



How Does Safety Rate on Your Farm or Ranch?

Each year many people die or are seriously injured in farm and ranch accidents. Most of these accidents are preventable. This checklist can be a guideline for farm and ranch operations in evaluating each particular circumstance. Unsafe acts or conditions, faulty equipment, or human error often cause accidents that may result in injury, death, or property damage.

An inspection of your workplace will help prevent injuries by identifying hazards, recording them, and taking corrective action. You must be committed to correcting the hazards in some manner if you are to succeed in reducing accident potential.

Aspects of Workplace Inspection

Your inspection should not be taken lightly. You may need several family members or workers, or an outside set of eyes to see some hazards that you may pass every day. No work area can be 100 percent free of hazards. Include the questions "*Who, What, Where, When, and How*" for each area examined.

When to Inspect



Many locations on a farm or ranch can be inspected year round. The home buildings and other structures are examples of this. Machinery and equipment can best be inspected when

gearing up for work in early spring, or in operation. Static inspection examines the machine itself (shields and guards, decals, wear and tear on parts), while an inspection during equipment operation looks at unsafe acts of the operator or hazards in the field.

How to Complete the Inspection

As you go through the various sections of the following inspection checklist, answer the questions or statements by checking "Yes" or "No". If you have answered "Yes", no action is required. If you have answered "No", then a hazard exists requiring corrective action. You should then determine a priority level for the hazard to indicate the urgency of the corrective action:

Priority level

You should determine a priority level for the hazard to indicate the urgency of the corrective action:

- A Major**
Life-threatening or serious injury potential
- B Serious**
Injury or property damage corrections in the short term
- C Minor**
Long term action can correct the problem

Indicate a realistic target date to correct the hazard on the attached sheets. When a hazard has been corrected, check it off in the last column.



