

A Guide to your Farm Safety Plan



Health



Safety



Environment

Introduction

Whether overseeing a large-scale farming operation or tending to a small farm, everyone wants those working on the farm to get home safe at the end of the day.

Incidents can happen – and often do happen – when workplace health and safety is not made a priority within your farm’s overall operations. Volatile environmental and market factors, managing, hiring, and scheduling employees along with the time and focus required for production are all factors that can easily creep ahead of the need to make workplace health and safety the number one priority.

Nonetheless the farm is a place where people live, work and visit, which means safety must be as paramount as production.

As the face of farming changes and as the machinery, practices and protocols in our province continue to evolve, the approach to health and safety will also need to change to reflect new realities.

Developing a farm safety plan can seem like a daunting task – especially when faced with trying to understand and implement the various rules and regulations. The Agricultural Health and Safety Network, Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture (CCHSA), and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in collaboration with Vital Insight using Farm Safety Nova Scotia resources prepared A Guide to Your Farm Safety Plan and Workbook Templates as a part of the Saskatchewan Farm Safety Plan Pilot Project.

This guide was created to help you navigate through the development of a farm safety plan and to also remind you that this plan not only serves to help protect your workers – it also protects your farm’s bottom line. Complementing this guide is a workbook that includes specific forms you will need, templates, examples of farm safety best practices, and materials to walk you through establishing your farm safety plan.

As you navigate this guide, know that the Agricultural Health and Safety Network, CCHSA and the MoA in collaboration with Vital Insight and using Farm Safety Nova Scotia resources are here to support the development and implementation of your farm safety plan, working with you to create a safe and healthy work environment for your team, your family, and your community.

The sections outlined in this guidebook will provide you with an overview of why safety matters on your farm, who is responsible, and what actions you need to take.

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Section One: Get on Board



Why does Workplace Health and Safety Matter?

You care about your team

Employees, suppliers, contractors, visitors, and family members all play important roles in the success of a farm's operation – and more importantly make up a close-knit community. Everyone deserves to be protected from injury and illness while at work and to go home safe at the end of every day.

Workplace health and safety impacts your bottom line

Workplace incidents can be extremely costly – whether it is an injury that removes an experienced worker from the day-to-day operations, or a piece of equipment that needs to be replaced. These incidents can make the difference in your operation making a profit each year or recording a loss.

Recognizing the importance of health and safety and developing a farm safety plan will protect your biggest assets – your workers, your family, and your business.

It's the law

The Saskatchewan Employment Act and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 establish the standards of workplace health and safety with the aim of preventing workplace incidents, injuries and diseases, and outlines consequences for breaches of those standards.

The Act and associated regulations apply to all provincially regulated workplaces in Saskatchewan, no matter the number of employees. However, the requirements each farm needs to fulfill do differ depending on how many regularly employed people you have on your team and the hazards that exist on your farm. For example, farms with 10 or more workers are required to have an Occupational Health and safety Program.

Worksite

The Saskatchewan Employment Act defines a worksite as follows: "an area at a place of employment where a worker works or is required or permitted to be present."

Place of Employment

The Saskatchewan Employment Act defines a Place of Employment as follows: "any plant in or on which one or more workers or self-employed persons work, usually work or have worked."

Plant

The Saskatchewan Employment Act defines a Plant as follows: "any premises, site, land, mine, water, structure, fixture or equipment employed or used in the carrying on of an occupation."

How does the Saskatchewan Employment Act apply to my farm?

[Saskatchewan Farm Safety](#)

Agriculture is one of Saskatchewan's largest and most hazardous industries. Incidents occur most often between seeding and harvest and can cause needless suffering and consequently reduce farm revenues.

Approximately 13 people are killed on Saskatchewan farms each year. Of these fatal injuries, most involve machinery and equipment. Most incidents occur in the farmyard.

(Statistics provided by the Saskatchewan Farm Injury Surveillance Program at the University of Saskatchewan.)

Everyone can do their part to help make Saskatchewan farms safer. Some tips to remember while farming include:

- Replace all guards and shields following maintenance and repairs. A few extra minutes might save your life or a limb.
- Watch for overhead lines when moving equipment, augers, bins, and when loading grain trucks and semi-trucks.
- Ensure employees and others helping on the farm are properly trained.
- Change jobs periodically or take a short walk to help you stay focused.
- If youth are recruited to help with farming, make sure the activities are age appropriate and the youth are properly trained and supervised.

Responsibilities on the Farm for Employers and Employees

If you are a farmer, you are not exempt from Saskatchewan's health and safety laws. The Saskatchewan Employment Act (Act) covers the health and safety of both farmers and farm workers, especially where an employer-employee relationship exists.

Farmers/Farm Operators

As a farmer or farm operator who employs farm workers, you must:

- Provide a safe working environment for the worker.
- Provide orientation to:
 - Location of first aid supplies
 - Fire and emergency procedures
 - Prohibited or restricted areas
 - Chemical and physical hazards
- Ensure that each worker understands and complies with the provisions of the Act and the associated regulations that apply to the work being done.
- Ensure that workers know their rights under the legislation:
 - The right to know
 - The right to participate
 - The right to refuse
- Provide hazard information - ensure workers understand the potential hazards, and the precautions that must be taken to avoid injury or illness associated with their daily work tasks.

- Ensure that training for workers includes:
 - Knowledge about workplace hazards & any other information needed to keep them safe
 - An explanation of safe work procedures and a practical demonstration by the worker to show that they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills
- Supervise the worker. This means monitoring the worker's activities to ensure they are working safely and being available to assist and answer any questions. Usually, more supervision is needed when a worker is undertaking new or hazardous tasks.
- Identify who the supervisor is (e.g., If multiple family members are involved in the farming operation, who does the worker answer to?).
- Inform the worker their responsibility to follow safe work practices, use the safety equipment provided and bring any unsafe condition(s) or equipment to the attention of the employer.
- Keep in place and maintain all safeguards, safety latches, and safety devices.
- Discuss safe work practices (the how and why) for each work-related activity.
- Openly discuss work practices, remain open for questions, and acknowledge suggestions for improvement from a worker.
- Supply personal protective equipment (PPE) and instruct the worker about the requirement to wear PPE and how to correctly use and maintain it.
- Discuss safe handling of chemicals and controlled products.
- Report fatal incidents, serious injuries and dangerous occurrences to the Occupational Health and Safety Branch. Consider insurance coverage ([Workers' Compensation Board \(WCB\)](#) or private insurance).

Farm Workers

A farm worker:

- Must cooperate with the employer to ensure employer's health and safety responsibilities are fulfilled.
- Must conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner at work.
- Has the right to refuse any work they believe is unusually dangerous to themselves or others.
- Must use the safeguards, safety appliances, and personal protective equipment (PPE) or devices provided pursuant to the Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020.
- Must bring health and safety concerns to the farmer's attention.
- Should ask for a tour of the farm prior to commencing work.
- Should clearly understand who their supervisor is (e.g., If multiple family members are involved in the farming operation, who does the worker answer to?).
- Ask questions to understand safe work procedures before proceeding and ask what PPE is required.
- Should clearly understand the communication plan (e.g., work progress checks, employer assistance, and availability).
- May ask if the employer has registered with the Workers' Compensation Board.

While this manual will provide you with a high-level overview of the Saskatchewan Employment Act employers have a responsibility to know their obligations under the Act. To understand those obligations, it is essential you become familiar with the entire act and the Occupational Health and Safety regulations, 2020.

