



Have you seen this logo lately? The Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Farm Safety Team has been busy travelling to rodeos and other agricultural events throughout Alberta to promote the “Safety Up” campaign.

The “Safety Up” campaign continues to remind young and new farmers to “save themselves for the good times” through posters, radio ads, displays, resources and training events across the province.

The campaign will finish the season on a high note with the **Safety Up Survey and Draw** for great Safety Up jackets, polo shirts, backpacks and belt buckles. The draw will take place September 30th and the winners will be posted on Ropin the Web. Individuals can enter by going online to www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety and clicking on **Safety Up Survey**.

Be sure to check out our website and remember to **Safety Up! Save yourself for the good times**. Stay safe on the farm so you can enjoy all that life has to offer.



The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)
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To order resources or would like to be added or removed from the mailing list, please fax: (780) 422-7755 (attn Cindy) or e-mail: cindy.kremer@gov.ab.ca

We're on the web:
www.agric.gov.ab.ca/farmsafety

Sign up for our new Ag Education & Training Branch E-Newsletter at:
www.agriculture.alberta.ca/greencertificate

Alberta Farm Safety Program



Farm Safety Newsletter

Fall 2008

Safety Up – On Working Alone

Editor's note: this article is from a series of Factsheets written for new and young workers. The entire series of 15 factsheets is available through the Farm Safety Program (see contact information within this newsletter).

When seasons are short, days are long, and assistance is scarce, working alone is sometimes the only option. Some tasks are designed to be performed alone (such as driving a tractor), but other tasks are much safer when completed with help. Working alone does have an upside. It can be peaceful and productive – no one looking over your shoulder, no one to distract you from the task at hand. On the other hand, it can also result in tragedy – such as injury, health impairment or victimization.

To ensure your safety on the farm, you and your employer need to work together to plan safety measures to be used when working alone. Once your employer provides the plan and the tools to carry it out, the next step is for you to take responsibility for your own safety. **Know the job. Know the hazard. Know the drill.**

Three steps to safe work

Knowing the job means getting trained ahead of time to ensure you can do your work safely. Once you're on the job, you need to **know the hazard**: be alert to recognize potential problems that may put you or coworkers at risk. Finally, when you identify hazards, you need to **know the drill** – how will you safely manage or avoid them?

Training – who needs it?

Before you even consider working alone on the farm, you need to have the correct training for the job. Driving a tractor, moving grain, managing livestock – along with all the other tasks you take on in agriculture – involve knowledge and skills that ensure you can accomplish the work effectively and safely. Don't head out alone unless you **know the job**.

What hazards?

The hazards of working alone are broader than you may at first think. You could be injured, suffer a medical emergency, be struck by lightning, or be victimized through criminal violence or other adverse conditions. Part of the risk is the delay between an incident happening and help being available. When you work alone, it could be hours before another farm worker becomes concerned about you, longer still before you are found, possibly in very poor condition. Whether it's a mechanical breakdown,

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power take-off (PTO) injury, heart attack or fire, the outcome is less optimistic if you are working alone when it happens.

Take responsibility for your safety. At the start of a new workday, consider the tasks you will perform, and plan accordingly. You need to know the answers to some important questions before you head out:

- In what situations will you be working independently?
- If your equipment breaks down or you need operational assistance, who will help?
- How will you communicate the need for help?
- Who can provide medical attention if you need it?
- Does someone nearby know first aid and CPR?
- Who can call a paramedic?
- Is someone aware of your whereabouts?

Checking up or checking in?

It's always better to check in than to check up. When you check in regularly, your supervisor will feel less need to check up. All it takes is a short phone call, quick walk around, prearranged meeting at break time, or two-way radio contact. If your boss doesn't respond, it could mean that he or she needs *your* help. When you take responsibility for checking in, you do it for the safety of everyone in the field.

Know the drill

In many cases, farm incidents would have considerably better outcomes if emergency help – or any help at all, for that matter – was available to the victim before the situation escalated. The key is to plan how you and your coworkers will respond to an incident before it happens. **Know the drill.**

The following strategies can prevent working-alone incidents and minimize the damage should one occur:

- Ask for instructions and training on working alone.
- Ensure appropriate supervision is available.
- Don't work alone without the means to communicate – cell phones, pagers or two-way radios.
- Check in regularly while you're alone in the field.
- Know who will assist you if something goes wrong.
- Leave tough or hazardous tasks to be completed when help is available.
- Ensure those working alone are capable of controlling the risks of the job.
- Ensure lone workers are medically fit and properly trained.
- Incidents can happen during low-risk work also, so you should still set time limits and check in regularly.

Lone worker alert

Sometimes, no amount of caution and preparation can make a work-alone situation safe. In these cases, never work alone. This includes any type of truly hazardous work, such as:

- Tasks involving high-energy sources: electrical, mechanical or pneumatic.
- Jobs involving toxic chemicals, or reactive or flammable materials.
- Using highly pressured materials.
- Jobs involving a confined space.

The last word

Working alone can be highly productive and enjoyable, or lonely and dangerous. Take personal responsibility for your safety on the job. Ensure you have the proper training and tools for the job, a trustworthy communication device, and plans to check in regularly.

References

The Lone Worker, Farm Safety Association Inc., April 2001.

Moving Forward with Ag Safety Training

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD), Agricultural Education and Training Branch plans to provide safety training opportunities for the agricultural industry in Alberta. Our industry has many hazards including large equipment, toxic chemicals, dangerous gases, unpredictable livestock and many more. On a farm, a worker is usually a “jack of all trades” and is exposed to many hazards that increase the chance of injury or illness.

ARD has engaged a safety education company, HDC Consulting, to facilitate a discussion with interested rural Albertans on how to best move forward with opportunities for safety training that will meet the needs of Alberta's farm owners and workers and will move us towards our goal of safe and healthy farms.

ARD will accept nominations until **September 5, 2008**, for members to serve on a Safety Training Advisory Committee. We are looking for community leaders with experience & skills in a number of the following criteria:

- **Current farming knowledge and minimum 7 years farming experience**
- **Demonstrated commitment to farm safety**
- **Leader in the community who understands the importance of change**
- **Ability and interest in promoting the safety training pilot program**

- **Knowledge of education and training processes**
- **Balanced representation from a variety of farm operations, industry organizations and regions of Alberta**

Please circulate this information to your contacts across Alberta. You can nominate individuals who you think would make a contribution to this committee or you can invite people to self-nominate based on their interest in the project. If you are interested, please submit a letter outlining how you meet the criteria.

The advisory committee members would be expected to attend two sessions in October/November to discuss options for safety training for farmers. The sessions would be facilitated by HDC Consulting who will use the information to develop a proposal for a pilot training program. Advisory group members will be invited to be part of the resulting pilot training program and will be encouraged to promote the program to their own farming community and industry networks.

All expenses will be covered by ARD and a per diem will be offered. Interested persons can **contact Laurel Aitken, 780 427-4231 or Jodi Drozda 780 644-5379 for further information.**



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Coming Events

The 14th Canadian Agriculture Safety Association Summit & Annual General Meeting

“Advancing Ag Safety – A National Action Plan”
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
October 22 - 24, 2008, Sheraton Hotel & Resort.
Reserve at www.casa-acsa.ca before September 15, 2008 for Conference rate

Sixth International Symposium – PHARE

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
October 19 – 23, 2008
This conference will address public health issues related to the agricultural rural ecosystem and the health and safety impact of the profound changes taking place in agriculture and rural communities.
Tel: (306) 966-7888
Fax: (306) 966-8799
www.cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca/pharesymposium2008/index.php