



# Maine Farm Safety Program

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## *Rescuing a Person Trapped in Grain*

**R**escuing a person trapped in grain is a dangerous procedure for both the rescuer and victim. Several precautions should be taken before beginning any rescue attempt. Always assume that the entrapped victim is alive. Under no circumstances should you start an unloading auger or open a gravity flow gate. The victim could be drawn into the auger or become wedged in the opening. If the rescuer must enter the bin, a body harness should be worn with a safety rope tied to at least two rescuers on the roof of the bin.

### **Rescuing a Completely Submerged Person**

When rescuing a completely submerged person, turn on bin aeration fans to provide air and call the local rescue squad. Remove the grain from the bin in the most rapid and orderly manner possible. Again, remember

under no circumstances should you start an unloading auger or open a gravity flow gate. Large openings should be cut uniformly around the base of the bin. If suitable cutting equipment is not available, use the corner of a tractor loader bucket to ram holes in the bin wall. Cut these emergency openings four to six feet above the ground to reduce the potential for a grain build-up around the outside of the bin. Make semi-circular or V-shaped cuts 30 to 40

### **Rescuing a Person Trapped in Grain**

- **Anyone entering a grain storage bin in a rescue attempt should wear a body harness attached to a safety rope with two additional people outside the grain bin.**
- **Never start an unloading auger when there is a person entrapped in it.**

inches across to form valves. They can be bent to allow grain to flow and slow or stop. Space the openings uniformly around the bin to reduce the risk of structural collapse and to make it easier to remove grain from around the base. Avoid weakening one area because of the possibility of collapse.

### **Rescuing a Partially Submerged Person**

When rescuing a person partially submerged in grain, it may be possible for another person to enter the bin and rescue the victim. Lower a rescue squad member into the bin to reassure the

victim and attach a body harness or life line. Do not try to pull the victim free with the life line because it could cause more injuries. Check the victim's airway for grain and try to keep the victim calm.

Form a shield to prevent greater entrapment if there is danger of further grain collapse. A steel drum with both ends removed, plywood or pieces of sheet metal formed into a circle have all been used successfully. Once the shield is in place, it may be possible to free the victim by scooping grain from inside the shielded area. Use a board or sheet of plywood as a work platform.



This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

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