To download or order a copy of the Act and the associated regulations please go to www.publications.saskatchewan.ca and if you have any questions about which regulations apply to your farm, you can contact the Occupational Health and Safety Branch:

Telephone: 1-800-567-7233

Fax: 1-306-787-2208

Website: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business>

E-mail: ohs.general@gov.sk.ca

Mailing Address: 300 1870 Albert Street, Regina, SK, S4P 4W1

Overview of Insurance

Insurance is a way to manage the business risks on your farm. There are different types of insurance available for workplace injury. Having this insurance will ensure that you have the required coverage should anyone on your farm get hurt at work.

Workers' Compensation Coverage

The Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board provides workplace injury coverage to businesses in Saskatchewan. Most employers in Saskatchewan are required by law through the [Workers' Compensation Act, 2013](#), and the [Miscellaneous Regulations](#) to register their business and provide WCB coverage to their employees. However, it is optional for farming and ranching owners and operators.



Benefits to the Employer:

One of the unique features of workers' compensation insurance is the protection it offers employers against lawsuits over workplace injuries. Regardless of who is at fault, an employee cannot sue their employer if the employer has workers' compensation coverage. In return, employees receive insurance benefits for workplace injuries.

Benefits to Employees:

Workers' compensation benefits are based on an earnings-loss system. This means an employee is paid a percentage of the wages they lose because of a workplace injury. An earnings-loss is the difference between what the employee was earning before their injury and what they can earn after their injury.

Saskatchewan WCB also provides a range of medical and rehabilitation services to employees as they prepare to return to work. For those who can't return to work, they provide long-term benefits, health care, and other services.

A safe and timely return to work helps reduce the overall human and financial toll of workplace injuries for both employees and employers.

Optional Personal Coverage

Optional personal coverage is for individuals not automatically covered under [The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013](#). When personal coverage is purchased, the applicant becomes a worker and is eligible for benefits under the Workers Compensation Act. Wage-loss benefits will be based on the amount of coverage purchased by the applicant.

Optional personal coverage may be purchased by:

- owners and their spouses
- partners and their spouses
- directors that do not receive a Canada Revenue Agency T4 income tax slip
- elected officials of a city, town, or village
- members of the governing body of a non-profit corporation or organization

Contact the Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board for more information:

E-mail: employerservices@wcbsask.com

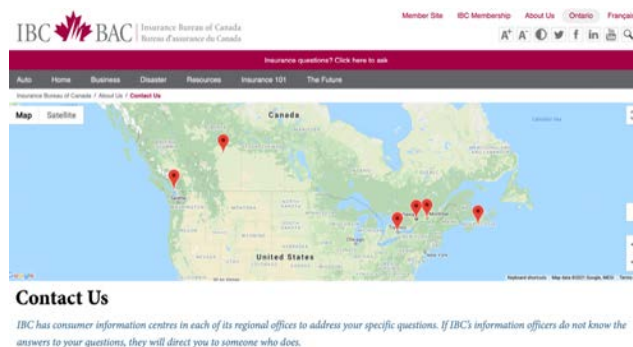
Phone: 1-306-787-4370

Toll Free: 1-800-667-7590

Private Insurance

There are several private insurance companies that offer workplace injury coverage. However, the types of coverage available and the benefits of that coverage vary with the provider. While private insurance will provide benefits to the employee, it typically does not provide the benefits to the employer, as does WCB.

For more information on private insurance options, contact your insurance provider or the of the [Insurance Bureau of Canada](#).

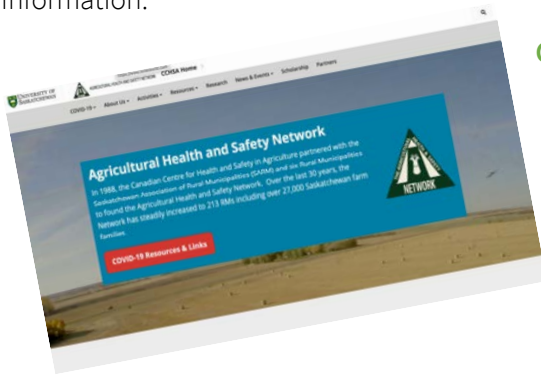


Saskatchewan's Workplace Health and Safety Community

There are a few supports and resources available to assist you in building and maintaining a farm safety plan.

There has been significant progress in making more people aware of the importance of workplace health and safety practices.

Here are a few of the organizations you can approach to ask questions or get additional health and safety information.



Canadian Center for Health & Safety in Agriculture

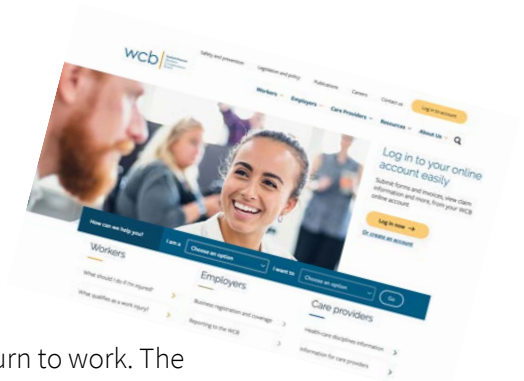
<https://cchsa-ccssma.usask.ca>

Our mission is to conduct and stimulate research, education, and health promotion programs aimed at enhancing the health and well-being of agricultural, rural, and remote populations.

Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board

<https://www.wcbask.com>

The Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board is the province's provider of workplace injury insurance. In addition, WCB also strives to educate employers on the prevention of workplace injury, and if an injury does occur, supports the individual toward a timely and safe return to work. The WCB also provides support in the wake of workplace tragedy such as counselling support, injury, and work-related death information.



Saskatchewan – Occupational Health and Safety Branch

<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace/hazards-and-prevention/safety-in-professions-and-industry/farm-safety>

The Occupational Health & Safety Branch (OHS) is part of the Government of Saskatchewan. This branch focuses on ensuring workplaces are safe and healthy, adhering to proper work practices and safety standards.



The OHS Branch also oversees the Internal Responsibility System (IRS), which is the system that acknowledges the responsibility of employers and employees for workplace health and safety. The OHS Branch is responsible for the enforcement of the Saskatchewan Employment Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020. (<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace/hazards-and-prevention/safety-in-professions-and-industry/farm-safety>).

WorkSafe Saskatchewan

<https://www.worksafesask.ca>



WorkSafe Saskatchewan is a partnership between the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety. Formed in 2002 out of a need to reduce the number of workplace injuries and fatalities, the partners work through an integrated provincial injury prevention strategy to deliver programs that move Saskatchewan towards zero workplace injuries.

WorkSafe is an advocate for **Mission: Zero** – an initiative that launched in 2008 by the partners in response to Saskatchewan having the second worst injury rate in Canada. Mission: Zero is a call to action and goal for employers and companies to achieve zero workplace injuries, zero fatalities, and zero suffering by families.

Saskatchewan Safety Council

<https://www.sasksafety.org>

Since 1955, the Saskatchewan Safety Council, a non-profit registered charity, has been dedicated to the prevention of injury in Saskatchewan... at home, at play, and at work. With the help of sponsors and through a variety of community partnerships and its members, the Saskatchewan Safety Council continues to deliver an extensive list of safety training, programs, and services everywhere in our province.



Whether an individual or organization is in search of safety resources or requires training for one person or an entire company anywhere in the province, working with our dedicated team simplifies the process and saves time.

Additional Resources

Government and industry associations can provide lots of support materials, information, and planning help. Farmers are encouraged to take advantage of their expertise and availability.

There is a lot of information about workplace health and safety on the Internet, but keep in mind that legislation differs from province to province, and from country to country. Make sure that the information you find is applicable for Saskatchewan farms and workplaces.

