



Farm Safety Association
March 2000
Tailgate-Falls

Slips, trips and falls

Instructor: *The following script can be used to deliver a 15-minute training session to employees. You may wish to use some props (e.g. tractor to demonstrate proper mounting technique.)*

The text emphasizes important points related to avoidance of slips, trips and falls. It is suggested that you try to stay strictly on topic. Obviously, you will need to be prepared to answer questions.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

- **Keep all work areas free of clutter that could cause a trip.**
- **Always use the 3-point technique for mounting and dismounting tractors and other equipment.**
- **Be extra careful working around equipment when footing is bad.**

Be aware of the danger

Slipping on an icy surface or tripping over some old boards stacked in a walkway can have serious consequences. In fact, a substantial number of farm workplace injuries—and even some fatalities—have resulted from what we might think of as a simple fall.

Following are some examples that we can all relate to:

- On his way back to the hay mow, a young, inexperienced worker trips over some twines that were left in the aisle. He falls through a bale “throwdown” hole, and breaks several bones as a result of landing on the concrete floor below.
- It’s the end of a long day in the field. The tractor driver shuts down his machine, then jumps from the platform to the ground. He twists his ankle upon landing, and is on crutches for several days.
- An oil slick remains on the shop floor following repairs to a tractor’s hydraulic system. No one takes the time to cover it with sand or cat litter, or clean it up. A worker slips on the slick surface, and gashes his forehead on the edge of an adjacent work bench.
- Freezing rain has knocked out the main power grid. A farmer is using a PTO generator to provide lighting in the barn. While checking on the equipment, he slips on a patch of ice and falls onto the PTO shaft, with fatal results.

Although fictitious, these are the kinds of incidents that could easily happen in just about any farm workplace. Management definitely has a responsibility to eliminate “slip and trip” hazards to the greatest extent possible. Workers need to adopt habits that will reduce their chances of being injured in a fall.

1. Learn to recognize potential “slip and trip” hazards.

2. Take steps to eliminate the hazards. Check with your supervisor if you come across something that you feel could be a threat to sound footing.

3. Stay alert, and *think* about your actions—remember to “look before you leap”!

Hazard elimination

- Keep all aisles and walkways free of clutter and debris. Follow the principle of, “a place for everything, and everything in its place”.
- Clean up oil spills and other slippery materials immediately.
- Set aside a few minutes to put tools away and clean up debris at the end of the day. Work is more efficient and enjoyable in a clean, well organized environment.
- Keep feed throwdown holes covered when not in use. Install guard rails around clean-out openings in multi-floored poultry houses.
- Spread sand and/or salt on icy surfaces if work has to be done in the vicinity. If the weather is particularly bad, consider putting the job off until conditions improve.
- Keep steps and platforms of tractors and other equipment clean and dry. Take the time to clean off mud, ice, snow, manure, grease, and other debris that can accumulate on these surfaces. Don’t carry tools, chains, etc. on the platform.
- **Slip-resistant safety footwear** is a *must* for all farm workers.

The above are but a few examples of “good housekeeping” practices that should be followed to minimize “slip and trip” hazards. You can probably think of several others. It is really important to develop an awareness of potential

hazards, and take the necessary steps to eliminate them *before* someone gets hurt.

Take extra care around machinery

Slips, trips and falls around farm equipment can have fatal consequences. We've already stressed the importance of keeping steps and platforms clean. Here are some additional points to consider when working with machinery.

- *Never* jump from a tractor. There is always the danger of catching clothing on pedals, lever, or other protruding parts. You could land on an uneven surface and injure your ankles, legs, or back.
- Always use handrails, handholds, and steps to mount or dismount tractors and self-propelled equipment. Follow the **3-point system**—either two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet on the machine at all times.
- Never try to operate equipment from any position other than the seat! Maintain safe operating speeds, and take a break when you are tired. **Never allow passengers to ride along!** They are much more likely to fall from a moving machine.
- Always shut the power off and pocket the key

before making repairs and adjustments. That way, if someone does fall onto the equipment, they won't become entangled.

- Take extra care when operating stationary equipment (grain augers, generators, grinder-mixers, etc.) Stay well clear of the machinery while it is running. Try to maintain good footing in the surrounding area.

Think, then act

Most falls are needless and preventable accidents. You need to be alert on the job, and develop awareness of what could constitute a "slip and trip" hazard.

It is vital to "THINK" about actions before you take them. That way, you'll be more likely to recognize hazards, and take the steps necessary to eliminate or avoid them.

Are there any questions?

Finally, let's take a moment to review some of the "Do's" and "Don'ts" of fall prevention.

DO:

Keep aisles and walkways free of clutter.

Wear slip-resistant footwear.

Use the 3-point system when mounting or dismounting equipment.

Think about actions before you take them.

DON'T:

Leave oil slicks uncovered.

Jump from a tractor platform.

Allow tools to accumulate on a tractor's platform.

Leave tools on the workbench when you finish using them.

The information and recommendations contained in this publication are believed to be reliable and representative of contemporary expert opinion on the subject material. The farm safety Association Inc. does not guarantee absolute accuracy or sufficiency of subject material, nor can it accept responsibility for health and safety recommendations that may have been omitted due to particular and exceptional conditions and circumstances.

Copyright © 2000

Farm Safety Association Inc.
22-340 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph, Ontario N1H 7K6 (519) 823-5600

Produced with the assistance of:



Agriculture et
Agroalimentaire Canada

Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada



Canadian Coalition for
Agricultural safety and rural Health
Coalition canadienne pour la sécurité
agricole et la santé rurale



Ontario

Ministry of
Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs