



Maine Farm Safety Program

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Harvest Safety

Good weather and daylight hours always seem to be at a premium when you're trying to harvest a crop in top condition. Planned maintenance and skilled equipment operation can curb downtime and reduce the potential for accidents during harvest. Preventing accidents is the key to a safe harvest.

The Human Factor

Safe completion of any task depends on knowledge, alertness and hazard awareness. Fatigue, drowsiness and illness can lead to mishaps in the field. Recognize when you have had enough, and turn the operation over to someone else.

Adverse weather adds to harvesting pressure. Do not rely on stimulants to keep you going or depressants to calm your nerves. Keen awareness is important to safety; drugs and alcohol work against safety.

Periodic breaks relieve the monotony of machinery operation. If you are going to eat in the field, at least climb down from the machine and relax for 15 to 20 minutes.

Equipment operators should be dressed for comfort and safety. Protective footwear and close-fitting clothes are essentials when working in and around machinery. Wear appropriate safety gear if noise, dust or toxic materials pose hazards.

Harvest Safety

- **Make sure all guards and shields are in place.**
- **Instruct all workers in proper technique and safety procedures.**
- **Stop all moving parts before servicing the machine.**
- **Keep alert—work safe and smart.**

Teach workers proper techniques and safety precautions. Enforce safety rules. Allow only age-appropriate work. Follow the no seat, no rider rule. Do not allow people to board or disembark any moving piece of machinery.

Universal Equipment Cautions

Equipment should be made harvest-ready in the off-season, or at least several weeks before use. It takes time to get machinery into safe, efficient operating condition. You may also need lead time to get replacement parts.

Perform all routine maintenance on schedule. Fuel up and lubricate equipment so it's ready for the next day. Take steps to prevent condensation and corrosion.

Never clean, oil or adjust any equipment when it is running. Always make sure the machine has stopped operating to avoid injury.

Secure all guards and shields before starting equipment. These protective devices reduce the chance that people will get caught in moving parts.

Hydraulically raised equipment should be securely blocked before anyone starts working around or under the machine. Do not operate the hydraulic controls from beside or behind the tractor. Operate them only from the tractor seat so you will have full control over the entire machine.

Never attempt to clear plugged equipment by hand while power is

engaged. A person can be dragged into the machine in a matter of seconds if the machine suddenly clears itself. Modern equipment is powerful. Entanglement may result in loss of limb or even death. Alert operators develop a habit of shutting off the power before leaving the driver's seat.

Never stand behind or under the discharge spout of an operating crop harvester. Hard objects coming out of the spout become dangerous projectiles. Completely stop the harvester before hooking up wagons to avoid being hit by objects from the spout.

Fire is a hazard in the field, particularly during cereal grain harvest. Every piece of powered equipment should carry a fire extinguisher.

Do not allow children around machinery. Far too many tragedies occur when youngsters end up in the path of equipment and operators have a restricted view.

Safe harvests begin with the prevention of accidents. Watching the weather and making sure equipment is in the proper working order will help bring in a crop in good condition.

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