

Working Safely

on the Farm or Ranch



Safety is Important on the Farm

Farming is a rewarding career and lifestyle, but it also involves many potential hazards, including:

- Powerful machinery
- Harmful chemicals and dusts
- Long hours and high stress
- Extreme weather conditions

In addition, farmers and ranchers often work alone, far from sources of help.

Learn to be Safe

Learn about the special danger you may face

- Hazards can vary from site to site and from day to day

Take steps to prevent injury and death

- Make safety your first step in every job you do, and always follow proper procedures

Know how to respond

- Be prepared to handle any emergency or dangerous situation that might arise



Grain Bins and Silos

Never enter a grain bin or silo if:

- It is being loaded/unloaded, OR
- If you are alone

If you must enter at some other time:

- Ventilate thoroughly
- Shut off fans and augers
- Lock up equipment
- Check for bridging by probing stored material from the outside
- Use a nonconductive pole and watch for overhead power lines
- Wear a respirator
- Use a safety harness and secured lifeline
- Stay near the outer edge of the bin
- Have backup help outside in case of emergency

Use augers and loading devices with care

- Stand clear while they are operating
- Keep long hair contained and avoid wearing jewelry or loose or torn clothing
- Keep all guards in place

Keep children away

- Silos, grain bins, and grain trucks are not safe play areas for kids

Falls and Injuries

Be careful with ladders

- Set the ladder on firm, level ground
- Place at the proper angle: 1 foot out for every 4 feet up
- Store out of the weather
- Inspect before each use, and never use a damaged ladder

Use guardrails and fences where needed

- Add approved guardrails to catwalks above pens or other areas
- Install fences around pools, pits, ponds, and lagoons

Pick up tools and equipment

- Keep steps and operator platforms clean
- A little trip or slip could turn into a costly and painful injury

Wear sturdy footwear

- Nonskid soles can prevent slips
- Toe protection can prevent injury



It takes knowledge and care to stay safe on a farm or ranch.

Fires and Electrical Shocks

Have fire extinguishers handy

- Place them on machinery, in storage and fueling areas, and anywhere else you might need them
- Select the right kind for the types of fires you might face, and know how to use them

Post “NO SMOKING” signs in storage and fueling areas

- Insist that everyone follow no-smoking rules

Know the location of all power lines

- Always move ladders, augers, and conveyors into the lowest position before passing under wires

Hire only qualified electricians

- Substandard or poorly installed wiring is a fire hazard and injury threat

Install safety devices

- Use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets to prevent shocks in damp areas
- Install nonexplosive switches in dusty storage areas



BASIC SAFETY

- Call 911 if someone suffers an accident
- Take a first aid and CPR course
- Have well-stocked first aid kits handy and post emergency numbers
- Keep your work areas clean – a clean area is a safer area
- Keep others informed – tell someone where you're working and when you plan to be back
- Don't mix alcohol or other drugs with work – both impair judgment and increase risk of injury
- Follow safety procedures every time - never take shortcuts
- Pace yourself – fatigue is a safety hazard

Safety for Children

Teach your children safety habits

- From an early age, help them learn the safe way to work and play

Tell kids where they can and can't play

- Make them stay clear of silos and bins, pools and pits, corrals and livestock pens, sprayed fields, equipment, and other hazards.
- Provide safe, supervised play areas.

Know your children's limits

- Children often want to help out long before they understand the dangers involved. Don't let them do any job unless they're mature enough, physically able, properly trained, and (if necessary) licensed.

Be sure kids know how to get help in an emergency





Working in the Sun

Prevent sunburns

- Sunburns can increase your risk for skin cancer
- Wear long sleeves, long pants, and a wide-brimmed hat
- Use sunscreen rated SPF 15 or higher

Prevent heat-related illness

- Drink plenty of fluids, but avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Take breaks and avoid overdoing it in the heat

Know what to do if heat-related illness strikes

- If you or a coworker gets muscle cramps or feels dizzy, weak, or nauseous:
 - Stop working
 - Get to a cool place
 - Drink plenty of water
 - Get medical help immediately

Heat-related illnesses can be deadly - don't ignore the signs!

