

# Managing people risk this vintage

**V**intage is a busy time and people are constantly moving in and out of vineyards. With this movement comes risk – the potential for a professional visitor to your vineyard, such as a winemaker, grower liaison officer, contractor or supplier, to unwittingly track in a pest, disease or weed seed you don't currently have.

People can pick up pests, diseases and weed seeds from the soil and vines on their clothing, shoes, tyres, equipment and machinery and spread them to the next vineyard they visit. This spread could be between vineyards in different countries, states, wine regions or blocks on the same vineyard.

“Research shows that visitors generally do not consider the risks associated with walking into vineyards. It is the responsibility of every vineyard owner to set up biosecurity systems to manage and minimise risks and communicate responsibility for adhering to these requirements to visitors before they arrive,” said Inca Pearce, CEO of Vinehealth Australia.

“It's assumed that vineyard owners already have a biosecurity plan for their own property and that owners, managers and staff already adhere to best practice farm-gate hygiene. But vineyard owners also have a responsibility to set the expectation for how they want their vines to be respected by their visitors. They need to know what practical steps they can take to protect the long-term health and value of their vines and ensure that these steps are simple to adhere to.”

To manage any risk, you first need to understand it. Below we've provided information about phylloxera management zones and how they relate to vineyard entry conditions. It's important that you tailor your biosecurity plan to the phylloxera management zone that you are in to adequately manage the risk of a potential phylloxera incursion.

## Defining 'visitors'

Firstly, who are 'visitors'? For this article, we're dealing with professional



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visitors servicing the operation of the vineyard, including grower liaison officers, seasonal labourers, contractors, consultants, supplier representatives, winemakers, researchers, tradespeople and maintenance personnel.

The content in this article is also highly relevant to employees of a single workplace who are not deemed 'visitors' to this workplace.

This article does not cover best practice biosecurity for tourists. For

advice about hosting tourists and non-professional guests, check out Vinehealth Australia's Responsible Visitation Campaign, which you can learn about here: <http://vinehealth.com.au/industry/resources/hosting-visitors/>

### Understanding entry conditions for vine rows

Who you allow into your vine rows, and what protective shoes and clothing you provide or insist must accompany a visit, depends on where your visitors have been in the three weeks prior.

Research has shown that grape phylloxera can live 'in transit' for up to three weeks without food. This means if a person picks up a single phylloxera insect on their shoe or clothing in an infested vineyard, they can transfer it to your property days or weeks later if they are wearing the same shoes or clothing. The same holds for phylloxera picked up on machinery, vehicles or equipment.

'High risk' visitors are those who have been:

1. In or near vineyards in Phylloxera Infested Zones (PIZ) or Phylloxera Risk Zones (PRZ) in Australia in the three weeks prior to coming onto your property. See the 'Understanding Phylloxera Management Zone' information on page 41.
2. In an overseas wine region in the three weeks prior to coming onto your property.

Granting machinery and equipment access to vine rows will depend on:

Whether the machinery and equipment is clean of soil and plant material on arrival to your property; and

3. If from another state or phylloxera management zone, whether the machinery and equipment is accompanied by required state plant quarantine legislation documentation, outlining adherence to cleaning and sterilisation according to state entry conditions.

### MANAGING PROFESSIONAL VISITORS

#### Risk area: planning

- If you don't already have one, develop a biosecurity plan for your property including your conditions

for allowing visitor entry to vine rows. This plan will stand you in good stead for protecting your vineyard from most pests, diseases and weeds.

- Base your entry conditions on the Phylloxera Management Zone your vineyard is in, to appropriately manage the level of risk associated with phylloxera.
- Set up farm-gate hygiene processes that match your biosecurity plan and visitor entry conditions, including:
  - Visitor sign in register (<http://vinehealth.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Visitor-sign-in-Register-2212018-PDF.pdf>);
  - Footwear disinfection station (<http://vinehealth.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Vinehealth-Footwear-and-Small-Hand-Tools-Disinfection-Protocol-White-A3.pdf>);
  - Parking area for visitors on a hard stand surface, such as concrete or bitumen;
  - Fencing of vineyards near parking areas and roads.

