



Biosecurity planning for vineyard owners hosting visitors

Vineyard owners in NSW are experiencing increased visitor numbers to their vineyards. Visitors can bring in unwanted pests, diseases and weeds on their clothing, footwear and vehicles. To protect your vineyard and the viticulture industry, you need to be aware of the biosecurity risks involved with visitors in your vineyard and know how to manage and mitigate those risks.

Everyone has an obligation under the *Biosecurity Act 2015* to prevent the introduction or spread of pests, diseases, weeds and contaminants. Biosecurity is a shared responsibility and we must ensure that biosecurity risks are prevented, eliminated or minimised.





What is vineyard biosecurity?

Vineyard biosecurity:

- is a set of activities focused on awareness and industry preparedness to protect a vineyard from the entry and or spread of pests, diseases and weeds
- involves implementing biosecurity measures so growers can play a key role in protecting their vineyards and the Australian viticulture industry from exotic pests. If a new or exotic pest was to occur in a vineyard, it would severely impact business continuity (increased production costs and market access) and reduce productivity (yield and/or quality)
- enables early detection and immediate reporting for effective and efficient management and or eradication of an exotic pest
- is everyone's responsibility, including every person visiting or working on a vineyard.

The purpose of this document is to assist you with managing the potential impacts visitors could have on the health of vines. It includes best practice biosecurity advice relevant to hosting individual visitors, small and large groups as well as major events such as weddings, festivals (e.g. A Day on the Green), concerts and sporting events like Tough Mudder. Information specific to a particular visitor group will be highlighted throughout the document.

This document only applies to visitors, machinery and equipment that may be brought onsite. It does not apply to grapes, grape products, wine, diagnostic samples and propagation material. The movement of these items is governed by principles outlined in the [National Phylloxera Management Protocol](#), [NSW Biosecurity Act 2015](#), [Biosecurity Regulation 2017](#) and the [Biosecurity Order \(Permitted Activities\) 2019](#).

People movement is a serious threat.

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

As a property host, you are responsible for:

- building sustainable visitation procedures to ensure the longevity of your vines
- creating a connection between yourself as the host and your guests
- opening your guests' eyes to respectful visitation; you cannot afford to do otherwise
- understanding people movement is a serious biosecurity threat.

Definition of 'visitor'

For this document, visitors are defined as those you host on your vineyard (anyone but you and your direct staff) including guests, friends, VIPs, marketing staff and visitors servicing the operation of the vineyard (e.g. grower liaison officers, seasonal labourers, contractors, consultants, supplier representatives, winemakers, researchers, tradespeople, inspectors and maintenance personnel).



Research shows that visitors generally do not understand the risks associated with walking into vineyards. It is the responsibility of every vineyard owner to implement a biosecurity system to manage and minimise the risks.

It is expected that you and your staff already adhere to best practice farm-gate hygiene (refer to <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/grapes>).

You have a responsibility to set the expectation for how you want your vines to be respected by your visitors. Know what practical steps you can take to protect the long-term health and value of your vines – they are your core business asset.

Biosecurity is achieved by stopping the entry and spread of new and potentially damaging pests, diseases and weeds into vineyards. Such entries can threaten the livelihood of vineyard owners, the sustainability of wine regions and the entire wine industry. Biosecurity is a shared responsibility – you need to do your bit, as do your neighbours and visitors. Biosecurity must be a top consideration for all vineyards, wineries and cellar doors.

Of the pests and diseases we currently have in Australia, one of our greatest biosecurity threats is grape phylloxera. Grape phylloxera is currently confined to regions in Victoria and New South Wales. South Australia, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania are recognised as being free of phylloxera. Queensland wine-growing regions are currently categorised as phylloxera risk zones.

Grape phylloxera

Grape phylloxera is a tiny insect that kills grapevines and ornamental vines by feeding on their roots. A high proportion of vines in Australia are planted to own roots, making them susceptible to attack. Once vines are infested, they will die within 6 years. There is no way to kill and eradicate phylloxera, so infested vineyards must be replanted on phylloxera-resistant or tolerant rootstock. This can cost about \$60,000/hectare and replanted vines will take about 3 years to produce a crop and longer to mature.



