

Auger Safety on the Farm Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

"Auger safety on the farm" refers to the implementation of safety measures and guidelines to ensure the safe use and operation of augers in various agricultural activities. Augers are commonly used on farms for tasks like grain handling, seed processing, and transferring materials, but they can pose potential hazards if not used properly.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

COMMON HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH AUGERS ON THE FARM INCLUDE:

- **Entanglement and Contact Injuries:** Loose clothing, hair, or jewelry can get caught in the rotating auger flighting or other components, leading to serious injuries or even amputations.
- **Flying Debris:** During auger operation, debris or other materials can be thrown out by the rotating auger bit.
- **Slips, Trips, and Falls:** Uneven or slippery surfaces around the auger can lead to slips, trips, and falls.
- **Grain Bin Entrapment:** Augers can create bridging or clumping inside grain bins, leading to potential grain bin entrapment hazards if workers attempt to dislodge the grain manually.
- **Overloading:** Overloading the auger can strain the equipment and lead to breakdowns.
- **Equipment Malfunction:** Mechanical failures or malfunctioning parts in the auger can result in accidents.
- **Electrical Hazards:** Electric-powered augers can pose electrical hazards.
- **Working at Heights:** Farmworkers may need to work at heights while operating or maintaining the auger, increasing the risk of falls if proper fall protection measures are not in place.

- **Storage and Transportation:** Improper storage or transportation of augers can lead to accidents, such as equipment falling or tipping during transportation.
- **Overexertion:** Operating a manual auger or handling heavy auger components can lead to overexertion injuries if proper lifting techniques are not used.
- **Lack of Training:** Inadequate knowledge and training in using the auger can lead to accidents and injuries.
- **Working Alone:** Working alone with an auger can be dangerous.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

ESSENTIAL SAFETY TIPS WHEN USING AUGERS ON THE FARM

- **Read the Manual:** Familiarize yourself with the manufacturer's manual and safety guidelines.
- **Inspect the Auger Regularly:** Before each use, inspect the auger for any damage, wear, or loose parts.
- **Clear Work Area:** Ensure the work area is clear of obstacles, debris, and other hazards that could interfere with the auger's operation.
- **Positioning:** Set up the auger on a level surface, and ensure it is stable and secure.
- **Safe Grain Handling:** When using the auger for grain handling, ensure proper grain flow and avoid overloading the auger. Never enter grain bins while the auger is running.
- **Shut Down Safely:** After use, shut down the auger following the correct procedure. Allow the equipment to cool down before performing maintenance or storage.
- **Avoid Loose Clothing:** Avoid wearing loose clothing that could get entangled in the auger's moving parts.
- **Safe Start-up:** Make sure all guards and shields are in place before starting the engine.
- **Electricity Safety:** If using an electric-powered auger, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shocks.
- **Proper Hitching:** When towing the auger with a tractor or other vehicle, ensure proper hitching and follow the recommended towing capacity.

- **Proper Storage:** Store the auger in a secure location, away from the reach of unauthorized users.
- **Proper Training:** Ensure that anyone operating the auger is properly trained and familiar with the equipment's safe operation.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Have a first aid kit and fire extinguisher readily available in case of emergencies.

BEST PRACTICES AND TOOLS FOR SAFE AUGER OPERATIONS

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** The following PPE should be used:
 - Safety goggles
 - Ear protection
 - Gloves
 - Sturdy footwear
 - Long-sleeved shirt and pants
- **Safety Shields and Guards:** Augers are equipped with safety shields and guards.
- **Grain Flow Indicators:** When using the auger for grain handling, grain flow indicators help monitor the grain flow inside the auger, reducing the risk of overloading and blockages.
- **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs):** For electric-powered augers, GFCIs help protect against electric shocks by automatically cutting off the power if a fault is detected.
- **First Aid Kit:** Have a well-stocked first aid kit readily available in case of minor injuries or accidents.
- **Fire Extinguisher:** Keep a fire extinguisher nearby to handle small fires that may occur.
- **Auger Hitch Pin Lock:** Use a secure hitch pin lock when towing the auger with a tractor or other vehicle.
- **Safety Labels and Signage:** Ensure that safety labels and signage on the auger are visible.
- **Training Materials and Manuals:** Provide farmworkers with access to training materials.
- **Safety Cones or Barriers:** Use safety cones or barriers to cordon off the work area around the auger.

- **Inspection and Maintenance Tools:** Keep inspection and maintenance tools on hand.
- **Emergency Communication:** Establish a communication plan, so workers can seek help in case of an accident.

FINAL WORD

By prioritizing auger safety on the farm, farmers and their workers can reduce the risk of accidents, protect their well-being, maintain a safe working environment, and benefit the overall efficiency of farming operations.