

## The Entrance Ramp

Without a properly designed entry to the shearing shed, time and effort will be wasted when marshalling sheep prior to shearing.

The floor on which sheep are held before shearing is raised above the ground and thus some means is required at the shed entrance to facilitate the sheep moving up to that above ground level.

Once inside the shed, the holding area needs to be of sufficient size to hold the required number of sheep without overcrowding; and the floor construction needs to accommodate the needs of sheep being held for up to two days.

The most common way of achieving the movement of sheep from ground level to the raised shearing shed floor is via a ramp. In a small number instances steps are used instead of ramps.

The entrance ramp should:

1. Be made of durable materials – as it will be exposed to the weather;
2. Encourage sheep to flow freely and in a forward direction;
3. Be wide enough to allow several sheep to move forward side by side, at a slight angle of inclination (no more than 20 degrees or a 1 in 3 slope);
4. Have sheeted or enclosed sides to restrict the vision of sheep to straight ahead;
5. Have a maximum width of between 2.5m to 3.0m; and a minimum width of around 1.5m;
6. When it is relatively wide, have a central divider, parallel to the sides – to minimise sheep turning back; and
7. Where a person would be required to walk up and/or down the ramp/steps through the sheep to move the sheep, a railed personal walkway with non slip decking should be incorporated into the ramp.

These requirements can be met with ramps constructed of concrete, steel, steel mesh, timber, appropriately restrained earth/rock – or a combination of all these materials.

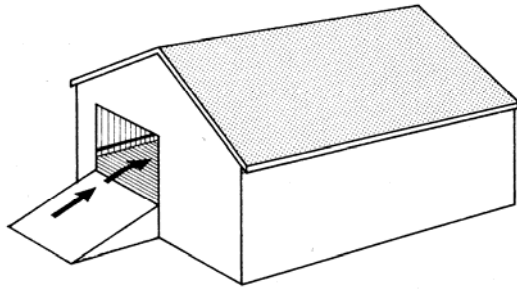
No matter what materials are used, a sure foothold needs to be provided so that sheep, and handlers, can walk safely up and down the ramp – in both wet and dry conditions. This can be achieved via:

1. Timber ramps - cleats fixed to the surface; extending from side to side;
2. Concrete ramps - a rough textured finish;
3. Steel (mesh) - cleats of angle iron welded/bolted to the steel (mesh).

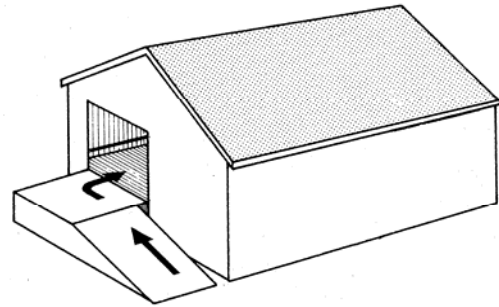
In high rainfall areas, the ramps may need to allow for loose earth materials from the feet of the sheep to pass through.

Where the ramp cannot go directly into the shed, a landing may be required.

The following are simple diagrams of the two most common forms of ramps – without the enclosed sides shown:



Direct entry ramp



90 degree entry ramp – with landing

Source: Barber & Freeman, p 27

Barber & Freeman also have some photographs of ramp styles:

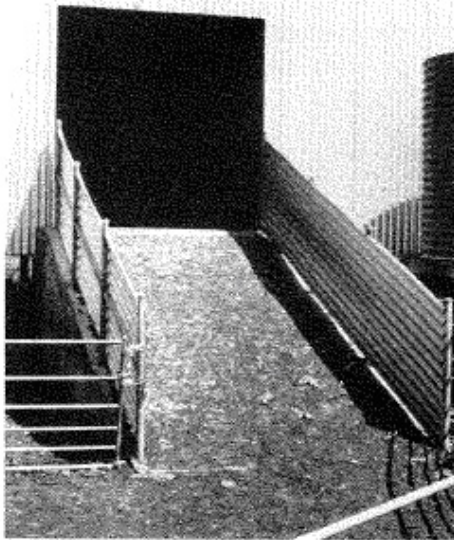


Figure 3.2 Straight ramp with sheeted sides

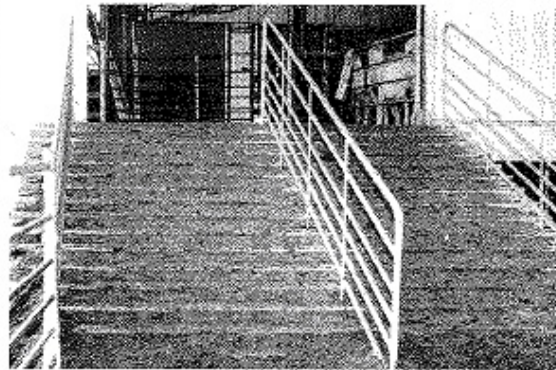


Figure 3.3 Wide concrete ramp with dividing panel



Figure 3.4 Sheep entrance using steps

The Victorian Workcover Authority also provides guidelines for shed access.

### 6.1 Access to and movement around the shed

Hazard or risk	Risk control
Safe access to and movement around the shed are essential. There may be risks of injuries from trips, slips, falls, collisions etc. These may be caused by obstacles, tripping hazards, presses, other machinery, working shearers, changes in floor levels.	The layout of the shed should allow adequate space so that collisions with other workers, machinery and plant are avoided. Machinery and plant should be located away from entrances and exits and other high traffic areas. Placement of signs or other warning devices restricting access to some areas may be necessary.
Getting on and off raised boards and entering and leaving elevated sheds without steps places high stress on the knees.	Steps should be provided for access to elevated sheds or raised boards as required, and they should be properly designed for their purpose. They should be sound, have wide treads and have a non-slip surface. Where the height is over one meter they should be fitted with an adequate handrail.



*Safe access to the shed.*



*Top rail can be removed to allow loading of bales.*

Source: © Victorian Workcover Authority