

Hazards and Eye Protection on the Farm Meeting Kit

From the workshop to the field, farms present many opportunities for eye injuries. It is important to wear proper eye protection where hazards are present. Become familiar with proper first aid treatment for eye injuries and seek medical attention if there is an eye injury.

EYE INJURIES – CAUSES

Chemicals Filled in Spray Cans: Chemicals are commonly used on the farm, and spray cans filled with chemicals can harm the eyes. Farmers should use these spray cans carefully and keep them in a safe place, out of reach of children.

Equipment-Generated Particles: Tools Such as grinders and larger farm equipment can kick up soil, rocks, and other foreign objects into the air. These particles are dangerous to both the farmer, as well as any bystanders.

Servicing Farming Equipment: Servicing equipment on the farm can pose a number of different hazards to the eyes, as errant parts or tools carry the possibility of striking an eye.

FIVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF EYE PROTECTION AND THEIR PURPOSES:

Safety Glasses – The heavy lenses of safety glasses offer protection from flying particles, as they can withstand the shock of impact. However, these do not protect debris from accessing the eye around and behind the lens. If you require prescription glasses, it is advised to wear impact resistant lenses.

Safety Goggles – Fitted with the same heavy lens, these offer more protection from side impact. It is recommended you wear safety goggles when working with chemicals, striking hardened metal tools

and surfaces, and working with wood.

Face Shields – These can be found with impact resistant shields, but they are most often used to protect the face against splashing, dust, and chaff.

Sunglasses – Wear sunglasses when working in the sun. It is not just chemicals or flying debris that causes damage to the eyes. The dangers of UV rays can be just as severe as those caused by working with tools and chemicals.

Welding Helmets – These are made specifically to protect the individual from the multiple dangers of welding. Welders must be protected from not only the splatter of molten metal and slag, but the damaging rays of the welding arc. The helmets are equipped with a coloured lens to ensure protection from the light. It is important to consult your welder's instruction manual, as there are specific shades for the different levels of currents used. For example, a No. 10 shade is necessary when working with 200 amperes or less. For oxyacetylene welders, be sure you are wearing No. 5 or 6 lenses for welding and cutting, and a No. 3 or 4 for brazing.

BASIC FIRST AID FOR COMMON EYE INJURIES

- **Foreign Particle in the Eye:** Flush the eye with water until the object rinses out. If unable to flush the particle out, cover the eye and seek medical attention.
- **Object Embedded in the Eye:** Bandage both eyes and seek medical attention
- **Cut Near the Eye:** Loosely bandage both eyes and seek medical attention
- **Bump or Bruise Near the Eye:** Apply a cold compress for 15 minutes to reduce swell and seek medical attention.
- **Welding Arc Burn:** Keep eyes closed and seek medical attention. The victim may or may not feel pain immediately, but eye may be sensitive to light, red, or swollen for up to 12 hours after the incident.

Actions to Avoid

- Do not rub your eye, as the object could scratch your eye or become embedded.
- Do not attempt to remove the object.
- Do not rub, press, or wash the cut because it could cause further damage.

FINAL WORD

Many farming activities carry the risk of eye damage. Moving grain, fixing equipment, operating grinders and chemical handling are all examples of activities that can result in an eye injury if proper precautions aren't taken.