Livestock

Farm animals are powerful and can hurt you if you are not careful

Use proper precautions

- Use sturdy gates in restraint areas and keep gates in good condition
- Properly maintain fencing
- Wear protective clothing
- Never wrap a lead rope around your hand

Know your animals

- Learn about the behavior of the animals you work with
- Know that animals' moods can change quickly
- Avoid blind spots
- Know an escape route you can use if the situation turns dangerous

Get proper veterinary care

- Healthy animals are less likely to spread disease or be aggressive

Use caution with manure pits

- Never enter without an oxygen supply system and backup assistance
- Manure pit gasses can kill quickly

Farming and ranching are among the most dangerous types of work!

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Keep this safety gear on the farm at all times

Respiratory protection – read labels for recommendations

You may need:

- A respirator with the proper cartridge for the hazard you'll face
- A supplied-air system for work in low-oxygen areas or around toxic vapors

Eye protection

- Goggles and face shields protect against debris and splashes
- Approved safety glasses provide good all-around eye protection

Hearing protection

- Earplugs or muffs protect against loud noises

Skin protection

- Chemical-resistant hoods, gloves, aprons, and boots protect against chemical splashes
- Don't use leather or cloth with chemicals

Clean PPE after each use, following the manufacturer's directions



Chemicals

Pesticides, cleaners, disinfectants, solvents, and other chemicals are a fact of life on farms and ranches

Read the label every time.

Before you start, know:

- Proper use, storage, and disposal methods
- Protective equipment needed
- Hazards of the chemical
- First aid for exposure

Certifications

Some pesticides or herbicides require proper applicator training or certification. Never spray pesticides or chemicals without proper training and follow all regulations

The SDS (Safety Data Sheet) can give you details about the chemical

Obey all reentry recommendations

- Never enter a sprayed area until it's safe, according to the information on the label
- Post appropriate signs to warn others about dangers

After you work with chemicals, always wash your hands before eating, drinking or smoking





Farm Machinery

Machine Safety

- Machinery can make a lot of hard work easier, but can also create hazards.
- Protect against rollovers
 - Make sure your tractor has a roll-over protective structure (ROPS)
 - Always wear a seat belt when operating a tractor
 - These steps greatly reduce the risk of injuries and death due to tractor rollovers
 - Never allow extra riders on any farm machinery!
- Know your machine
 - Read and heed the owner's manual and all safety warnings
 - Get proper training on how to use it
- Use extreme caution with power takeoffs (PTOs)
 - Keep all protective shields in place
 - Shut down the PTO and engine before servicing the PTO or any PTO-driven equipment
- Visibility
 - When traveling on public roads, Slow-Moving Vehicle signs (SMVs) must be clearly visible
 - Maintain and use lights and reflectors on all equipment
 - Check and follow your local regulations
- Maintain your machinery properly
 - This improves safety and efficiency, plus will help it last longer

ATVs

- Take a hands-on training course (many dealers offer them)
- Always wear a helmet, eye protection, and protective clothing
- Never carry passengers
- Stay off the pavement – your tires can't handle it!

Lawn Mowers

- Wear closed-toed shoes and close-fitting clothes
- Wear safety goggles and hearing protection
- Blow cut grass away from the road
- Never let small children ride on or operate a lawn mower

Trailers

- Inspect hitch, tires, and running gear to identify potential hazards
- Use a safety hitch pin
- Remember that heavy or tall loads affect vision to the rear, as well as your ability to turn, stop, and clear low wires or entryways
- Secure loads with straps if necessary
- Keep children off trailers

Advocating for farmers, the rural way of life, and all Missourians.

Due to the independent nature of the industry, each work site is unique and requires everyone to practice safe working habits. This booklet provides an overview of many safety issues. Become familiar with them and how they can reduce the risk of accidents.

Missouri Farm Bureau is committed to agriculture and the safety of the producers.

Keep Missouri Farms Safe!



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