Let's Get to Work

We know that a combination of legislation, experience, business knowledge, and understanding of personal responsibility to family and workers leads us to the inescapable conclusion that a farm safety plan is an essential component of diligent farm management. What we hope to emphasize throughout this manual is the importance of not just creating and “having” a farm safety plan, but actually “living” your farm safety plan. A plan is worthless sitting on a shelf, it must be seen as a living document, constantly being updated, and serving as a tool to keep you and your team accountable.

Now that you have made the commitment to health and safety and have your health and safety team together, it's time to get started developing your plan and learning how to put it into action.

Section Two:

Get Started

To Do:

- ☐ Complete a Self-Assessment
- ☐ Develop Farm OHS Policy
- ☐ Select Health & Safety Representative
- ☐ Select Occupational Health Committee
- ☐ Address posting requirements

Policy



Collaboration



Commitment



Confirm your Commitment

Like any task that you have undertaken, you need continued commitment to see it through. Understand that you may encounter challenges and frustrations along the way while building a farm safety plan but know that the results will make your efforts worthwhile.

Show your commitment

Let everyone know you are committed to the health and safety of your workers. Post your health and safety information (examples of which we will outline in this manual) throughout your farm, in visible locations which could include:

- Entryway
- Lunchroom
- Common room

Live your commitment

Celebrate a good safety record at your workplace:

- Set a goal just beyond your current record and celebrate with your workers when you achieve it.
- Recognize a worker or team for their safety record at a workplace meeting.
- Recognize workers for their ideas on improving safety.

Tips for making safety a workplace priority

- Make positive attitudes and proven safe work practices a condition of hiring.
- Make new workers aware of your safety policy as part of the hiring process.
- Make safety a part of all management, supervisor, and worker evaluations.
- Put workplace safety on the agenda at group meetings.

For this manual, we've provided definitions of both a Farm Safety Plan and an Occupational Health and Safety Program:

A **farm safety plan** is a farm specific, practical plan that will help you improve the safety on your farm by identifying the hazards, controls and day-to-day protocols required to stay safe. Every farm should have a farm safety plan in place. The information and processes within the plan will differ from farm-to-farm, considering each farm's unique operation and size.

A farm safety plan differs from an **occupational health and safety program**. The term "program" is a regulatory term defined by the OHS legislation. Farms with 10 or more workers are required to have an Occupational Health and Safety Program. The farm safety plan will act as a steppingstone in building a full Occupational Health and Safety program.

Every farm should have a farm safety plan, regardless of its size. The details of that plan will depend on the nature of your unique farm operation. The first step in developing that personal plan begins with adopting a commitment to safety, and that commitment comes from combining a personal and sincere obligation to the well-being of your employees and your family with good business sense.

This section will provide an overview on:

- Determining a baseline of your current workplace health and safety structure.
- The roles and responsibilities within the farm organization.
- Health and Safety Representative and an Occupational Health Committee.
- Building a unique workplace health and safety plan.
- Communications.

So, how do you get started? The best place is to determine where you currently stand.

Conducting a “Self-Assessment”

Establishing the effectiveness of your current workplace health and safety efforts can be done by conducting a “self-assessment” of your work environment. This assessment will provide you with a clear picture on the effectiveness of your current workplace safety measures, and what steps you need to take to improve.

Canada’s Farm Safe Plan, developed by the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, provides a helpful guide to take you through such an assessment. It looks at a few aspects of a workplace including:

- Philosophy
- Policy
- Procedures
- Practices
- People



You can find an example of this self-assessment exercise in your [workbook](#).

Once this self-assessment has been completed, it will provide you with a picture of what you’re doing well, and where you need to address some gaps in farm health and safety. From here, you can build your farm safety plan.

Overview of a Farm Safety Plan

A farm safety plan should be developed with the full participation of your workforce. This will empower your team to take responsibility for their safety and the safety of their co-workers, while also making sure they are aware of the expectations from the start. A written plan could include the following sections:

1. **General Policy Statement:** Develop and communicate an overall policy on health and safety with supporting operational policies.
2. **Identify Hazards:** Identify existing and potential hazards in all aspects of your operation.
3. **Control Strategies:** Follow a series of basic practices to control the health and safety hazards and risks in your farming operation.
4. **Communicate responsibilities:** Clearly establish responsibilities for everyone visiting and working on your farm and ensure that you have a communication process for sharing health and safety information with everyone on the farm.
5. **Prepare:** Establish a plan for incidents and emergencies that may occur on your farm.
6. **Review:** Review and revise your plan frequently to make sure employee, equipment, and process changes are reflected in the plan.

(Source: Canada Farm Safe Plan)

This guide will give you a greater understanding of what is needed to meet the requirements for each of the sections within your farm safety plan. You may wish to include policy statements to show your commitment on identified hazards and/or hazard controls to include:

- Chemical and biological hazards
- Fatigue
- Heat and cold stress
- PPE
- WHMIS
- Working alone



Sample policies are available in the [workbook](#) for your consideration. Adapt sample policy templates to suit the needs of your farm.

Developing an Occupational Health and Safety Policy

A written Occupational Health and Safety Policy will show the farms' commitment to those working and visiting the farm as proof of due diligence.

Due Diligence

Due diligence requires that employers take all reasonable precautions, under their particular circumstances, to prevent incidents or injuries in the workplace.

Developing a workplace health and safety policy reinforces your commitment to keeping your employees safe, and emphatically shows that you're taking direct leadership. When developing the policy, it's important to get everyone's input (especially the Health and Safety Representative and Occupational Health and Safety Committee, where applicable) on how you can collectively make the farm a safe and healthy place to work. This policy needs to be much more than just a written document; it needs to be woven into each action, task and decision made on the farm and can constantly evolve based on changes in job functions and business plans. This policy is one of the items that should be placed in a prominent area in the workplace.

Policy Requirements

The Policy must express the employer's commitment to health and safety and include:

- Reasons for commitment to health and safety.
- Commitment of the employer to co-operate with the employees in pursuing occupational health and safety.
- Responsibilities of the employer, supervisors, and other employees in fulfilling the required commitment.
- Discussion of the policy with all employees at one or more workplace health and safety meetings and must be reviewed each year.



As you're developing your policy for your operation, look to your [workbook](#) to help guide the way.

Developing an Occupational Health and Safety Program

An Occupational Health and Safety Program is a requirement on farms with 10 or more workers as per the Saskatchewan Employment Act. Your Farm Safety Plan using this guide and workbook templates should be developed in consultation with the Occupational Health Committee and reviewed and discussed with all employees. Use the Farm Safety Plan as a steppingstone in building a full Occupational Health and Safety Program.

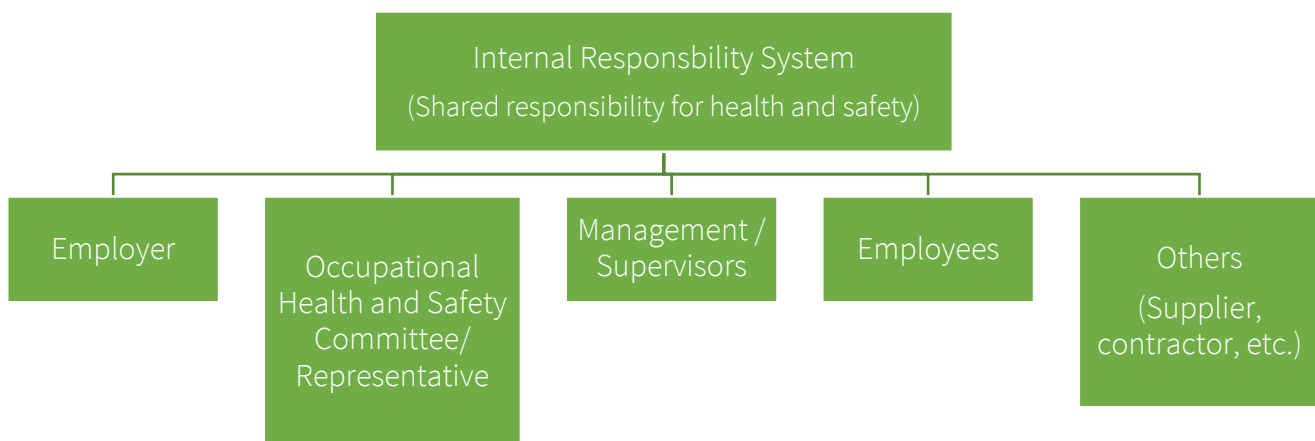
It is important to refer to the Saskatchewan Employment Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 to ensure you are complying with program requirements along the way.