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
HOME SAFETY					
Are some detectors installed in appropriate locations and operating properly? They should be tested periodically.					
Do you keep extra fuses on hand?					
Do small rugs have non-skid backings?					
Do you have a proper step stool or ladder for in-home use?					
Are there covers on electrical outlets where children play?					
Are all firearms safely stored and locked up according to new regulations?					
Do you post emergency numbers at all telephones?					
STAIRWAYS					
Are stairways clear of all hazards (shoes, toys, etc.)?					
Are there full-length handrails in good repair?					
Can stairways be well lighted?					
Are treads, risers, and carpeting in good condition?					
Are spills and wet surfaces cleaned up immediately?					
BATHROOMS					
Do you use non-skid mats/surfaces in bathtubs to prevent falls?					
Do you have a proper medicine cabinet?					
Are expired medicines disposed of properly?					
Do you keep electrical appliances away from sinks, tubs etc.?					
Do you have a night-light to prevent tripping?					
Is a ground fault circuit interrupter installed (GFCI) for bathroom circuits?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
KITCHEN					
Do you clean the stove's exhaust hood and duct frequently?					
Are cleaners, disinfectants, poisons, etc., secured out of reach of children and away from foods?					
Do you always use a step stool for climbing?					
Are utensils and knives neatly stored?					
Are handles of pots and pans always turned away from stove fronts?					
Are cracked or chipped dishes and glassware disposed of immediately?					
Are spills wiped up immediately?					
Are cupboard contents kept orderly to prevent falling objects?					
Is a fully charged fire extinguisher available?					
Are matches and lighters kept out of reach of children?					
ENTRANCES					
Is there adequate lighting at entrances?					
Are tripping hazards cleaned-up?					
Are steps well maintained?					
LIVING ROOMS/BEDROOMS					
Is furniture arranged to avoid bumping knees and shins?					
Are electrical cords kept away from carpets?					
Are fireplace screens used effectively?					
Are throw rugs avoided to prevent tripping hazards?					
Is furniture kept away from windows to prevent children from falling out?					
Are screens and windows secured to prevent children from falling?					
Have plans been made for a fire escape route from bedrooms?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
LIVING ROOMS/BEDROOMS (cont'd)					
Are lamps located near beds to prevent tripping in the dark?					
Are all chimneys checked for obstructions?					
BUILDING SAFETY					
Are buildings free of litter and debris?					
Are walkways, aisles and traffic areas clear of any obstructions?					
Is there adequate lighting in work and travel areas?					
Are stairs in good condition and equipped with handrails?					
Are stairs kept clear of obstacles on steps and landings?					
Are permanent ladders in good condition and inspected regularly?					
Have defects in concrete floors been repaired?					
Are low ceilings, beams, etc., marked clearly with signs or florescent materials to prevent bumping into them?					
Are stored materials properly stacked to prevent them from falling?					
Are protrusions such as nails removed from walls, railings, etc., to prevent contact?					
Are nails removed from used lumber before stacking?					
Do you wipe up spills immediately?					
Is there ample walking space between stored machines?					
Are keys removed from stored machines?					
Do large doors open smoothly?					
Are floor openings protected to prevent individuals from falling through?					
Do you keep your tractor and/or other fuel burning equipment in an outbuilding separate from the barn or other buildings?					
Do you avoid storing flammable liquids in barns or other structures?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
FIRE PREVENTION					
In hazardous areas, are NO SMOKING signs placed in prominent locations?					
Are light bulbs and heat lamps protected with wire guards?					
Are roofs checked for leaks where hay or straw are stored? (Wet hay or straw could lead to spontaneous combustion.)					
Are lightning rods checked for proper installation and grounding?					
Do all telephones prominently display fire department numbers and farm location?					
Are appropriate fire extinguishers located strategically for easy access in case of fire?					
Are fire extinguishers inspected regularly?					
Do livestock buildings have at least two exits for animals?					
Are doors and gate latches easy to open?					
Are faulty wiring and electrical equipment repaired or replaced immediately?					
Does your family periodically review how to operate fire extinguishers and discuss emergency plans?					
Do you regularly dispose of garbage and other combustibles?					
Are flammable liquids properly stored away from any ignition sources?					
Do you take care not to damage concealed electrical wiring when drilling hole or driving nails into walls?					
Are matches and lighters stored safely and out of reach of children?					
Is there a water source that can be quickly and easily accessed in all kinds of weather for fire fighting?					
Are chimneys and heater pipes clean and in good condition?					
Do you obtain an outdoor burning permit where required?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
ELECTRICAL SAFETY					
Have you discussed the various types of insulation in buildings with your insurance company?					
Are power lines, poles and other electrical hardware coming into the farm in a state of repair?					
Have trees been trimmed away from conductors?					
Have you had overhead lines relocated underground to avoid contact with high vehicles in the farmyard?					
Do all outlets have three-pronged receptacles to provide proper grounding of electrical tools and appliances?					
Are there sufficient outlets to eliminate the continued use of extension cords?					
Are bare light bulbs protected from being hit by objects?					
Are outside outlets weatherproof and installed with ground fault circuit interrupters?					
Is your TV antenna located far enough from wires in case it falls during a storm?					
Do you have warning systems to indicate the failure of vital equipment?					
Do livestock ever act wary or refuse to drink?					
