



Common Hazards on the Farm

Dairy farming has roughly twice the injury rate of most other industries. The majority of serious injuries and fatalities involve machinery, tractors and vehicles, animal handling, and manure systems. Focusing on these high-risk areas can help prevent accidents on the farm. For information on OSHA-specific trainings for common hazards and regulations, visit: www.osha.gov/agricultural-operations/resources.

Machinery & Equipment: Farm equipment can cause serious entanglement or amputation injuries. Always keep guards and shields in place on PTOs, belts, and augers. Shut off equipment and wait for all movement to stop before servicing or clearing jams, and never bypass built-in safety features.

Tractors & Farm Vehicles: Rollovers and runovers are leading causes of fatalities. Always use tractors equipped with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and wear a seatbelt. Do not allow extra riders, and ensure all operators receive proper training at least annually. For more information and tips on tractor safety, refer to Kubota's Ten Commandments of Tractor Safety by typing Kubota - Ten Commandments of Tractor Safety into your browser.

Skid Steers: Skid steers pose crushing and rollover hazards if not used properly. Operators should always wear seatbelts and use safety bars, never override safety systems, and use lift-arm supports when performing maintenance. For more information on skid steer safety, refer to Preventing Injuries and Deaths for Skid Steer Loaders by typing the title into your browser or using this URL: www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2011-128/pdfs/2011-128.pdf?id=10.26616/NIOSH PUB2011128.

Manure Storage & Pits: Manure systems present risks of drowning and exposure to toxic gases such as hydrogen sulfide and methane. Install barriers, fences, and warning signs around storage areas, stay clear during agitation, and never enter manure storage areas without proper precautions. Use gas monitors to avoid exposure. For more information on risks and safety regarding manure storage and lagoons, Penn State Extension has a manure & gas safety publication on the topic. Visit: extension.psu.edu/manure-gas-safety.

Animal Handling: Working with livestock involves a risk of crushing, kicking, or being pinned by the animal. Workers should be trained to understand animal behavior, avoid standing between animals and solid objects like gates or fences, and always maintain a clear escape route when handling livestock.

Confined Spaces (Silos, Tanks, Pits): Confined spaces can quickly become deadly due to a lack of oxygen or toxic gases. Air should always be tested before entry, workers should never enter alone, and proper confined space safety procedures must be followed every time. For more hazards, solutions, and additional resources, visit: www.osha.gov/confined-spaces.

Electrical Safety: Electrical hazards can result in shock or electrocution. Damaged wiring should be repaired immediately, workers should maintain safe distances from overhead power lines, and power should always be shut off before performing electrical work. For safety trainings and resources, visit: www.osha.gov/electrical.

Chemicals: Exposure to chemicals can cause burns, poisoning, or respiratory issues. All chemicals should be clearly labeled, Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be accessible, and workers need proper training on safe handling and use. For more information on hazard communication standards, visit: www.osha.gov/hazcom.

Noise: Long-term exposure to loud equipment can cause permanent hearing loss. Hearing protection should be worn whenever working around high-noise machinery. For more information, visit: www.osha.gov/noise.

Slips, Trips & Falls: Wet and uneven surfaces increase the risk of falls. Keep walkways clean and dry, and ensure workers wear proper non-slip footwear.

Maintenance Safety: Before performing maintenance or repairs, always turn off equipment, disconnect power sources, and ensure the machine cannot restart. Workers should wait until all moving parts have completely stopped before beginning any work.