Roles and Responsibilities

The Saskatchewan Employment Act makes farm owners, employers, self-employed farmers, farm supervisors, workers, contractors, and suppliers all responsible for safety on the farm. This includes people who may be working the farm business or working on their own property. Each person working on the farm is responsible, to the extent of their authority, for the health and safety of everyone on the farm. This is known as the Internal Responsibility System (IRS).

Internal Responsibility System (IRS)



While the IRS is based on the principle that all parties at the farm share the responsibility for health and safety and for creating, implementing, and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, the employer has the greatest authority over the workplace and has a greater ability to effect change and therefore the greatest responsibility.

The Saskatchewan Employment Act details responsibilities for farm owners, employers, self-employed farmers, farm supervisors, workers, contractors, and suppliers. Generally, the legislation requires that the employer do everything they can reasonably do to protect the health and safety of their workers in the workplace. In turn, workers are expected to take all precautions to protect themselves and others at the workplace.

Duties and Responsibilities

While everyone on the farm plays a role in managing the organization's health and safety, the employer's role is paramount in making sure everyone goes home safe at the end of the day. The employer is the farm's leader; employers, suppliers, contractors, and visitors to the farm all look to the employer and operator to define the farm's priorities and follow suit accordingly. As with anything, actions speak louder than words, and your team will be looking to you for guidance and mentorship – make it clear that nothing is more important than keeping everyone safe at work.

Employers

Employers must ensure, as reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of all the employers' workers.

Duties

- consult and cooperate in a timely manner with any occupational health committee or representative at the place of employment to resolve concerns on matters of health, safety and welfare at work;
- make a reasonable attempt to resolve, in a timely manner, concerns raised by an occupational health committee or representative;
- ensure, as reasonably practicable, the employer's workers are not exposed to harassment with respect to any matter or circumstance arising out of the workers' employment;
- cooperate with any other person exercising a duty imposed by the Act or the associated regulations;
- ensure that:
 - the employer's workers are trained in all matters that are necessary to protect their health, safety, and welfare; and
 - all work at the place of employment is sufficiently and competently supervised;
- if the employer is required to designate an occupational health and safety representative for a place of employment, ensure that written records of meetings with the representative are kept and are readily available at the place of employment;
- ensure, as reasonably practicable, that the activities of the employer's workers at a place of employment do not negatively affect the health, safety, or welfare at work of the employer, other workers, or any self-employed person at the place of employment; and
- Comply with the Act and associated regulations.

Workers

Employees must take precautions to ensure the health and safety of others and themselves and must:

- Take reasonable care to protect their health and safety and the health and safety of other workers who may be affected by their acts or omissions;
- Refrain from causing or participating in the harassment of another worker;
- Cooperate with any other person exercising a duty imposed by the Act or the associated regulations;
- Comply with the Act and associated regulations.

Self-employed individuals

Self-employed individuals are responsible for:

- Conduct their undertaking in such a way as to ensure, as reasonably practicable, that the self-employed person and workers employed on or about the same place of employment who may be affected by the undertaking are not exposed to risks to their health and safety;
- Cooperate with any other person exercising a duty imposed by the Act or the associated regulations; and
- Comply with the Act and associated regulations.

Owners

Owners are responsible for:

- Ensure, as reasonably practicable, that any area of the farm or activity occurring in or on an area of the farm that is not in the direct and complete control of any contractor, employer or self-employed person who works or employs one or more workers who work in or on the farm:
 - is maintained or is carried on in compliance with the Act and the associated regulations;
 - does not endanger the health or safety of any contractor, employer, worker, or self-employed person who works in or on the farm; and
- Comply with the Act and associated regulations.

Suppliers

Every supplier shall:

- Ensure, as reasonably practicable, that any biological substance or chemical substance or any farm supplied by the supplier to any owner, contractor, employer, worker, or self-employed person for use in or at a place of employment:
 - is safe when used in accordance with the instructions provided by the supplier; and
 - complies with the requirements of the Act and the associated regulations;
- In the following circumstances or conditions:
 - provide written instruction respecting the safe use of equipment that is supplied by the supplier to be used in or at a place of employment by workers; and
 - provide notice when equipment supplied does not or will not likely comply with a prescribed standard when used at a place of employment by workers;
- If the supplier has responsibility under a leasing agreement to maintain equipment, maintain that equipment in a safe condition and in compliance with the regulations; and
- Comply with the Act and associated regulations.

Contractors and Constructors

Contractors are responsible to:

- Ensure, as reasonably practicable, that each of the following that is not in the direct and complete control of an employer or self-employed person under contract with the contractor is safe for, without risk to the health of, and adequate with regard to facilities for the welfare of, all employers, workers or self-employed persons at the place of employment:
 - every place of employment or worksite where an employer, employer's worker or self-employed person works pursuant to a contract between the contractor and the employer or self-employed person;
 - every work process or procedure carried on at every place of employment or worksite where an employer, employer's worker or self-employed person works pursuant to a contract between the contractor and the employer or self-employed person;
- Post any prescribed notice in a conspicuous location at every place of employment or worksite where an employer, employer's worker or self-employed person works pursuant to a contract between the contractor and the employer or self-employed person; and
- Comply with the Act and the associated regulations.

Contractor Management

Farms who hire contractors must evaluate the contractor to ensure they meet Occupational Health and Safety requirements as well as the health and safety expectations of the farm.

Things to consider when evaluating a contractor before they start work on the farm:

- Training records with individual worker names, training completed, and copies of certificates.
- Proof of Liability Insurance and Workers Compensation Coverage, if applicable.
- Proof of good standing with OHS; no compliance orders relating to serious or hazardous OHS offences, charges, fines, or convictions in the last 3 years.
- Proof of a company specific health and safety manual. In the instance that a health and safety manual cannot be provided, the applicable policies and procedures can be provided by the farm as well as a safety orientation before work starts.
- Communicating fitness for duty and substance abuse policy statement and code of practice as well as the workplace violence and harassment policy statement and code of practice to contractors.



A contractor questionnaire template and contractor management plan are available in the **workbook** to help determine the risk the contractor may be to the farm and where additional health and safety training or resources may be required.

Workers' Rights

Workers in Saskatchewan must be made aware of their rights and be supported and empowered by their employer to use them when needed.

Under the Saskatchewan Employment Act a worker has the following basic rights:

- The *right to know* the hazards at work and how to control them.
- The *right to participate* in finding and controlling workplace hazards.
- The *right to refuse* work that you believe is unusually dangerous.