Do you unplug tools and equipment that are not being used?					
Do your tools and appliances carry UL listing?					
Are checks always made for underground wiring before digging?					
Is the correct sized fuse always used in circuits?					
Are proper fuses used in circuits where furnaces, dryers, ranges, air conditioners, etc. are connected?					
Are fuses and switches all labeled properly to prevent confusion in an emergency?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
WORKSHOP					
Are all electrical outlets in the shop properly grounded with ground fault circuit interrupters?					
Are floors kept dry at all times?					
Is personal protective equipment available (e.g., goggles, face shields, hard hats, etc.)?					
Is a stocked first-aid kit available?					
Are work areas debris-free and uncluttered?					
Is there adequate lighting to prevent working in shadows?					
Are suitable receptacles available for oily rags, used oil, etc.?					
Are there at least two exits available?					
Is adequate, well-organized storage available for tools and equipment?					
Are extension cords used only for temporary work?					
Are portable lights properly shielded to prevent breakage?					
Are portable tools unplugged when not in use?					
Are benches tidy and drawers kept shut?					
FIELDS, WOODLOTS, LANES DRIVES, AND YARDS					
Do you leave a sufficient turning area for machinery along ditches and embankments?					
Are washouts repaired and filled so vehicles will not be stuck?					
Do you trim low tree branches that could hit equipment?					
If underground utilities (e.g., gas lines, power lines, etc.) cross your farm, are they well marked?					
Do you keep your drive/lane in good condition, free of ruts and bumps or stones?					
Are all gates (yard and field) wide enough for machinery and trucks to enter and exit easily?					
Are workers made aware of overhead powerlines when moving tall equipment, ladders, etc.?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
FIELDS, WOODLOTS, LANES DRIVES, AND YARDS (cont'd)					
Are lanes and drives marked before winter snows to indicate ditches, etc. for snow removal?					
Are all obstacles that can be snow covered removed from yard and work areas before winter?					
Is equipment kept off steep slopes where stability can be uncertain?					
Are sidewalks and walkways in good repair?					
Are lawn and garden tools put away after use?					
Is the yard clear of rubbish, dead vegetation, waste, mislaid tools, etc.?					
Is there protection from the danger of uncovered water tanks, wells cisterns, etc.?					
Do you inspect trees after storms and in spring for broke limbs that could come down?					
Do you have an assigned play area for childre (e.g., a fenced area)?					
Do you kill or remove hazardous plants such as poison ivy?					
Do you check for nests of stinging insects and take appropriate action for their removal?					
Are clotheslines high enough for pedestrians to walk under?					
FARM TRACTOR SAFETY					
Do you read the operator's manual for you farm tractor, and follow the operating, maintenance and safety recommendations found therein?					
Before operating, do you walk around the tractor making a visual check for bystanders and other objects?					
Is the tractor equipped with a rollover protective structure (ROPS) and seatbelts?					
Do you always wear seatbelts with ROPS?					
Do you enforce the rule "NO RIDERS ON THE TRACTOR AT ANY TIME?"					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
FARM TRACTOR SAFETY (cont'd)					
Is there a SMV (slow moving vehicle) sign on the rear of the tractor or towed equipment for roadway travel?					
When towing equipment, do you use safety hitch pins and chains?					
Is there a first-aid kit mounted on the tractor?					
Is a fire extinguisher located on the tractor?					
When operating a tractor in buildings, do you open doors and windows or start ventilation fans?					
Are steps free of mud, tools or debris that could cause slips?					
Are keys removed from the tractor when not in use, to prevent theft or unauthorized people from using the equipment?					
Do you always avoid hazards such as ditches, steep hills and other areas where tractors can tip?					
When using front-end loaders, do you travel with the bucket low to avoid tipping sideways?					
Have all tractor operators on your farm received training on their equipment and reviewed the operator's manual?					
Do your tractor operators always do a proportional check, which includes a walk around the equipment to check lights, visibility, tires, brakes, etc?					
Is mounted equipment always lowered before the operator leaves the tractor?					
Are towed loads always hitched to the drawbar, and never higher?					
When towing high loads, are clearances from overhead powerlines always checked?					
Is the exhaust system on each tractor in good condition and leak-free?					
If the tractor does not have a sound proof cab, does the operator always wear hearing protection?					
Are brakes adjusted regularly?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
PTO DRIVEN EQUIPMENT					
Do all PTO's have shields and guards in place?					
Is there a master shield in place where the PTO meets the tractor?					
Are shields on PTO's checked periodically to ensure that they rotate freely? (Check only with power off.)					
Before leaving the tractor seat, is the PTO always disengaged?					
When working with PTO driven equipment, is clothing close-fitting, long hair covered, and no laces, etc. exposed?					
Do you always avoid stepping over a PTO shaft?					
Are worn or defective parts replaced as soon as possible?					
GENERAL FARM MACHINERY					
Are key warning decals on machines readable?					
Are all shields and guards in place?					
Are all machines free of jagged metal or protrusions that could injure workers?					
Are hydraulic lines free of excessive wear or leaks? (Do not check hydraulic hoses for leaks with your hands, as fluid under pressure can be injected into human tissue. Use cardboard or wood to detect leaks.)					
Are defective and worn parts replaced as soon as possible on all machinery?					
Are tires inspected regularly and properly inflated?					
Are children and bystanders kept away from operating machinery?					
Is the power turned off before adjusting or servicing machinery?					
