



# A13

## RESPONSIBLE USE OF BAIT STATIONS

An Operator's Guide

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## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Bait stations are designed to dispense toxic baits for pest animal control. Due care and safe handling is essential when using any toxic substance and this guide describes good practice in the use of bait stations.

Preventing livestock and domestic animals from accessing toxic baits is particularly emphasised, as poor bait station placement and management can put non-target species, including humans, at risk.

There are many types of bait stations, baits and baiting techniques. Therefore, this guide does not address every facet of bait station use but provides guidance in the key areas of:

- legal obligations;
- risk management;
- general techniques and placement in the field;
- recording and reporting requirements.

## BAIT STATIONS

Bait stations are an effective alternative to placing baits on the ground, with the advantage that baits will be less vulnerable to deterioration from weather, less likely to be taken by non-target species and more easily tracked. They are used for both initial population knock-down and maintenance control and are particularly useful in situations where their discreet use helps to manage special risks such as:

- vulnerable wildlife species in wetlands, wildlife refuges and special ecological sites;
- people and domestic animals in public open spaces;
- areas where there is a legal requirement to use bait stations.

Bait stations used for possum and rodent control are specifically designed and constructed to be attached to trees or some other wooden support. Some of the more common products available are:

- Sentry
- Pelifeed
- Philproof
- Maxi
- Kilmore
- KK



Bait stations are designed to be fixed above-ground, provide shelter and containment for bait, and allow target animals access to the bait.

## LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

By law, when using a bait that is a registered vertebrate toxic agent (VTA), you must adhere to all label instructions, and adhere to the requirements of the following legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Act 1997;
- Transport Act 1962.

Minimum requirements for safe use and handling are outlined in the following Bionet publications (see [www.bionet.nz](http://www.bionet.nz))

- B1, *Legislation Guide - User Guide to Legislation Relating to Vertebrate Pest Control*
- B2, *Vertebrate Toxic Agents - Minimum Requirements for Safe Use and Handling*
- B7, *Signage – Minimum Requirements for Signage where Vertebrate Toxic Agents are Laid Outdoors for Pest Control*
- B8, *Tracking - Minimum Requirements for Vertebrate Toxin Agents.*

## Consent requirements

Ensure all Ministry of Health and Department of Conservation consents/permits are obtained (see references above) and that the restrictions and controls are adhered to.

**Note:** you will need a Controlled Substance License (CSL) if you are using any 1080 product, cyanide product or phosphorus paste but will not need a CSL if using brodifacoum, cholecalciferol or pindone baits in a bait station.

Remember:

- It is the operator's responsibility to ensure all restrictions and controls have been adhered to when using a VTA.
- If a significant amount of bait is lost, a whole bait station is lost, and/or theft is suspected, then the consent granting authorities and police must be notified.
- The operator cannot contravene any label conditions on packaging for any toxin used in bait stations.
- Operators must obtain written approval from all occupiers of land on which it is intended to apply a vertebrate toxic agent.
- Livestock, domestic animals and young children cannot read warning signs, so it is important to place bait stations to prevent them accessing baits.

## DEFINITION OF A BAIT STATION

A rigid, reusable device or container designed or adapted to physically contain baits in such a way as to allow unrestricted access by target pests while preventing or minimising spillage of bait and access of non-target species. Also to protect baits from the elements and extend their usable life.

## FIELD PLACEMENT

Bait stations are likely to be placed in areas of two broad categories, each with different risk management requirements.

### 1. Urban and peri-urban locations

The main risks are to humans and pets.

### 2. Rural locations

Risks include those to humans, domestic stock, feral game animals, and pets.

**Under no circumstances are bait stations to be used in situations where there is any possibility of livestock gaining access to them.**

Remember that some less common farm animals such as deer, horses, goats, llamas and alpacas can reach higher than cattle and sheep. Some, such as deer and goats can readily feed while standing on their rear legs. Therefore bait station placement must be considered on a case by case basis before installing.



Do not under-estimate how high some farm animals can reach or climb!

## INSTALLATION

### Operators

Responsibility for the safe placement and installation of bait stations lies solely with the operator, who must hold a Controlled Substance License where appropriate.