Proper Procedure – Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

There are certain steps that employees and employers must follow when an employee invokes their right to refuse unsafe work:

- The employee must immediately report the unsafe work concern to a supervisor. The worker's priority is immediately reporting to the supervisor the refusal to work and the related safety concern.
- An employee should remain at work, but go to a safe place, away from the hazard.
- After the worker reports the refusal, the supervisor investigates the work. If the supervisor finds the work is safe, or fixes the work to the worker's satisfaction, the worker returns to work. Alternatively, if the worker continues to believe that the work is unsafe, and disagrees with the supervisor over this, then the work is investigated again. If the matter is not remedied to the employee's satisfaction, the employee must report it to the Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative – as applicable.
- The committee or representative investigate the refused work, and if it is deemed by the representative or committee to be safe, or has it fixed, the employee returns to work.
- If the worker's still in disagreement with the findings, then the refusing worker can report the unsafe work to the Occupational Health and Safety Branch at the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety by calling 1-800-567-7233 who will investigate the work refusal.
- Meanwhile the employer is allowed to re-assign the refusing worker to another safe work task. The employer also has the right to give the initial work to another employee, if the employee is made aware of:
 - The work refusal;
 - The reason for the work refusal; and
 - That they also have the right to refuse the work if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the work is unsafe or unhealthy.

(Source: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace/rights-and-responsibilities-in-the-workplace/duties-and-rights-of-workers>)



As you're developing your work refusal procedure and report form for your operation, look to your **workbook** for an example to help guide the way.

Understanding Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action is any action that results in an employee being reprimanded in a way that impacts their job. Some examples of disciplinary actions are verbal warnings, written warnings, or on the more severe end – suspending or firing of an employee.

Employers cannot reprimand employees for following the rules of the Saskatchewan Employment Act or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020. It is against the law to take or to threaten disciplinary action because the employee does something which complies with the Saskatchewan Employment Act or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 or attempts to use the rights given to them in the Act.

For example, an employer must not take disciplinary action against an employee because the employee has:

- Used their right to refuse dangerous work.
- Acted as an Occupational Health and Safety Committee member or Health and Safety Representative.
- Talked to an Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Health and Safety Representative, or the Occupational Health and Safety Branch at the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety about health and safety violations in the workplace.
- Testified in court about the employer's health and safety violations.

An employer can take disciplinary action because the employee:

- Has done something in contravention with the Act or associated regulations.
- Has done something in contravention with the farm's policies, practices, or procedures.
- Has done something unsafe and put themselves or others at risk.



An example of a disciplinary policy and warning report has been included in the accompanying [workbook](#).

Establishing a Health and Safety Representative

If your farm has five to nine workers, you must have an appointed health and safety representative. This representative cannot be part of the management team and must be selected by their co-workers.

The health and safety representative acts as a 'middleman' through which you and your workers can collaborate on issues related to health and safety in the workplace. The health and safety representative must be provided with time during the workday to fulfill their duties with pay. Farming operations with complex needs may establish a committee if they so choose.

To get your health and safety representative in place, follow these steps:

Explain the role of a health and safety representative to your workers

The health and safety representative brings worker concerns to managers and employers on behalf of all the workers. The role also includes:

- Providing a channel of communication between the employers and workers;
- Conducting regular inspections and talking with workers about their health and safety concerns;
- Participating in reportable incident investigations (both accidents and dangerous occurrences);
- Assisting the employer with the development of safety procedures, policies, and programs; and
- Meeting with the employer regularly to discuss concerns.

Ask your workers to pick someone to be their health and safety representative

The following process may be helpful in choosing a representative:

- Arrange a time to meet with your workers as a group.
- Review the role of a health and safety representative.
- Ask your workers to pick someone who is not a manager or supervisor to fill this role.
- The managers and supervisors should leave the room while the other workers make their choice.
- If a leader does not emerge, the workers can each anonymously write their choice on a piece of paper, which would then get collected and counted.
- If the chosen worker feels uncomfortable taking on this role, allow them to decline and ask the next person.
- Ensure the new health and safety representative understands their role.
- Respond when the health and safety representative come to you with concerns.

(Source: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/business/safety-in-the-workplace/ohc-and-ohs-representative/ohs-representatives>)



The **workbook** provides examples and templates to assist you in appointing a Health and Safety Representative and Rules of Procedure.

Establishing an Occupational Health Committee

Farms with 10 or more workers are required to establish an Occupational Health Committee (OHC). The employer is responsible for establishing and maintaining the committee with employee input, where required.

The function of a committee is to act as an advisory body and work together to improve health and safety in the workplace. The requirements for the committee are like that of a health and safety representative, and include:

- Helping employers identify, eliminate, or control hazards;
- Making recommendations to the employer for improving workplace health and safety;
- Talking with workers about health and safety concerns and helping resolve the concerns;
- Receiving and distributing information, including OHS Branch publications;
- Inspecting the workplace regularly;
- Investigating reportable incidents (meaning accidents and dangerous occurrences);
- Helping establish and promote health and safety programs, policies, and training;
- Investigating refusals to work; and
- Helping employers comply with OHS legislation.

Employer requirements

- Consult and co-operate with the OHC;
- Respond to concerns or recommendations raised by the OHC; and
- Inform the OHC, in writing, of the action(s) they have or will take to correct the hazard(s) or, if the employer has not corrected the hazard(s), the reasons for not acting.



The **workbook** provides examples and templates to assist you in establishing a committee and terms of reference.

TIP

Use the same approach to select committee members as outlined for the representative on the previous page.

TIP

It's important to keep all committee meetings meaningful and engaging. Provide new information at each session and find opportunities to invite in guest speakers who can share industry-specific information. The key is to keep the committee engaged and ensure meetings are time well spent.

Recommendations received by the employer:

When an employer gets a recommendation in writing from the health and safety representative or the Occupational Health Committee, the employer should respond within 21 days. In the response, the employer may either accept the recommendations or give reasons for disagreeing with the recommendation.

If it is not reasonably possible for the employer to give an adequate response within 21 days, they must give a reasonable explanation for the delay within the deadline. In this explanation, they must identify when a response will be provided, then deliver the response as soon as it is available.

Fitness for Duty & Substance Abuse

Farm owners and employers need to ensure family members, workers, contractors, visitors, and suppliers on the farm report to work fit for duty. Developing a policy is a reasonable measure that is required to ensure the health and safety of workers at or near sites and facilities under the Saskatchewan Employment Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020.

The goal of a fitness for duty and substance abuse program is to provide a work environment that is both healthy and comfortable for all its workers. It is recognized that the use of alcohol or drugs may have serious adverse effects on a worker's health, safety, and job performance.

Under human rights laws, use of medical marijuana or cannabis must be accommodated to the point of undue hardship when it's used to treat a "disability." Similarly, drug or alcohol addiction or dependence is also a disability requiring accommodation. A worker's casual use of recreational alcohol, marijuana, or cannabis is not a disability and there's no legal duty to accommodate.

Addiction to drugs or alcohol is a serious health problem. The intent of developing a fitness for duty and substance abuse program is to accomplish the health and safety goal in a manner that is fair, humane, and consistent with workers' accommodation rights under discrimination laws. The goal is not to punish but help workers identify and get help for their substance abuse issues so that they can return to work healthy, safe, happy, and productive.



The **workbook** provides examples and templates to assist you in developing a policy, code of practice and employee assistance program.

Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention

A Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention program may help prevent workplace violence and harassment and support worker's health and safety and take steps reasonable to protect workers from workplace violence and harassment. Part III, Division 3, Section 3-21, and Part 3, Sections 3-25 & 3-26 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 require a plan to be in place to prevent violence and harassment from coming onto the farm and within the farm working environment.