Phylloxera crawlers feeding on grapevine root.



Phylloxera adults, nymphs and eggs. Photo: Agriculture Victoria.

Key focus

Keep vineyards safe from the introduction of new pests, diseases and weeds. These can be picked up and carried on shoes, clothing (including hats), soil, tyres, tools, grapevine material, and machinery and equipment used in vineyards.

For policy, regulatory and management purposes, our wine regions are classified into Phylloxera Management Zones (refer to the [Phylloxera Management Zones](#) map) according to evidence of phylloxera presence, absence or unknown (untested) status:



- Phylloxera Exclusion Zones (PEZ) – a whole state or part thereof, recognised to be free of phylloxera
- Phylloxera Risk Zones (PRZ) – an area of unknown phylloxera status
- Phylloxera Infested Zones (PIZ) – an area known to have phylloxera

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

While phylloxera is an existing biosecurity threat in Australia, there are many other destructive grapevine pests and diseases that we need to be aware of and keep out of Australia. Currently, our vineyards are fortunate not to have many of the diseases and pests that are present overseas.

This allows us to manage our vineyards in a comparatively 'clean and green' way. It is up to the government, industry bodies, exporters, importers, grape and wine businesses, nurseries, suppliers, tourists and the broader community to keep it that way.

How to manage visitors

Build your biosecurity plan and capabilities

We recommend developing an event-specific plan for marketing VIPs and guests and an overarching plan for operational visitors. These plans should identify biosecurity risks and the actions to implement before, during and after a visit to mitigate or manage these risks. Ensure external event organisers and crew involved in major events also have a copy of your event-specific biosecurity plan. Here are the main risks to your business when hosting visitors and how to manage these risks:

Staff preparation

- Communicate to visitors that biosecurity matters:
 - confirm what Phylloxera Management Zone your vineyard is in
 - explain all farm-gate hygiene practices that must be adhered to by visitors while on your property
 - provide maps identifying the location of parking area(s), designated meeting point(s) on your property and 'no-go' areas
 - encourage all visitors to make an appointment
- Include relevant farm-gate hygiene details in the event information package in a brand-friendly manner
- Prepare experiences for visitors to enjoy; for vineyards in PIZs and PRZs, it is strongly recommended that access to vine rows is not allowed.

Visitor access to vines

- Know where your visitors have been: access to vine rows in a Phylloxera Infested Zone (PIZ) or Phylloxera Risk Zone (PRZ) should be denied where access is not vital (e.g. for operational work)



- Entry to vine rows in any Phylloxera Management Zone must only be granted under the controlled conditions identified in the 'Entry conditions for vine rows' on page 8
- Erect biosecurity signage, plant hedges and use fencing or bunting at common entry points to vine rows close to car parks, cellar doors and roadways
- Limit entry points to access the property; ideally there should only be one access point so all movements can be recorded, and you always know who is on your property
- Create experiences for visitors away from vines so their expectation is not to walk down vine rows, for example:
 - during vintage, bring grape bunches in from the vineyard for tasting away from the vine rows (ensure grapes are safe to taste as some might have spray residues)
 - prepare soil cores in clear display tubes and discuss how your soils influence your wines
 - discuss the various activities performed in the vineyard throughout the year
 - build an interactive display showing the growth cycle of a grapevine
 - set up designated photo points and scenic outlook platforms away from your vine rows and direct visitors to capture photos of your best vistas
 - focus on the wine experience
- If visitors are permitted to walk down vine rows, ensure all appropriate footwear and clothing precautions have been taken according to the 'Entry conditions for vine rows' on page 8
- Do not let visitors take away any soil or vine material including grapes, cuttings and leaves from your vineyard
- Ensure all vehicles are cleaned of soil and plant material before leaving your vineyard, regardless of the Phylloxera Management Zone. This is imperative if travelling into a PEZ.

Tip: many cellar doors host bridal parties and weddings, and photographs are commonly taken in vine rows. In such cases, risk management must be assessed by the individual venue. For example, consider a vineyard in a PEZ, the bride is likely to wear new shoes and dress and is unlikely to wear these in another vineyard. However, the photographer is likely to be local and wearing shoes that may have been worn in vineyards before (and likely after) and therefore farm-gate hygiene should be considered by the venue according to the 'Entry conditions for vine rows' on page 8.

