

# SPINAL CORD INJURY

## Physical Simulation

**Materials:** pickup truck, wheelchair, two belts

**Time required:** 15 minutes

Assign one student (weight not to exceed 200 lbs.) to be the spinal cord injured farmer. Secure upper thighs and calves with the belts, which will help remind the student not to use the legs and prevent balancing by positioning the legs. Have a second student serve as the “helper,” who holds the wheelchair during the transfer as a safety precaution.

When the student has assumed the disability, explain that he/she needs to transfer to the driver’s seat of the pickup truck. Have the student transfer from the wheelchair to the truck seat. Be sure the chair is locked, and the helper holds the chair securely during the transfer.

Once in the truck, have the group brainstorm some of the obstacles that might be faced by the farmer with a spinal cord injury, even after getting in the truck.

Have students examine a tractor and brainstorm some of the obstacles that might be faced by a farmer with a spinal cord injury.

*Operating foot controls (clutches, brakes)*

*Dealing with equipment failure*

*Maneuvering through gates, keeping animals away from open gates*

*Twisting to operate levers, hydraulics*

*Maintaining balance over rough terrain*

*Dismounting and mobility (has to mount/dismount at same location or have some way of carrying chair)*

Once the student is back in the wheelchair, have the chairbound student try to reach into the bed of the truck and get tools you have placed out of reach. Have the student wheel over rough ground to understand how physically challenging it is to be mobile. Visit your shop room and have the student try to retrieve out-of-reach tools, switches, and go through doors. Remind them that farms and many stores are not equipped for accommodating chairbound persons.