



## Farm Safety Association

# Falls responsible for many injuries, deaths

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Slips, trips and falls in the farm workplace can result in serious injury or death. Following is a brief summary of the major causes of falls, along with pointers for avoiding such incidents.

### Misplaced objects

Work areas and passageways should be kept clear. Objects should be returned to organized storage areas after use. Children, toys and pets are dangerous additions to farm work areas.

### Slippery surfaces

Slips and trips on the same level often cause falls into operating machinery, such as elevators, feed grinders, conveyors, etc. Repair flooring that is broken or uneven. Cover slick floors with skid-resistant materials or paint. Oil or water spills should be cleaned up immediately.

**Stairs** should be well maintained and properly lit. Provide sturdy handrails. Keep step free of ice, snow, mud, manure, grease, grain, or hay. Avoid clutter--boxes, buckets, tools, and other items should never be stored on stairs. Don't carry a load that blocks your vision while climbing or descending stairs. Take your time, and watch where you are going.



### High places

While most falling accidents occur on the level, special care is required during 'high up' maintenance or construction work, such as painting or roofing.

- Fasten roof ladders securely.
- Footwear should grip the surfaces on which you are working.
- Keep materials and tools well secured and within easy reach.
- Don't work on exposed, high places when conditions are stormy or windy.
- Don't work 'high up' when you are tired, ill, or taking strong medication.

### Machinery

Many serious injuries are caused by falls from and into moving farm machinery. To prevent falls during farm machinery operations:

- Keep children off of and away from machinery.
- Never allow anyone to ride on the drawbar, or on towed machinery.
- Stay clear of operating machinery when there's no need to be near. Keep at least six feet away when walking by machinery, so that a slip or stumble won't cause you to fall into moving parts.
- Never jump on or off equipment that is moving. Dismount only after the tractor or vehicle has come to a complete stop.

- Use handrails and ladders on self-propelled equipment. Keep steps clean.
- Wear proper footwear. Clean mud, snow, grease, or manure off of shoes or boots before attempting to mount tractors or self-propelled equipment.
- Drive slowly over rough ground. Watch for obstructions such as limbs, low building entrances, lines, etc. that could brush you off of a vehicle.

## **Ladders**

Purchase safety-approved, good quality ladders.

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Never try to economize with a damaged or shaky ladder. Always follow the 4-to-1 rule--set ladders one foot out for every four feet up. Keep your body between the ladder rails. It's better to move than risk a fall. Don't stand on the top three rungs of a straight ladder, or the top two steps of a stepladder.

### **Think ahead**

Most falls can be prevented by taking the time to consider the situation, and instituting proper measures to avoid or eliminate the 'fall potential.' Time spent cleaning up a spill or moving objects out of the way will be much less than the time needed to recuperate from an injury caused by a fall.