

Egg and Poultry Workers Safety Meeting Kit

What's At Stake

Safe work practices or healthy egg and poultry worker!!! Which came first? Attention to safety is the answer either way you crack it.

What's the Danger

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARDS OF EGG AND POULTRY WORKERS

Personnel working in the poultry industry are permanently exposed to hazards which include:

- **Physical hazards** such as noise, exposure to cold, and vibration.
- **Ergonomic hazards** including manual and repetitive work, such as hanging and cutting, forceful exertion, awkward work positions, and fast work pace.
- **Chemical hazards** including dust, chemicals from poultry processing disinfectants, and cleaning agents.
- **Biological hazards** such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi.

Traumatic injuries and Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are also main reported health effects, especially during the processing and packaging steps. These are caused by rapid, repetitive movements by the workers, and the extensive use of knives and other sharp-bladed tools.

OVERVIEW OF SAFETY AND HEALTH HAZARDS

Workers are subject to occupational and environmental hazards on a daily basis. Airborne exposure, injuries, and zoonotic infections are amongst the main categories of health hazards. Farm employees, especially new and untrained ones, are usually at a greater risk.

The health and safety concerns commonly associated with poultry plants are:

- **Modern Processing Equipment** has, in the past, led to workers getting hands, arms, clothing, and hair caught in the machinery.
- **Slippery Floors** can lead to employees falling, creating many different health concerns.
- **Sharp Knives and Scissors** can lead to punctures and lacerations that require medical attention.
- **High Noise Levels** can lead to hearing loss.
- **Exposure to Biological Hazards** and disease can occur when handling live birds.
- **Musculoskeletal Disorders** such as Carpal Tunnel and other similar repetitive stress injuries.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

POULTRY WORKER SAFETY IN EGG PRODUCTION

Working around animals and their wastes exposes workers to zoonotic diseases, transmissible from animals to humans. Prevent exposure by:

- Learn about the potential diseases that could affect pullets and hen flocks so you can monitor them for signs and symptoms.
- Remove sick animals and dispose of dead animals promptly.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as coveralls, gloves, and hair coverings.
- Work in well ventilated and filtered areas.
- Wear an approved respirator if there is exposure to dusts and airborne contaminants from the animals or their wastes.

Sanitation in egg production facilities uses lots of water and mild detergents for cleaning equipment, totes, trays, conveyors, etc. Make sure that workers:

- Watch for wet areas, as these could be slip hazards. Post signs and wear sturdy boots with non-slip soles.

- Make use of goggles to protect your eyes from water and detergent splashes.
- Practice good hygiene when handling animals, their wastes, and any contaminated equipment and always throw away disposable PPE properly.
- Exit work areas and wash your hands before you eat, drink, smoke, or touch your face or eyes. Wash and/or decontaminate your reusable PPE before you wear it again.

Protect workers from burns in the heated processes in egg production.

Eggshell disinfection, pasteurization, and even egg boilers can use water heated between 120- and 200-degrees Fahrenheit. Guard heated surfaces to prevent burns and wear protective gloves when working in these areas. Avoid breathing the dusts or off-gassed ammonia from the chicken manure and eggshell dust by wearing an approved respirator and keeping these work areas ventilated.

BEST HAZARD CONTROL MEASURES TO ENSURE POULTRY AND EGG WORKER SAFETY

1. Safety Guards: Ensure that all your modern processing equipment has proper safety guards on motor drives and sprocket wheels. This prevents workers from getting their clothes or body parts from being caught in the mechanisms. This will help prevent broken bones, lacerations, and even death.
2. Implement Maintenance Safety: There are times when the accidental startup of machinery during maintenance can lead to injury. Implement design and maintenance of electrical systems, to reduce/eliminate accidents.
3. Grit & Painted Floors: By painting floors and adding traction, you can keep down on the number of employees slipping, falling, and needing to seek medical attention.
4. Protective Gloves: Provide workers with protective gloves to cover the non-cutting hand.
5. Knife Sharpening Programs: Introduce a knife sharpening program so workers can improve their skill and control over knives in a safer setting.

6. Noise Controls: Place noise controls on machinery or providing employees with ear gear to decrease employee exposure to potentially damaging noise.
7. Improve Sanitation and Ventilation: Adopt proper cleaning and ventilation protocols so workers can be protected from biological hazards that could cause salmonella and other diseases.
8. Encourage and Utilize Early Report of Injuries: Accurate and comprehensive injury reporting by workers and employees can lead to the early detection and resolution of musculoskeletal disorders caused by repetition, forceful exertion, awkward posture, and cold temperatures.
9. Provide Personal Protective Equipment: Provide properly fitted and up-to-par personal protective equipment.

FINAL WORD

Mechanized poultry and egg farms can contain many hazards. Work safely around animals, utilize the proper PPE, make use of guards on machinery, and follow lockout/tagout procedures to help prevent injury.