Tips for biosecurity activities before, during and after hosting events

- Individual visitor sign-in may have to be foregone, if impractical. As a result, it is critical that you put in place other controls
- During sign-in upon entry to your property, check that state quarantine requirements have been met. Stipulate that you require all contractors to follow the '[Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfestation](#)' Protocol for footwear and small hand tools
- Consider the event layout. Plan traffic flow for vehicles and people. Locate your event as far as possible away from vine rows. Use temporary but sturdy fences and barriers to prevent access to vine rows. Use clear, directive signage highlighting the risks and your expectations for event participants



- Advise security staff to keep people out of vine rows and out of reach of vine material and ensure the security staff are vigilant during the event
- Ensure hard-stand parking areas are set up for visitor cars and buses well away from vines
- Consider the need for additional transport for visitors from the parking area to the event
- Communicate the importance of biosecurity by placing a biosecurity message in the event promotional material in a prominent position. Contact NSW DPI for standard wording. Include the importance of not removing any soil or vine material from vineyards (e.g. grapes, leaves or canes) as memorabilia. Be active on social media during your event with biosecurity messaging
- Where hire companies are involved, communicate to them their responsibility to follow and complete disinfestation procedures for equipment and machinery that is used in the vicinity of vineyards as outlined in state quarantine regulations [Biosecurity Regulation 2017](#) for movement between Phylloxera Management Zones
- Ensure all hired items that have touched the ground are cleaned of soil and plant material before leaving your property. This will involve you setting up a high-pressure washer for use by contractors on a hard-stand surface. Record evidence of this adherence in your event plan.

Vehicle access to vineyard

- Instruct visitors to park their vehicles in a designated (preferably hard-stand) car park away from vines and check they have done so
- If vineyards must be accessed:
 - provide visitors access to site vehicles
 - ferry large visitor groups in vehicles hired by the site or in multiple site vehicles
 - ensure any hired vehicles are clean of soil and plant material before entering your vineyard, and that you ask where the vehicle has been in the 29 days before coming to your vineyard
- If the visitor's vehicle must enter the vineyard for operational requirements, then it must come to your vineyard already clean of 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 and your vineyard is in a PEZ, this is high-risk: do not allow the vehicle access to your vine rows
- All vehicles must be cleaned of soil and plant material before leaving your Phylloxera Management Zone. This is imperative if travelling into a PEZ.

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

Machinery and equipment access to vineyard

- Read and understand best practice farm-gate hygiene requirements presented in 'Flowchart A' on page 10. Allow access to vine rows ONLY if strict adherence to farm-gate hygiene practices and state quarantine standards have been demonstrated



- Machinery and equipment used on your property must be washed clean of soil and plant material when exiting vine rows and before leaving your property. Keep a record of this cleaning. Preferably, this wash down should occur:
 - away from vines
 - with high-pressure water
 - on a hard stand area with waste water capture to prevent run-off onto vines or traffic areas.

Staff training

- Invest in biosecurity training and education
- Train staff on:
 - the importance of washing hands before and after visiting a vineyard
 - the importance of keeping visitors out of vine rows
 - managing visitor movement on your property
 - how to speak to visitors about biosecurity and why it is important to your brand. Refer to NSW DPI's [Biosecurity induction training video](#).
- Ensure staff have good knowledge of the:
 - latest Phylloxera Management Zones map and identification of risky locations at <http://vinehealth.com.au/industry/resources/maps/phylloxera-management-zones/>
 - best practice guidelines on footwear and clothing hygiene requirements if visitors are permitted to walk among vines (refer 'Visitor access to vines' on page 4) and [how to set up a footwear disinfection station](#)
 - what the early signs/symptoms of high priority endemic and exotic pests and diseases look like (refer to 'If You Spot Me, Report Me!' poster and accompanying documents)
 - procedures and expectations for reporting unusual symptoms
- Debrief with your staff and contractors about biosecurity components of the event: discuss what worked and what didn't and consider what measures you could implement to improve the safety of your vines for future events
- Acknowledge and reward clear biosecurity thinking, planning and proactive implementation.