Preventing all forms of workplace hazards including risks of workplace violence and harassment in the form of physical assault, threats, or intimidation, bullying, gestures of a violent nature, harassment or abuse, and any other conduct that might reasonably give a worker cause for fear, insult their dignity, or create a hostile or poisonous work environment. Developing a policy that applies to family members, employees, contractors, suppliers, volunteers, visitors, and clients. It is the expectation that everyone behaves in a professional, respectful manner and work together to prevent workplace violence and harassment.

Workplace violence and harassment can happen not only on the farm, but on off-site locations such as fields, bunk houses, conferences, other farms, social situations related to work or workers' homes if there are real or implied consequences related to the farm. Acts of violence or harassment may occur as a single event or a series of events leading to an incident. There may be an abuse of power or authority. Possibly in the form of sexual harassment where it is perceived that the sexual act in nature is a condition of employment.

The workplace violence and harassment policy and code of practice includes measures and procedures to protect workers from workplace violence and harassment, a means of asking for help, and a process for workers to report incidents or raise concerns. These measures are in place to ensure that a policy and a supporting program are available and maintained and that everyone have the appropriate information and direction to protect them from violence and harassment in the workplace.



The **workbook** provides examples and templates to assist you in developing a policy, code of practice, and employee assistance program.

Communications

When it comes to creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, communication is essential. The Saskatchewan Employment Act, the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 and the policies all set the stage, but alone are ineffective without ongoing open dialogue with all members of your farm team.

Everyone you interact with on your farm will take cues from your leadership, if you make clear by your daily actions that everyone needs to keep safety top-of-mind when engaged in any task on the farm, your employees will follow suit.

This leadership requires regular and consistent conversations about workplace health and safety, making sure your employees are comfortable coming to you with concerns or ideas on how to make the workplace safer. Instead of making health and safety a separate conversation with your team, integrate safety into every team meeting, providing updates on equipment and safety techniques or using this time as an opportunity for safety training through guest speakers or simply watching an online video.

There are some things you are required through regulations to communicate and to provide your employees. The following information must be posted in an area that is easily accessible to your team and a place they visit often (i.e., lunchroom, staff room):

- A current copy of the Act and associated regulations.
- Information and reports recommended by an Occupational Health and Safety Officer.
- Relevant “Codes of Practice”.
- Telephone number(s) to report workplace incidents.
- The farm’s Occupational Health and Safety policy.
- Any order, compliance notice, deviation, etc. issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Branch at the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.
- Names and contact information for Occupational Health Committee or Health and Safety Representative.
- Committee meeting minutes, where one exists.

Refer to the Act and associated regulations to stay current on all the required communication information that must be posted.



A checklist of the above requirements has been included in the [workbook](#)

Additional information as applicable to your farm:

- Location of first-aid supplies.
- Emergency information – civic address & emergency phone numbers.
- Names of gasses stored in portable gas cylinders and signs prohibiting smoking around them.
- A hoist's rated load, visible to the operator.
- Maximum revolutions per minute of an abrasive wheel or grinder.
- Placing "Danger – High Voltage" signage outside electrical rooms.
- Signs identifying confined spaces and any further information required at the time.

Every farm is different. Some farms may not have as frequent contact with their employees as other farms. Determine the best communication approaches for your unique workplace, talk to your team about how they best receive information, and where this information is most easily accessible.

The following diagram showcases some additional ways to keep the communication with employees consistent, open, and ongoing.



TIP/IDEA

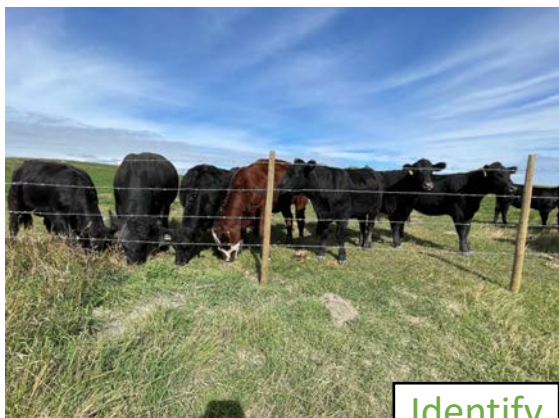
A short meeting (5-10 minutes) at the beginning of each day to discuss the day's task is an excellent method of communication. This will give employees an opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification of responsibilities. Alternatively, some farms host weekly staff meetings and incorporate safety as a regular agenda item.

Section Three:

Identifying Hazards and Knowing the Risks

To Do:

- ☐ Identify the hazards on your farm
- ☐ Develop a hazard identification Program



Identify



Develop

Understanding Farm Hazards

In this section we will go over the importance of identifying the potential hazards on your farm and assessing their risks. After understanding and identifying the risks on your farm, the following section will provide information on how you can control the hazards you've identified to keep everyone safe.

It is well known that farming is a hazardous occupation and that you can't eliminate all hazards and risks, but the important part is identifying those hazards and understanding the risk involved. Once identified you, can work safely around those hazards by implementing the proper controls. Know your farm, know your hazards, and know your controls!

It's impossible for you or your employees to work safely around hazards if they are not acknowledged and managed.

Hazards can cause injury or negatively impact your health or the health of your employees. Identifying hazards is the first step in managing them. There are two types of hazards: health and safety.

Health Hazards

Health hazards – may endanger a worker's physical or mental health. They may take time to show an impact.

Safety Hazards

Safety hazards – could cause bodily injury or property damage. They often have an immediate impact.

Safety Hazards

(Source: Small Business Safety Toolkit, Nova Scotia)

Machine: Includes hazards from moving parts like rotating shafts, belts, pulleys, blades, tractors, and stationary equipment.

Energy: Includes pneumatic or hydraulic pressure, steam, heat, and electricity.

Material Handling: Includes manual and mechanical handling—lifting, lift trucks, conveyors.

Work Practices: Working unsafely, because of either safe work practices not being in place or failure to follow them.

Health Hazards

(Source: Small Business Safety Toolkit, Nova Scotia)

Chemical: Includes any form of chemical, such as compressed gases, sanitizers, fertilizers.

Physical: Includes noise, vibration, heat, cold, and radiation.

Mental or Psychological: psychological and social well-being.

Ergonomic: Includes design of the workplace and jobs that involve repetition, force, and posture (e.g. milking, packing lines).

Biological: Includes organisms or toxic substances produced by living things that can cause illnesses or disease in humans, such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, and insects.

Different tasks and processes on the farm will involve multiple hazard types, you need to look at the big picture and consider all types and factors contributing to hazards.

Five Key Factors Contributing to Creating Hazards

(Source: Small Business Safety Toolkit, Nova Scotia)

There are many contributing factors to creating or increasing the risks of hazards.

People: Action, or lack of action, can create workplace hazards. Knowledge and training are critical to avoid unsafe behaviours. Solid leadership that puts health and safety top-of-mind can help ensure safe work practices and procedures are followed.

Equipment: Tools and machines can be hazardous. Look for unsafe or unhealthy conditions, such as inadequate guarding or barriers; defective tools and equipment; incorrect tools and equipment for the job; or inadequate warning systems.

Materials: Some materials, such as hazardous chemicals, pose a hazard in and of themselves. In other cases, handling materials improperly or using the wrong material for the task can pose a hazard.

Environment: Some hazards are created by the work environment. Look for things like the condition of all work surfaces and walkways; overcrowding; poor ventilation; poor lighting; extreme temperatures or noise; or poor housekeeping.

Process: Process involves a combination of people, equipment, materials, and environment. It includes design, organization, pace, and type of work. By-products created by the process may be hazards, such as heat, noise, dust, vapours, fumes, and scrap materials.

Identifying Hazards

There are several ways to identify the hazards on your farm. All employers are responsible for identifying the hazards that exist at their workplace. A hazard identification program is simply the outline of the process and schedule to be followed on your farm.



