphological features of the intended variety under production. Being or behaving as expected.
Turf Generation	Each expansion of a turf cultivar from one classification of paddock to another is considered a generation, ie. Foundation to Registered, Registered to Certified.
Turf tensile strength	The resistance of a turf roll or slab to breaking under tension.
Visually free	No visible signs or distress or damage in the harvested turf product.



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