Risk area: company employees based on another vineyard worksite who visit your vineyard

- Add a chapter on farm-gate hygiene systems and expectations to your staff training and education program. Train staff on:
  - What items phylloxera can be moved on;
  - What sterilisation methods can kill phylloxera;
  - How to access the state plant quarantine standards or equivalent;
  - Why carrying out farm-gate hygiene practices are important to your business;
  - What's at stake in the event of a biosecurity incursion;
  - How to speak to visitors about biosecurity and key questions to ask visitors about their prior movements and those of their machinery and equipment;
  - The importance of keeping non-critical visitors out of vine rows;

- How to manage visitor movement on your property;
- How to manage controlled entry of visitors to your vine rows; and
- How to check for adherence to state plant quarantine standards for the movement of machinery and equipment.
- Ensure staff have good knowledge of the latest Australian Phylloxera Management Zones map, including what the different phylloxera management zones mean in terms of risk of bringing in phylloxera to their vineyard, and where the risky locations are. You can find maps at: <http://vinehealth.com.au/industry/resources/maps/phylloxera-management-zones/>.
- Don't forget about the risk that international wine regions pose. Ensure that staff travelling overseas are well versed in farm-gate hygiene to avoid bringing pests, disease and weeds back into Australia.
- Ensure staff know how to use your visitor sign-in register and regularly check that it is being filled in properly. You should record who is visiting and the visits they (and their machinery and equipment) have made to other wine regions in the past three weeks. Retain this register for at least seven years. In the event of a pest, disease or weed outbreak, it will be important to recall for traceback activities. For large accompanied groups, obtain visitor details from the supervisor.
- Ensure staff know the early signs/symptoms of high priority endemic and exotic pests and diseases. Refer to the 'If You Spot Me, Report Me!' poster and related documents, which you can find here: <http://vinehealth.com.au/industry/resources/farm-gate-hygiene/>
- Also ensure you have established procedures and expectations for reporting unusual symptoms.
- Acknowledge and reward clear biosecurity thinking, planning and proactive implementation.

#### Risk area: clothes and shoes

- Ensure staff have good knowledge of best practice guidelines on footwear and clothing hygiene requirements to effectively evaluate



the risk visitors pose to your vines and then what practices must be undertaken if these operational visitors are permitted to walk amongst your vines. If you have staff visiting other vineyards, ensure you communicate your expectations of them when offsite, as your reputation is on show. If in a PEZ, consider providing them with disposable footwear to use at other vineyards. This can prevent the pickup and spread of weed seeds on the bottom of footwear.

- Communicate your expectations of operational visitors prior to them arriving, including what footwear or clothing they need to bring with them, and what disinfection procedures they will be expected to follow on entry and exit of your vineyard. Review what biosecurity requirements you have in your contract agreements to set expectations for operational visitors to your vineyard.
- Even if a visitor has worn a disposable chemical suit in the vineyard, there is a risk that this suit can rip, and pests can be transferred from the outside of the suit to clothing beneath during removal of the suit if not done carefully. Best practice is to seal in a bag all clothes worn under the disposable chemical suit prior to leaving the property and change into a clean set of clothes. The dirty clothes must be hot washed on the highest temperature setting (54°C or above) using the longest wash cycle setting, as clothes will not always remain immersed in the water if using a front loader, followed by tumble-drying also on the highest heat setting. Hot washing of clothes must be completed by visitors moving between Phylloxera Management Zones and between vineyards within a PIZ or PRZ.
- Allow operational visitors access to vine rows only if strict adherence to farm-gate hygiene practices has been demonstrated.
- Ensure sufficient time is allocated around vineyard operations at the start and end of the working day, to ensure compliance with requirements of best practice farm-gate hygiene.

- If any disposable footwear or clothing is worn, remove carefully prior to leaving the vineyard on which it is worn. Collect it and double-bag in sealed garbage bags for disposal.
- If you provide your visitors with alternative footwear, ensure it is regularly cleaned of all soil and plant material.

### **The following best practice guidelines for clothing and footwear apply:**

1. For a vineyard in a PEZ: If your visitors have either not visited vineyards in the three weeks prior and walked down vine rows or near vines, or only visited vineyards in a PEZ, provide alternative footwear (including gum boots or work boots), or sturdy shoe covers, or ensure footwear disinfection is undertaken on entry and exit of vine rows.
2. If your visitors have visited vineyards in a PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region in the three weeks prior and walked down vine rows or near vines:
  - a. If the operational visitors are wearing the same clothing (including hats) they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region, they must be denied access to your vine rows, even if they wore a disposable suit in the vineyard they recently visited.
  - b. If the operational visitors have changed their clothing (including hats) and shoes that they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region, provide them alternative footwear, or sturdy shoe covers, or ensure footwear disinfection is undertaken on entry and exit of vine rows.
  - c. If the operational visitors have changed their clothing (including hats) but not shoes that they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region:

If the shoes were disinfested prior to entering your property, provide alternative footwear or ensure footwear disinfection is undertaken on entry and exit of vine rows.