Find a template for a hazard identification program within your [workbook](#).

While a formalized hazard identification program may not be required, it is critical to know and identify any potential health and safety issues on your farm to keep everyone safe. There are several methods by which you can identify hazards on your farm. You should pick the options that work best for you.

Identify Hazards through Workplace Inspections

(Source: Small Business Safety Toolkit, Nova Scotia)

Employers, managers, health and safety representatives, occupational health committees, and workers can — and should — participate in workplace inspections. Inspections are one of the most common and effective tools for identifying and correcting hazards before they cause injuries or illnesses.

You can also use inspections to draw attention to and encourage good health and safety practices. Regular workplace inspections are an important part of your overall occupational health and safety system. Inspections let your workers know that you care about workplace safety.

Workplace inspections include both formal inspections and informal inspections.

Also, include inspection schedules and checklists for farm tools, equipment, and vehicles. Checklists act as a proof of completion but also serve as a reminder of what to check. Develop checklists using the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020, manufacturers manuals, and industry best practice. Remember, if an inspection isn't documented, it didn't happen.

Formal inspections are planned, regularly scheduled walkthroughs or examinations of a workplace, selected work areas, or sources of potential hazards, such as machinery, equipment, tools, and work practices. Use an itemized checklist to guide a formal inspection. The primary advantage of formal inspections is that a record is kept, and any hazards identified are documented for action and follow up.

Create a workplace inspection checklist to clarify inspection responsibilities, plan, and control inspection activities, and provide a report of inspection findings. Checklists permit easy, on-the-spot recording of findings and comments. Be careful, however, that your inspection team does not become so intent on filling out the checklist that they miss other hazardous conditions. Use a checklist as a tool, not as an end. Keep the focus on workplace health and safety.

Informal inspections are a conscious awareness of health and safety hazards and controls as people do their daily jobs. They differ from formal inspections in that they do not necessarily rely on a checklist, and they are not regularly scheduled.

Informal inspections can be done for a specific work area or task. They are limited because they are not systematic or focused, but they may spot potential hazards. The advantage of informal inspections is that anyone can do them at any time. Letting your workers know that informal inspections are a part of everyone's daily business gives each worker permission to speak up about hazards.



A sample farm inspection checklist is included in your [workbook](#).

Additional checklists include:

- Ladders (fixed, extension, step, orchard)
- Forklift (propane, electric, diesel)
- General Equipment (use for tractor, skidsteer, bobcat)
- Mobile Platform
- Vehicle

Adapt the checklists to your farm specific worksites, tools, equipment, and vehicles.

Identify Hazards through task analysis

Task analysis is a key method for recognizing potential hazards. It is a structured approach of breaking a task down into steps, looking for hazards at each step, and developing ways to eliminate or control the hazards to prevent injury.

TIP

It is best to involve your workers when doing a task analysis. They are the people most familiar with the tasks. They are most likely to have insight into the tasks that a casual observer may not notice.

A thorough task analysis involves five steps:

1. Select the task to be analysed;
2. Identify the steps involved in that task;
3. Identify and rank potential hazards at each step;
4. Determine how to control the hazards; and
5. Write a safe work practice and/or written work procedure.



For a more detailed look at task analysis – including a closer examination of each step involved – refer to your [workbook](#).

Identify Hazards through Observation

Hazards may be identified through observation by anyone at your workplace. You can think of observation as being aware of your surroundings in the normal course of your day and noticing something out of the ordinary.

Listen to your workers

When a worker raises a concern about something they've observed, attend to it immediately. Determine if there is a hazard and whether controls need to be put in place or improved. Provide your workers with an easy forum to report hazards. A simple report form can be made available for workers to fill out and submit or it could be done verbally.

Workers and others in the workplace should report any hazards immediately. Encourage the reporting of "near misses" as well. If you notice a worker seems uncomfortable or concerned when completing a task, ask them why. Then make sure their concern is heard and acted upon.

Visitors provide a fresh perspective

Sometimes a casual observation by a visitor or another fresh set of eyes can point out something you may not have noticed.

TIP

Identifying hazards on the farm can seem like a large daunting task. You need to break it down into manageable steps.

1. Identify the tasks performed on the farm (e.g., planting, harvesting, milking, welding).
 - a. Perform a task analysis on each task. Start with the more hazardous tasks first.
2. Identify the equipment and products use on the farm.
 - a. Conduct an inspection of the equipment and products to ensure they are safe working condition (according to manufacturer's specifications).
 - b. Identify the task associated with the equipment and products.
 - c. Perform a task analysis on each task. Start with the more hazardous tasks first.

Risk Assessment

Once a hazard has been identified, employers need to assess the hazard by the degree of risk posed to the farm's workers or visitors. This process is typically called a risk assessment. The reason for completing a risk assessment is to help prioritize the order in which you will address these risks. The next section of this guide will help you determine the controls to put in place to protect workers and visitors from these hazards after completing the assessment.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk assessment – process to identify, evaluate and prioritize hazards and risks.

HAZARD

Hazard – any source of potential damage, harm, or adverse health effects.

RISK

Risk – the chance or probability that a person will become harmed or experience an adverse health effect or that potential damage will occur, if exposed to a hazard.

When determining the degree of risk to workers, you must consider the consequence and impact of exposure (e.g., injury or illness) along with the likelihood of occurrence.

The easiest way to conduct a risk assessment is to assign a risk score to the hazard. A risk score can be calculated using the following system:

RISK SCORE = LIKELIHOOD X CONSEQUENCE			
Likelihood		X	Consequence
Remote = 1	May occur only in exceptional circumstances.		Minor = 1 Little profit reduction; injury may require first aid; minor effects on workplace
Possible = 2	Might occur at some time; infrequent recorded incidents.		Moderate = 2 Profit reduction; injuries requiring hospitalization; serious/medium term effects on workplace.
Probable = 3	Likely to occur; regularly recorded incidents.		Major = 3 Profit reduction; serious bodily injury or impairment; serious/ long-term effects on workplace.
Expected = 4	Likely to occur high level of recorded incidents.		Extreme = 4 Serious profit reduction; death or permanent disability; serious/ long-term effects on workplace.