### Risk management

- Do not place bait stations within five metres of public walking tracks and public roads or as specified by the Ministry of Health.
- Never position bait stations above waterways.
- Avoid placing low-set bait stations on steep ground where dislodged baits can roll through fences.
- Avoid placing bait stations with very open fronts in high positions, where bait dislodged by target animals could fall within reach of livestock.
- In locations where there is no structure (such as a fence) to exclude stock, members of the public, dogs or pets, **bait stations should be placed at a height that prevents access by non-target species.**

Bait stations must be installed in a manner to prevent the possibility of livestock gaining access to them or to the bait. If livestock eat toxic baits, residues could result in contaminated animal by-products and threaten human health or jeopardise export trade.

### Targeting considerations

- Install bait stations in such a way that the target species have ready access to them.
- Determine the spacing of bait stations and quantities of toxin used by considering initial pest animal densities, the pest animals being targeted and the nature of the habitat. Avoid overfilling bait stations to prevent spillage.

### Practical placement considerations

- Wherever possible, place bait stations on larger trees, where forks or branches can aid access by target pests, or on other robust permanent structures. If placed on smaller flexible vegetation, bait could be lost through movement from heavy winds or other forces.

## HOW NOT TO USE A BAIT STATION



Do **not** place bait stations over waterways (left) or position leaning forward (centre). Do **not** place very open-fronted bait stations in high positions (right); such designs should be placed in areas that livestock cannot access.

- Do not place bait stations on any dead or rotting trees, or other sites where the stations could become unstable or detached in the foreseeable future.
- Lessen the chance of bait spillage and entry of moisture by:
  - keeping the bait station straight and level. Do not allow it to tilt forward as this will reduce safe holding capacity - a slight tilt back is preferable;
  - facing the station away from the prevailing wind and rain.
- Secure bait stations with 2 galvanised nails of at least 50mm to 75mm in length. Bark depth, tree shape and the way the bait station is set will be factors in determining the length of nail. Screws of similar length are acceptable. Be aware that the screws should be loosened occasionally as the tree grows, otherwise brackets will become embedded into the tree. Some commercial forest owners may require plastic or aluminium nails to be used. Occasionally plastic straps are used.
- Position bait stations so they can be serviced safely by the operator.

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD SETS



Left: A high set mounted on a solid structure and accessible to target animals.  
Centre: Solidly side-mounted to suit the tree configuration, with acceptable angle.  
Right: Angle bracket used to ensure the bait station is in the correct position.

## SERVICING

- Keep bait stations 'fit for the purpose' and robust. Any broken bait stations, lost lids etc must be replaced.
- Fill bait stations within the capacity specifications and do *not* over-fill.
- Always recover any bait spilled when filling bait stations.
- Secure new and old bait in approved packing at all times during transportation to ensure no bait is spilled or lost in transit. Transport new bait inside a secure 'fit for the purpose' container, and 'double-bag' or otherwise securely enclose old bait.
- At the completion of a control operation, bait stations may be left onsite for future use. Any remaining baits must be removed. Any warning signage can be legally removed after the time period for the relevant VTA.

## RECORDING

Keep records of all bait stations in the following manner:

- Set up a bait station recording system at the installation stage. Identify each bait station individually, by such methods as permanent waterproof marker, an engraving tool or an alternative tagging system and record the identifiers.
- Ideally record locations and bait station numbers on a GIS operational map.
- Use a recording form to monitor bait usage in compliance with *BB Tracking: Minimum Requirements for Tracking Vertebrate Toxic Agents*.
- In the event of any missing bait stations containing toxic bait, make all practicable efforts to locate them, and initiate an emergency response procedure appropriate to the toxin being used.
- Account for all retrieved bait stations in the bait station recording system.
- Formally notify the landowner/occupier of the type, amount, whereabouts and application method of all VTA's applied on their land, and provide a copy of all documentation relating to placement of bait stations on and around their property.
- Report any bait spillage or suspected access by livestock to the landowner/occupier.
- If the owner of any livestock suspects an animal has had access to any VTA the animal should be removed and isolated. The owner has a legal obligation to report this to MPI upon supply or sale of the animal or any of its products.

## MORE INFORMATION

For further information about the use of bait stations for vertebrate pest control, contact:

- your regional council or unitary authority, or
- Ministry for Primary Industries:  
[www.bionet.nz/contact](http://www.bionet.nz/contact)

**Local Government  
New Zealand**  
*te pūtahi matakōkiri*



**Ministry for Primary Industries**  
Manatū Ahu Matua



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