Route of travel

- Route of travel – insist that vineyards in Phylloxera Exclusion (free) Zones (PEZ) are visited first, followed by Phylloxera Risk Zones (PRZ) and Phylloxera Infested Zones (PIZ) last
- Request the visitor group itinerary is submitted to your early if it is expected the group plan to cross state borders and/or phylloxera management zones
- Use a visitor sign-in register to keep a record of who is visiting and visits they (and their machinery and equipment) have made to other wine regions in the past 29 days. Retain this register for at least 7 years to assist with traceback should a pest, disease or weed outbreak occur. For large, accompanied groups, obtain this information from the tour organiser. See the NSW DPI Grapes page for an example register (<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/grapes>).



Requirements for protective shoes and clothing

- Read and understand best practice farm-gate hygiene requirements presented in flowcharts B and C on page 11 and page 12
- Organise items required to adhere to best practices. Allow access to vine rows ONLY if strict adherence to farm-gate hygiene practices have been demonstrated
- Ensure enough time is allocated in the itinerary to comply with requirements of best practice farm-gate hygiene
- If rubber boots are offered as alternative footwear, consider applying your brand to them for marketing purposes
- If alternative footwear is provided, ensure it is regularly cleaned of all soil and plant material
- If any disposable footwear or clothing is worn, collect it, 'double bag' it and place it in sealed garbage bags for disposal.

Entry conditions for vine rows

Focus on implementing best practice farm-gate hygiene strategies for your visitors that you have devised and documented in your plans.

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

1. whether the machinery and equipment are accompanied by required biosecurity documentation if that is a movement requirement under state quarantine legislation and
2. whether the machinery and equipment are clean of soil and plant material upon arrival to your property.

Refer to flowchart A on page 10

Protective shoes and clothing requirements for those visitors granted access to vine rows will depend on:

3. if visitors have been in or near vineyards before coming to your property
4. which Phylloxera Management Zone(s) the vineyards visited are in (if in Australia)
5. if visitors have visited an overseas wine region before coming to your property
6. which Phylloxera Management Zone your vineyard is in.

Refer to flowcharts B and C on page 11 and page 12

Notes:

1. Disinfestation should be done according to the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfestation Protocol (<https://vinehealth.com.au/tools/posters/>)
2. The Phylloxera Management Zones Map is at <https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/horticulture/grapes/publications/grape-phylloxera>
3. Presently, there is no validated and endorsed method for sterilising clothing that has potentially come into contact with grape phylloxera. Even if a visitor has worn



a disposable chemical suit in the vineyard they have recently visited, their clothing should not be assumed to be free of pests and diseases such as grape phylloxera. Whilst the disposable suit will lower the risk, there is still a possibility that these suits can still rip, and pests can be transferred from the outside of the suit to the clothing beneath during the removal of the suit if this is not done carefully.

4. In addition to the steps recommended in Flowcharts B and C, it is good practice that visitors place dirty clothes in a sealed bag before hot washing on the highest temperature setting, followed by tumble-drying also on high heat. This will reduce the chance of survival of grape phylloxera or other pests and diseases that might have been picked up on clothing. This process must be done by visitors moving between Phylloxera Management Zones and between vineyards within a PIZ or PRZ
5. Clothing and shoes worn in vine rows in vineyards in PIZs or PRZs must not be worn in vineyards in PEZs
6. Any equipment or machinery that visitors are bringing onto your vineyard must be cleaned and disinfested and any small hand tools should be disinfested according to the Footwear and Small Hand Tool Disinfestation Protocol. A copy of the document can be found at <https://vinehealth.com.au/tools/posters/>. Refer also to Flowchart A
7. For state regulations on movement of phylloxera risk vectors, refer to <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2015-024>.

