



Farm Safety Association

For safety's sake, Take the time to train new workers



It often seems difficult to find enough time to instruct new employees. Yet proper job training is recognized as being fundamental to reducing potential for accidents and injuries in the workplace.

Many seasonal workers may be first-time farm employees. Never assume that these people know exactly what is expected of them. Put yourself in their place--it can be frustrating and scary to simply be directed to the workplace, with no instruction on how to complete a particular job properly!

Explain techniques that can make a task easier. The result will be a happier workforce and--most likely--a higher level of productivity.

All farm businesses should have a written safety policy. Such a document provides a set of guidelines that encourage safer work habits. The safety policy should be discussed in detail with all new workers.

Following are a few key points that contribute to safer working conditions:

1. Employees should be made aware of specific hazards in their working environment. Explain the risks of exposure to dust, noise and toxic materials, and

provide workers with the appropriate protective gear.

2. Maintain adequate supplies of personal protective equipment. It is the employer's responsibility to make sure employees wear suitable clothing for the environment in which they are working.
3. Workers should know how to use fire extinguishers. A small extinguisher in the hands of a trained individual can save thousands of dollars worth of assets.
4. Instruction in proper lifting techniques is vital to prevention of back injuries.
5. Equipment operation and other complex tasks require more comprehensive training. "Do's and don't's" of safe machine operation must be specified. Make sure that appropriate warning decals are in place, and insist that all workers read such information before operating equipment. Employees should be aware of maintenance requirements for the equipment they operate.
6. Encourage workers to report unsafe conditions and equipment. Timely reaction to problems can save the employer money, and reduce potential for lost-time injuries. Hazard recognition becomes automatic with well-trained individuals.
7. Define what action employees should take in the event of an emergency. More than one employee or family member should be trained in first aid procedures.
8. Employers must comply with the requirements of the Workers' Compensation

Act when hiring help. Full details of employer responsibilities under the Act may be obtained from local Workers' Compensation Board offices (listed in the blue pages of your telephone directory.)

Every year, hundreds of new employees are injured on the job. Many lost-time injuries can be directly attributed to lack of worker knowledge.

Never assume that an individual knows what to do--

it could prove fatal! Even if a person claims to have experience, go through the training exercise and monitor job performance after the employee has had time to adjust to the task.

Proper job instruction is basic to maintaining a safe operation. When a worker is trained to perform a specific task in the correct manner, benefits include less frustration, improved morale, increased productivity, *and* a safer workplace.