

Harvest Safety Tips

KEY POINTS

- During harvest, farmers must be aware of the potential for fatigue and inattentiveness that may increase the possibility of injury when using farm equipment.
- Farm workers need to know the hazards of flowing grain and how to prevent a grain entrapment situation.
- Taking shortcuts to perform routine tasks may increase your risk for injury, so it is important to take the extra time to stay safe and perform a task properly.



Equipment Safety

The following are safety tips for all farm workers to follow:

- Thoroughly inspect farm equipment before use.
- Decrease fatigue by shutting machinery off and walking around at least once every hour.
- Stay hydrated to maintain awareness.
- To reduce fall hazards, use grab bars when mounting and dismounting machinery, and wear non-slip shoes.
- When transporting machinery on roads, have these items in place: a spotter, reflectors from the Department of Transportation, a slow moving vehicle sign, and flags on items that stick out. Most accidents and injuries that involve equipment occur while machinery is in operation. Idle machinery can also be dangerous to workers. It is important to take care when doing a preharvest inspection, making sure that basic safety checks are in place.

The following are some important steps to follow during machinery maintenance:

- Before working on equipment, make sure machinery is turned off and in park or neutral with the parking brake engaged.
- The front loader and any other accessories on a tractor should be lowered to the ground.
- Wait a few minutes after turning off farm equipment to make sure all parts have completely stopped moving.
- Always refer to the manufacturer's manual before performing any maintenance.

Bin Safety

When grain is being unloaded from the bottom of a bin, the grain flows downward from the top center creating a funnel effect. If a worker is on top of the grain in a bin being unloaded, they can be pulled into the flowing grain within seconds, likely rendering them helpless and possibly causing suffocation. Anyone who works with grain, whether it is loading, unloading, or moving it to another bin, needs to know about the hazards of flowing grain and how to prevent a grain entrapment situation.

If you must enter a bin, it is extremely important to follow these safety precautions:

- Avoid entering the bin when possible. A long pole can be used to break up crusted grain, instead of having a worker enter the bin. Grain that has crusted can cover open spaces, which will likely not support the weight of a person.
- Shut off and lock all unloading equipment before entering a bin.
- When possible, ladders should be installed inside grain bins as emergency exits.
- Wear a harness that is attached to a properly secured rope.
- Stay near the outer wall of the bin. If the grain starts to flow, move to the bin ladder or safety rope as quickly as possible.
- Never enter a bin alone. Have at least one person stand outside the bin who can help should you become entrapped. It is best to have two people available that are properly trained to follow all safety procedures for entering the bin.
- Wear a dust filter or filter respirator when working in a grain bin, especially while cleaning.
- Do not allow children to play in or around grain bins, wagons, or truck beds.

Source: Henna, M. and Schwab, C. 2017. Harvest safety yields big dividends, Iowa State University. <https://store.extension.iastate.edu>. OSHA. Farm Safety. OSHA fact sheet. <https://osha-safety.myshopify.com/pages/farm-safety>. Web sources verified: 08/02/18. 150921113219 082818TAM