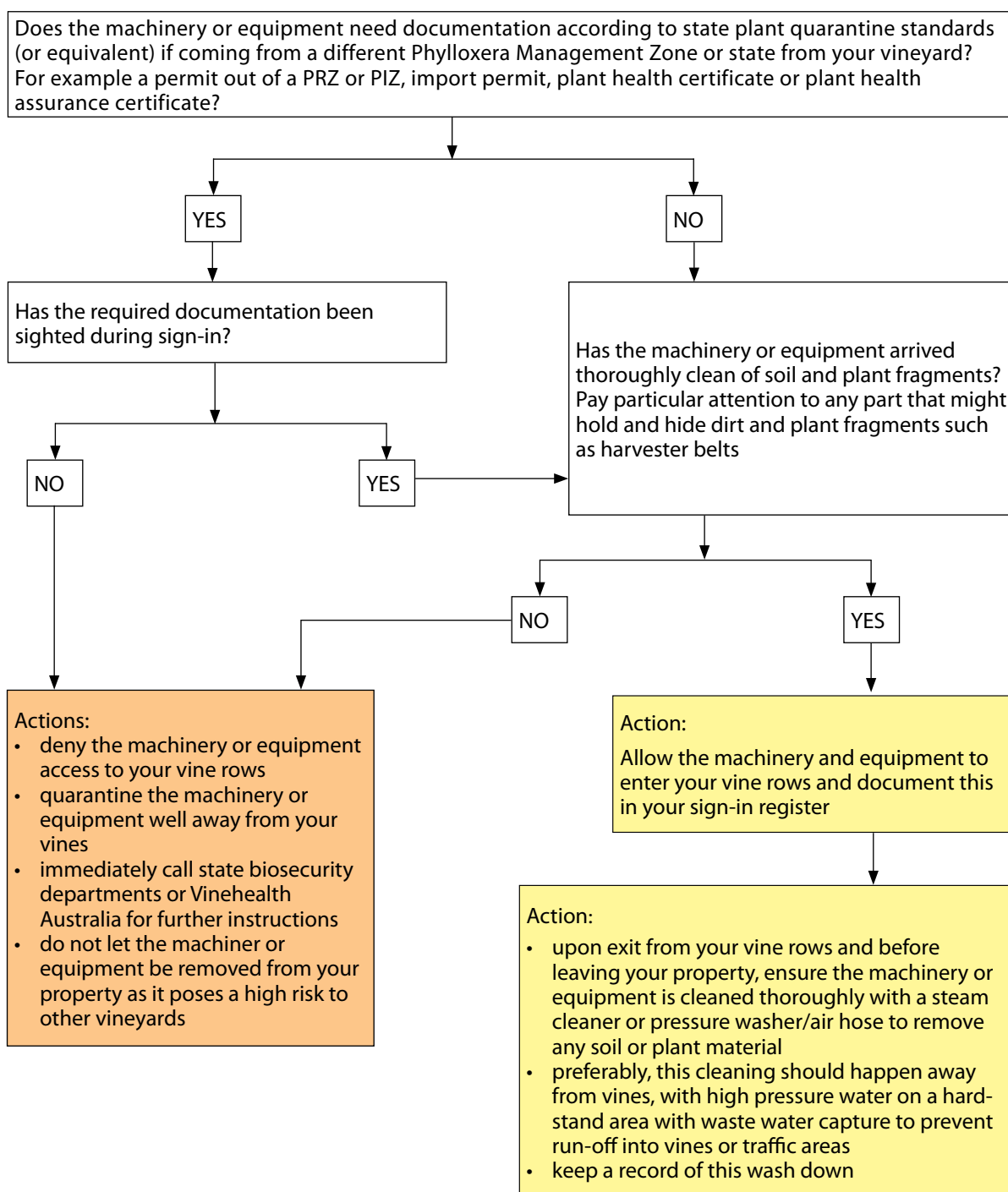


Flowchart A

Best practice farm-gate hygiene for machinery and equipment entering your vineyard. This provision applies to any equipment, machinery or hand-held tools that have been used in the production and manipulation of grapes and grapevines.

It includes, but is not restricted to, tractors, spray equipment, pruners, mechanical grape harvesters, excavators, pruning snips, picking snips, shovels, backhoes, used trellis posts, netting, grape bins and other containers used for collecting harvested grapes from a vineyard and delivering to a winery.

