

Spotlight On Safety

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AGRICULTURAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Agricultural work is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States. Most agricultural accidents involve some type of machinery or equipment. The safety tips below can help reduce injuries and accidents.



Dress for success. Prepare yourself for your tasks by choosing appropriate clothing. When working with farm equipment, avoid wearing loose fitting clothes around moving parts. If working outdoors, choose lightweight long sleeve shirts and long pants to protect your skin from the sun.



Wear proper PPE for the task. If you're using chemicals, use chemical respirators, wear proper gloves and protective clothing. Wear work gloves when completing tasks like digging but not when working around rotary machines and PTO's. Wear eye protection and hearing protection while using or operating machinery or equipment. Wear a dust mask to protect yourself when working with soil, powdered amendments, or near equipment generating dust.



Know your chemicals. It's common for different chemicals and pesticides to be used on a farm. To stay safe, it's important to know what you're working with. You should have hazard communications training which covers how to read and understand labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) before working with any chemicals. SDS must be accessible near your worksite or online with a mobile device.



Drive safely on and off the road. Before driving any vehicles or equipment conduct a safety inspection to ensure it is safe to operate. If you're driving farm equipment on public roads, it's especially important that you're clearly marked so motorists can see you in time to slow down — considering you're probably driving less than 25 MPH. Never allow riders on tractors or equipment.



Do not use equipment you are not trained to use. Read the manual for each piece of equipment and attend training to ensure you know how to operate the equipment safely. Ask your supervisor for training for your jobsite specific activities.



Follow all safety precautions. All operators of tractors equipped with a ROPS (Rollover Protection Structure), must wear a seatbelt. Farm tractors have one seat which means no riders on fenders, hitches, or in front -loader buckets. Be sure all PTO guards and shields are in place and in good repair prior to using the equipment. Make sure the tractor is off and keys are removed before installing attachments or PTO equipment.