Are farm equipment manuals readily available to the operator?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
GENERAL FARM MACHINERY (con't'd)					
Is any equipment that is likely to be towed on roadways equipped with a slow moving vehicle sign, safety chains and safety hitch pin?					
Are SMV signs in good condition (clean and not faded)?					
Are moveable components properly blocked before repair or adjustments?					
Do you always observe the "NO RIDERS" rule on machines or drawbars?					
Are brakes adjusted regularly?					
PESTICIDES STORAGE					
Is your pesticide storage area used exclusively for the storage of pesticides?					
Is this storage area kept neat and orderly?					
Is the storage area vented to the outside?					
Is the storage area secure?					
Have you posted a chemical warning sign on all entrances to the storage area?					
Do you have adequate safety equipment (respirator, rubber gloves, boots, etc.)?					
Have you posted emergency telephone numbers?					
Is the storage area free of floor drains?					
When storing chemicals out-of-doors, do you keep them in a secure area?					
When chemicals are being stored in a vehicle, are they inaccessible to the public?					
Does your storage vehicle have a chemical warning sign prominently displayed?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
ANIMAL HANDLING FACILITIES					
Are steps and walkways roughened in facilities to prevent slips and falls?					
Are walkways and aisles kept free of debris, manure, feed, etc.?					
Are outside ramps, steps and entranceways protected from rain or spilled liquids that could freeze?					
Are animal drugs and barn chemicals kept in a secure area in original containers?					
Are pens, gates and fences in good condition, without protrusions?					
Are ventilation fans and vents operative and in good condition?					
Are heaters kept away from combustible materials?					
Do you use special care in handling animals with newborn young?					
Do you make animals aware of your approach so as not to frighten them?					
Do you have cattle dehorned?					
Do you forbid anyone to excite, tease or abuse animals?					
Are icy areas in feedlots sanded?					
Do you wear protective footwear and head protection when handling animals?					
Do you leave yourself an "out" when working in close quarters with animals?					
Are pets and animals immunized as required?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
LADDER SAFETY					
Are ladders inspected before each use? Are they replaced or repaired immediately if found faulty?					
Are wooden ladders coated with clear preservatives so that faults or cracks are visible?					
Are metal ladders free of weld cracks, missing rivets, etc?					
Are ropes on extension ladders in good condition?					
Are the feet of the ladder in good condition?					
Do you face the ladder when climbing up or down or when working from the ladder?					
Are areas around the top and bottom of the ladder clear of obstruction or debris?					
Are straight ladders placed at a four to one angle (the base set one foot out for every four feet up)?					
Are metal ladders avoided where electrical contact is possible from overhead wires?					
When using a ladder, does it extend at least three feet above the landing level?					
Have you replaced any missing or damaged rungs on the ladder?					
Are two people involved with moving or erecting long ladders?					
Do you store ladders where they cannot be damaged?					
Do you always put a ladder on firm footing or compacted soil?					
Is work with ladders avoided in windy or stormy conditions?					
When working from a ladder, do you always keep the trunk of your body centered within the ladder rails?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
SAFE LIFTING AND MATERIAL HANDLING					
Has everyone on your farm received instructions on safe lifting techniques?					
Is the "bend your knees" rule always followed?					
Is appropriate protective equipment worn when lifting and handling materials (steel-toed boots, gloves)?					
Are two people or mechanical means used to move heavy loads?					
Do you check for a clear pathway before lifting and moving objects?					
FIRST AID/EMERGENCY ACTION					
Do you maintain first-aid kits in the following locations:					
Home?					
Workshop?					
Tractors?					
Vehicles?					
Are first-aid kits periodically checked, replenished and updated?					
Has anyone on your farm or ranch received first-aid training in the last three years?					
Do you have a good first-aid manual for reference?					
Do all family members know how to shut off all machinery if someone is caught or pinned?					
Do you act on issued weather warning?					
Are you prepared for blizzards, floods, lightening, tornadoes, etc., should they strike?					
Do you know what to do for accidental poisonings?					
Are emergency telephone numbers posted by all telephones along with farm location and directions?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
SPECIAL STRUCTURES: SILOS, GRAIN BINS, ETC.					
Are entrances to silos and grain bins secured against entry by children?					
Are fixed ladders sound and in good condition?					
Are there safety cages around ladders on silos?					
Are warning signs posted to warn of silo gas or oxygen deficiency?					
Do you use appropriate self-contained breathing equipment when entering silos where gas may be present, or where an oxygen deficiency may exist?					
Are workers made aware of hazards of flowing grain entrapment and crusted grains?					
Can power be locked out so that unloading mechanisms cannot start by accident?					
Are all shields and guards in place on unloading mechanisms?					
Do you always avoid entering a manure pit for any reason?					
Are dust respirators used when handling moldy hay and grains, or when grain dust is present?					
Is your silo free of cracks and structural problems, corrosion, etc.?					
TRANSPORT VEHICLES: TRUCKS, ETC.					
Are keys removed from motorized equipment to prevent starting by children?					
When entering the roadway from your driveway, is there clear vision in both directions?					
Do you check your vehicle before going on highways (e.g., tires, lighting, visibility, security of load, etc.)?					
Do you always wear seatbelts on the roadways?					
Are hoist-equipped trucks stored with boxes down when not in use?					