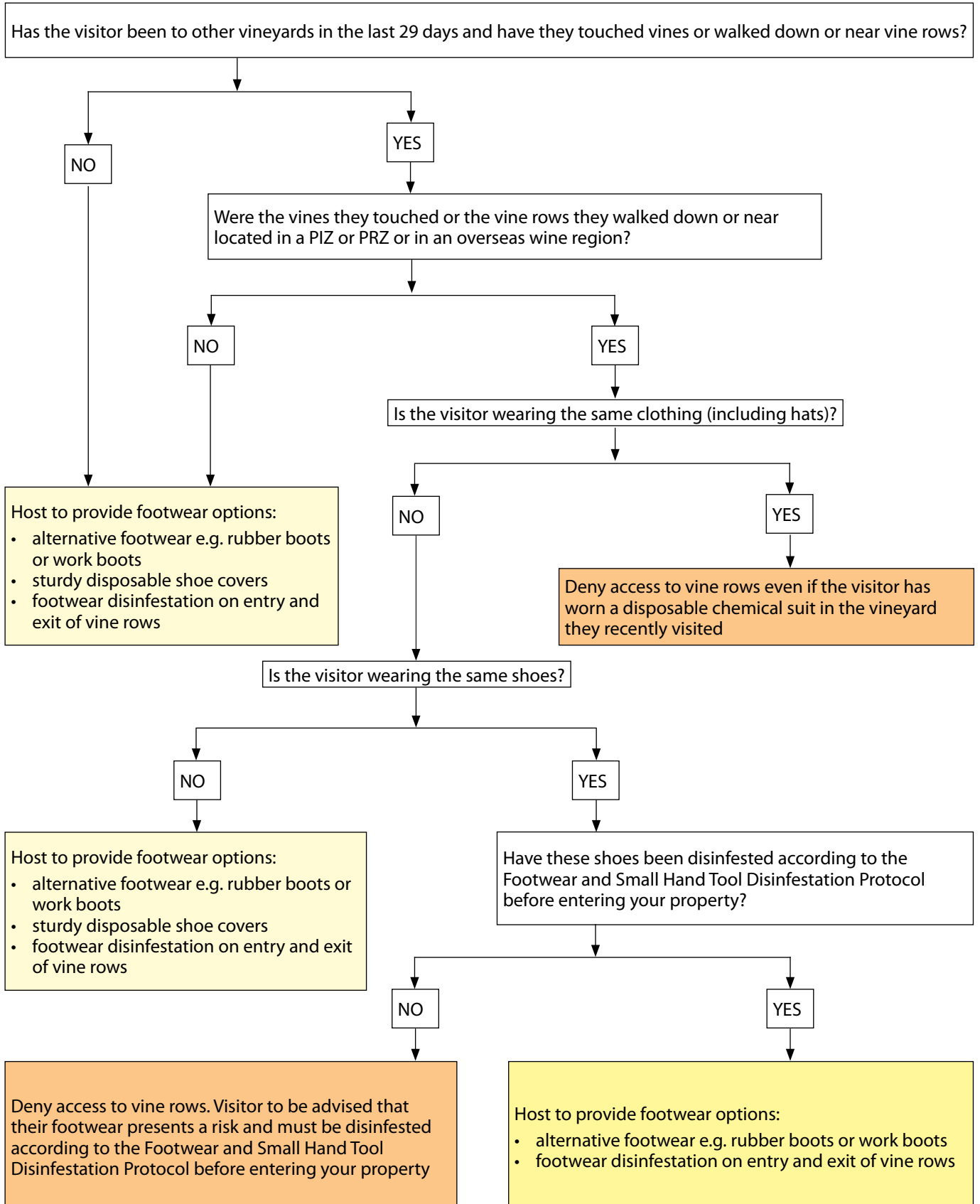
Authorised entry of machinery and equipment is the responsibility of the vineyard owner and may be granted under the following controlled conditions:





Flowchart B

Best practice farm-gate hygiene for visitors entering your vineyard if it is in a Phylloxera Exclusion Zone (PEZ). Authorised entry is the responsibility of the vineyard owner and may be granted under the following controlled conditions:

