

Workshop Safety

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Winter is a busy season in many farm workshops. Good shop management can prevent injuries and improve the efficiency of repair operations.

Keep it Clean

- Many injuries are the direct result of poor “housekeeping” in the workshop. Trips, slips, and falls account for the bulk of these mishaps.
- Scrap material and wrappings, loose parts, scattered tools and equipment, and oil spills all pose hazards. Oil spills should immediately be covered with absorbent material and cleaned up promptly. Debris should be swept up and disposed of in designated containers.
- Parts should be kept on the workbench. Tools should be placed where they cannot fall and cause damage or injury.

Lighting, Heating, Ventilation

- Windows and overhead lighting are essential to provide a good level of overall illumination. Additional lighting should be available over work benches and stationary tools.
- Supplemental heating is required for winter shop work. The heating unit should be located to provide adequate, even distribution of heat. Ceiling heaters leave the work area clear.
- Open doors and windows may provide adequate ventilation of smoke, fumes and exhaust gases in the summer. Special systems may be needed to remove exhaust fumes and other gases during cold weather months.
- Flexible pipe or tubing can be used to vent exhaust gases. Properly designed ventilation systems are required in welding and battery areas to remove smoke and fumes. A booth with separate venting is recommended for paint fumes.

Electricity Safety

All wiring must conform to Ontario Hydro’s Electrical Safety Code. Following are general, basic standards:

- Wiring must be of adequate capacity to handle lighting, heating and power tool requirements.
- The shop should have a sufficient number of conveniently located outlets.

- Conductors, plugs and receptacles should all be 3-wire grounded to prevent shock with power tools.
- Sufficient power should be available for welders and motors used in the workshop.

Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI's) are recommended for wash bays and other damp areas. Explosions-proof wiring, motors and fixtures are required where flammable gases, fumes, or vapours may be encountered.

Shop Management Summary

The following procedures will help prevent injuries and increase efficiency.

- Keep all tools and service equipment in good condition.
- Always use the appropriate personal protective equipment for operations such as welding and grinding.
- Keep floors and benches clean to reduce fire and tripping hazards.
- Clean the area completely after a job is finished.
- Empty trash containers regularly. Never store oily, greasy rags in closed containers – this practice has been responsible for numerous fires due to spontaneous combustion.
- Lighting, wiring, heating, and ventilation systems should be properly maintained.
- Do not allow unauthorized use of tools, service equipment and supplies.
- Don't allow anyone to use tools or service equipment without proper instruction.
- Keep guards and safety devices on power tools in place and functional.
- Use tools and service equipment only for their designed purpose.
- Service fire extinguishers on a regular schedule.
- Keep the first aid kit fully stocked.

For additional information, contact your local Outreach and Extension Center or the MU Extension Rural Safety and Health Program, 1.800.995.8503.

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