If the shoes were not disinfested prior to entering your property, deny access to your vine rows and advise the operational visitors that footwear presents a risk and must be disinfested prior to coming onto your property and away from vineyards.

### **For a vineyard in a PRZ/PIZ:**

1. If your visitors have either not visited another vineyard in the three weeks prior and walked down vine rows or near vines, or only visited vineyards in a PEZ, provide them alternative footwear, or ensure footwear disinfection is undertaken on entry and exit of vine rows. And, provide a disposable chemical suit, or alternative clothing that remains on your vineyard.
2. If your visitors have visited another vineyard in a PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region in the three weeks prior, and walked down vine rows or near vines:
  - a. If the visitor is not wearing the same clothes (including hats) or shoes that they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region, they must wear a disposable chemical suit or change into alternative clothing that remains on your vineyard. And, wear alternative footwear or undertake footwear disinfection on entry and exit of vine rows.
  - b. If the visitor is wearing the same shoes that they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region, and these shoes have not been disinfested according to the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfection protocol (<http://vinehealth.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Vinehealth-Footwear-and-Small-Hand-Tools-Disinfection-Protocol-White-A3.pdf>) prior to entering your property, deny these operational visitors access to your vine rows. Explain that their footwear presents a risk and must be disinfested according to the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfection protocol

prior to coming onto your property and away from vines.

- c. If the visitor is wearing the same shoes that they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region, and these shoes have been disinfested according to the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfestation protocol prior to entering your property, provide alternative footwear or ensure footwear disinfestation is undertaken again on entry and exit of vine rows. Conditional entry at this stage though is subject to the state of the clothing worn. If the operational visitors are also wearing the same clothing (including hats) they wore in the PRZ, PIZ or overseas wine region, they must be denied access, even if they wore a disposable suit in the vineyard they recently visited. The only options for controlled entry are for these visitors to change into their own clean clothes and then wear a disposable chemical suit, or to change into alternative clothing that remains on your vineyard.

### Risk area: machinery

- Allow access to vine rows only if strict adherence to farm-gate hygiene practices and state quarantine standards has been demonstrated. Vineyard owners and managers must be aware of entry requirements for different types of machinery and equipment and if accredited to verify and inspect imports. Carry this out with due diligence.
- Contract machinery and equipment used on your property must arrive free of all soil and plant material and be washed down of all soil and plant material again before leaving. Best practice is to keep a record of this cleaning.
- Preferably, this washdown is to occur:
  - Away from vines;
  - With high pressure water; and



Disposable chemical suits should be removed prior to leaving the property on which it is worn. Collect it and double-bag in sealed garbage bags for disposal.

- On a hard stand area with wastewater capture to prevent runoff onto vines or trafficked areas.

### Risk area: vehicles

- If vineyards must be accessed, provide operational visitors access to site vehicles that don't leave your property or region.
- Instruct visitors to park their vehicles in a designated (preferably hard stand) car park away from vines and check they have done so during the visit.
- If the visitor's vehicle must enter the vineyard for operational requirements, then it must come to your vineyard already clean of all soil and plant material. If not, it must be denied access.
- If the vehicle has driven down vine rows in a vineyard in a PIZ or PRZ, this is high-risk. Do not allow the vehicle access to your vine rows.
- The visitor must clean their vehicle of soil and plant material before leaving your phylloxera management zone. This is imperative if travelling into a PEZ.

**TIP:** If vineyards are in a PIZ or PRZ, visitor parking should be on hard stand areas in the sun, at least 100m away from vines.

## Understanding Phylloxera Management Zones

For policy, regulatory and management purposes, our wine regions are classified into Phylloxera Management Zones according to the evidence of phylloxera presence, absence or unknown (untested) status. The zones are:

### Phylloxera Exclusion Zones (PEZ)

– a whole state or part thereof, recognised to be free of phylloxera. South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania are all Phylloxera Exclusion Zones.

**Phylloxera Risk Zones (PRZ)** – an area of unknown phylloxera status. There are Phylloxera Risk Zones in Victoria and Queensland.

**Phylloxera Infested Zones (PIZ)** – an area known to have phylloxera. There are Phylloxera Infested Zones in Victoria and New South Wales.

Movement of vectors that can spread phylloxera from one place to another, such as machinery, equipment, grapes, grape products, diagnostic samples, grapevine propagation material and soil, are tightly controlled between these Phylloxera Management Zones.

For an up to date map of Phylloxera Management Zones go to: <http://vinehealth.com.au/industry/resources/maps/phylloxera-management-zones/>