Checklist	Yes	No	Priority level	Target date	Hazard corrected
LAWN MOWER HAZARDS					
Does the person who uses the lawn mower always wear heavy shoes?					
Does the person who mows the lawn always pickup trash etc., first?					
Does the lawn mower have safety shields?					
Is a grass catcher used to help prevent objects from being "thrown" by the rotary mower?					
Do you always turn the lawn mower off (or disengage the blade) before crossing gravel drives or walkways?					
Do you always refill the lawn mower and other gas tanks outdoors?					
Is extra gasoline stored in a safety gas can?					
Do you always disconnect the spark plug wire before tipping the lawn mower up to do any servicing under the mower deck?					
Do you keep good mufflers on all gasoline-powered lawn mowers, leaf mulchers or snow throwers?					
Do you insist that everyone leave the area of lawn you are mowing?					
Do you work across the slope with a hand lawn mower?					
Do you mow up and down the slope with a riding mower?					
Do you always look behind you before backing up a riding mower?					
Do you make it a practice to never pull a hand mower toward yourself?					
Do you always wear hearing protection when operatin power lawn equipment?					



Written by Tom Karsky, University of Idaho. For more information about farm safety, please contact:

Tom Karsky, Extension Farm Safety Specialist, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844-0904, phone 208/885-7627, fax 208/885-7908, email (tkarsky@uidaho.edu).

Myron Shenk, Integrated Plant Protection Center, Oregon State University, 2040 Cordley Hall, Corvallis, OR 97331-2915, phone 541/737-6274, fax 541/737-3080, email (shenkm@bcc.orst.edu).

Bill Symons, Extension Safety Specialist, Biological Systems Engineering Department, Washington State University, 204 L. J. Smith Hall, Pullman, WA 99164-6120, phone 509/335-2902, fax 509/335-2722, email (symons@mail.wsu.edu).

This series is supported, in part, by funds provided by the Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center (PNASH), Department of Environmental Health, Box 357234, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195-7234 (phone: 800/330-0827, email: pnash@u.washington.edu). PNASH is funded by CDC/NIOSH Award #U07/CCU012926-02.

Published and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System, the Oregon State University Extension Service, Washington State University Cooperative Extension, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. The three participating Extension services provide equal opportunity in education and employment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam-era veteran as required by state and federal laws. The University of Idaho Cooperative Extension System, Oregon State University Extension Service, and Washington State University Cooperative Extension are Equal Opportunity Employers.

Published December 1998

Farm and Ranch Safety Rating

Farm Safety Series PNW 512

A P a c i f i c N o r t h w e s t E x t e n s i o n P u b l i c a t i o n
I d a h o • O r e g o n • W a s h i n g t o n