Harvest Safety Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Harvest is a busy and often hectic time for farmers and agricultural workers because crops ripen on their own time schedule. More workers, more equipment, and a compressed time schedule for harvest increases the potential for accidents and injuries. Increase safety by inspecting the worksite, before harvest work begins.

What’s the Danger

HAZARD AVOIDANCE IN HARVEST SEASON

Correcting hazards may require repairs, retrofits, or even new equipment for the harvest. Communicating hazards may include instructing workers on existing field conditions such as overhead electrical lines, steep slopes, and other hazardous situations. Inspections also help identify worker training and personal protective equipment (PPE) needs that should be completed before harvest begins.

Training before harvest prepares workers to safely operate and maintain the equipment they use. Workers should be instructed on the specific hazards associated with their harvest machinery. Caught and crush (entanglement) injuries are the highest hazard of harvest work and should be emphasized so workers take precautions to avoid them.

To avoid entanglement, workers should secure hair and clothing, use proper lockout/tagout procedures, and never clean, maintain, adjust, or clear jams on equipment that is operating or powered. Workers should stay clear of discharge spouts, fans, conveyors, and other moving equipment parts to avoid projectile injuries. Workers should be instructed not to walk or stand between harvesting machines because the operator often has a limited line

of sight. Because harvest work often occurs in the dark before dawn and after sunset, additional lighting may be required to allow for the safe movement of workers and machinery.

Workers also need training on the use and maintenance of the PPE necessary for harvest. Required PPE may include work boots, gloves, coveralls, hard hats, eye protection, hearing protection, and respiratory protection. They need training on first aid, sun protection, heat/cold stress. Ergonomic safety and procedures should be emphasized to eliminate strains and sprains.

Preparing equipment prior to harvest ensures that it is in good shape for the heavy workload. It should be inspected for proper guarding and all worn parts should be repaired or replaced. Harvesting equipment should not be used unless it is in proper working order.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

FARM WORKERS SAFETY PROTOCOL

1. **Rest up.** Lack of sleep can slow response time and make it harder to focus. This raises a chance of an incident. Easier said than done, but try to get a minimum of seven hours of sleep each night to be well rested.
2. **Take a break.** Make sure to stop operating equipment frequently and get out of the cab. This provides an opportunity to get out, stretch and recharge.
3. **Check on your neighbors** – and yourself. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Do not isolate yourself too much, and check in with others.
4. **Inspect equipment.** Manufacturers put safety guards and shields on equipment for a reason. Make sure all equipment is in good working condition and all guards are in place. Also, make sure lighting and markings work and are clean every time equipment is driven down the road.
5. **Travel safely.** Follow protocols. For example, remove the combine head before driving down the road to another field. Avoid driving in the busy travel windows of 7 to 8 a.m. and

5 to 6 p.m. Move over when safe to do so, and let traffic pass. Do not wave other vehicles around – let the other driver make that decision. On the road or in the field, remember to put the phone down and limit distractions.

6. **Protect yourself.** Remember to wear personal protective equipment such as eye protection, hearing protection, a dust mask and/or a body harness.
7. **Make sure everyone is on the same page.** Farmers and workers should understand safety protocols such as wearing proper protection, understanding blind spots and responding to an emergency. Consider mapping out each field so you have accurate directions in case of an emergency.
8. **Be prepared.** Prevention is best, but preparation is important, too. Have a first-aid kit and fire extinguisher easily accessible, and make sure workers know where they are and how to use them.
9. **Lock out, tag out, try out.** Shut and lock the power off and keep the key. This assures that no one else can turn the power on while you are in the bin or working on the bin. Then, try turning the power on to make sure the lockout was successful.
10. **Have help on standby.** Always have an observer on the outside monitor you and call for help immediately if something goes wrong.
11. **Use personal protective equipment.** Use a body harness, anchored lifeline and belay system.

HARVEST SEASON SAFETY SURVIVAL TIPS

- If something is blocked or broken, plan the clearance or repair job.
- Ensure machinery maintenance (including hydraulics) is up to date.
- Keep a phone or other means of communication on you so help can be called if necessary.
- Let someone know where you'll be working and when you're due back.
- Machinery must only be used for its intended purpose.
- Be aware of where powerlines are and height of machinery.

- Keep children away from machines and areas where work is being carried out.
- Make sure traffic is kept away from pedestrians, including children.
- Be aware of fatigue – take regular rest breaks, drink plenty of water, eat nourishing food.
- Keep the weather forecast in mind. If you're tarping grain, be aware of the potential for high winds.
- If working at height, ensure fall protection is in place.
- Review how heavy lifting work is to be done- for example stacking bales. Ensure it's done so muscle and bone injuries are prevented.
- Contractors need to be inducted to the property and consulted about safety issues.
- Prevent sun exposure and heat exhaustion.
- Snakes can be a hazard. Wear appropriate clothing such as long pants, long-sleeved shirts and boots.

FINAL WORD

Safety in the field must not be overlooked. During harvest there is pressure to get the crop harvested as soon as possible. Do not ignore safety when we're harvesting the crop. Always be sure to follow all safety guidelines listed in the manufacturer's operator manual and always have shields in place, and support equipment properly when working under it.