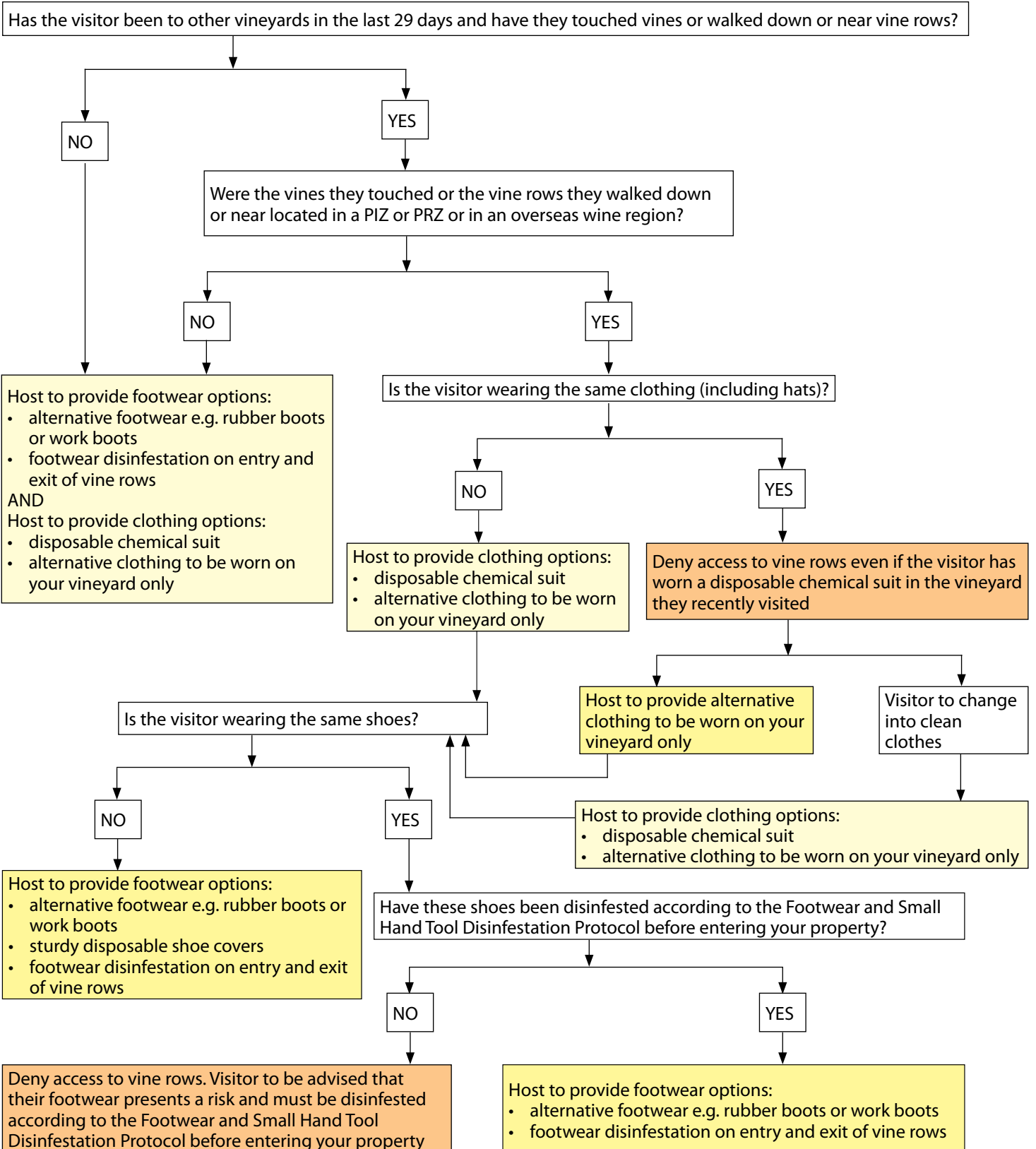




Flowchart C

Best practice farm-gate hygiene for visitors entering your vineyard where your vineyard is in a Phylloxera Infested Zone (PIZ) or a Phylloxera Risk Zone (PRZ).

Access to vine rows must be denied where access is not vital (e.g. for operational work). Authorised entry is the responsibility of the vineyard owner and may be granted only under the following controlled conditions:





Acknowledgement

The Biosecurity planning for vineyard owners hosting visitor's guidelines is a collaboration between the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Vinehealth Australia. For more information, go to www.vinehealth.com.au

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