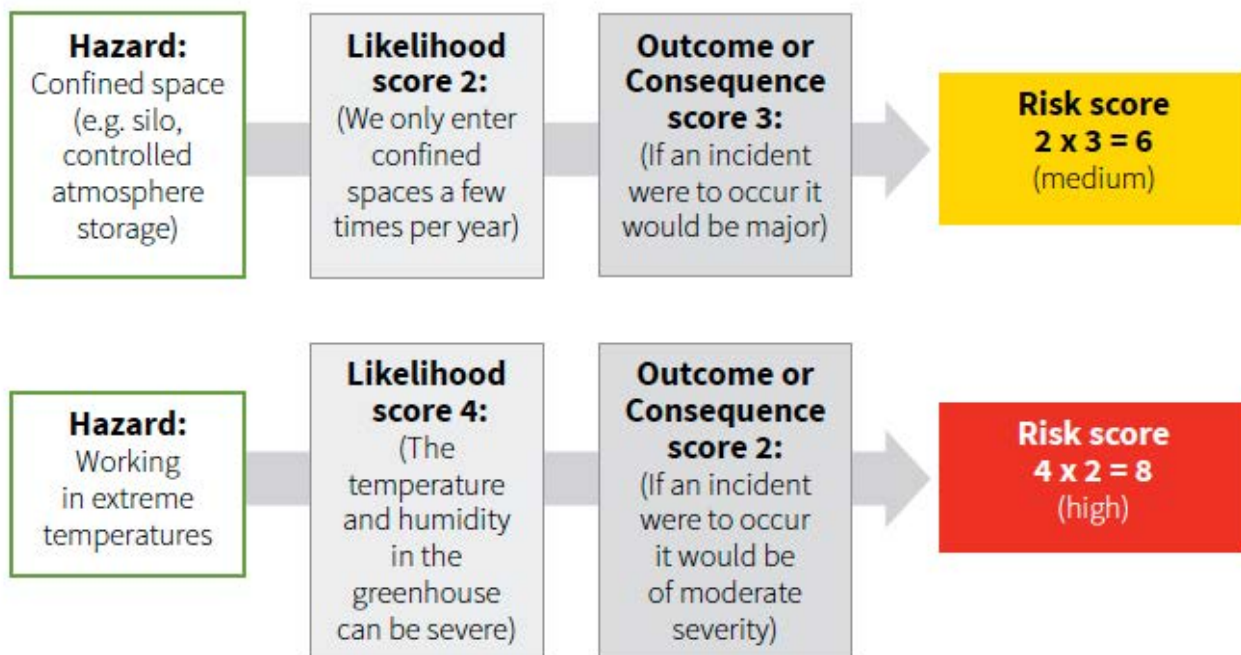
TIP

Ask yourself the following questions when determining likelihood: has this hazard caused an incident before, either on your farm or a neighbour's? How often has it happened? Could a similar incident happen again?

Ask yourself the following questions when determining the consequence: If an incident were to happen, what would be the outcome? Would there be a serious injury or fatality? Would it cause severe damage to equipment or property? If you know of past incidents, how serious was the outcome?

Have a look at your incident records (more on this in section 5) to help you determine the risks associated with the hazards on your farm.

Example assessments



		CONSEQUENCES			
		1 Minor	2 Moderate	3 Major	4 Extreme
LIKELIHOOD	1 Remote	1	2	3	4
	2 Possible	2	4	6	8
	3 Probable	3	6	9	12
	4 Expected	4	8	12	16

Low Risk (1 – 2): They are risks of less significance and should be managed accordingly.

Moderate Risk (3 – 6): These risks are also significant and should be addressed following high risk items.

High Risk (8 – 16): These risks are critical risks requiring immediate attention. They must be treated as high priority.



Refer to your **workbook** to complete your risk assessment.

Section Four:

Controlling the Hazards

To Do:

- ☐ Identify controls required to manage identified hazards.
- ☐ Develop/implement the required controls:
 - ☐ Safe work practices and written work procedures
 - ☐ Training program



Train



Practices

Hazard Control

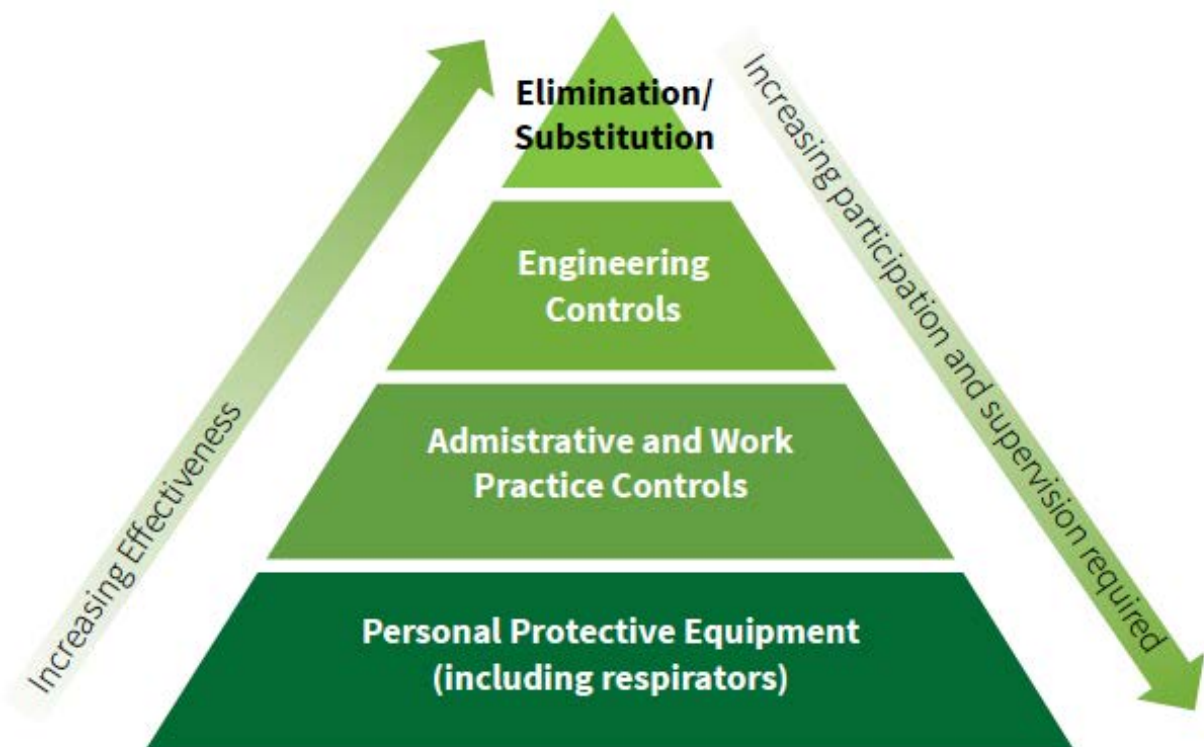
Identifying the hazards and issues that exist on your farm is just the first step. Once these concerns have been identified and prioritized, controls need to be put in place and monitored to keep everyone safe on the farm.

In this section, we'll learn how to eliminate, reduce, and control hazards within the workplace as well as making sure your employees are provided with the appropriate level of training to do their work effectively and safely.

Steps for Hazard Control

1. Eliminate/Substitute
2. Engineer
3. Administrative Controls (e.g., training, safe work practices, supervision, signage)
4. Personal Protective Equipment

Hierarchy of Hazard Controls



When seeking to control the hazards in your workplace, you should explore each of these options in the following order:

Elimination

Ideally, you will be able to eliminate a hazard completely. Examples include removing trip hazards on a floor or safely disposing of unnecessary chemicals.

If you cannot remove a hazard completely, you must reduce the risk of injury as much as possible through the methods below in order of effectiveness.

Substitution

If a hazard cannot be removed, you should substitute with something safer, if possible. This involves replacing something that causes a hazard with something that does not cause a hazard.

Examples include using a less toxic chemical, using smaller containers to reduce the weight of items for manual handling, or using scaffolding instead of ladders to reduce a fall hazard.

Engineering Controls

If you cannot remove a hazard completely or substitute with something safer, you must implement engineering controls to create a physical barrier around the hazard. This involves isolating the hazard or ensuring proper guarding around moving equipment and machinery parts.

Examples include using soundproof barriers to reduce noise levels, using an enclosed booth for spray painting, using remote control systems to operate equipment, installing safety switches, installing guards, or using hoists to move heavy loads.

Administrative Controls

If you cannot remove a hazard completely, substitute with something safer or implement engineering controls to reduce the hazard, you must establish administrative processes to ensure your workers are not exposed to the hazard.

This involves developing safe work procedures, providing worker training and supervision, and using signage and warning labels. Preventative maintenance and housekeeping are also examples of administrative controls – keep your farm tidy, ensure equipment is maintained according to manufacturer specifications. Remember, prevention is key.

Implementing administrative controls can often be a bit challenging on the farm, especially keeping the required records; however, it is critical to develop these controls when a hazard cannot be completely controlled by elimination, substitution, or engineering. There are several different types of administrative controls that can be used. Most often they are used in combination.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the least reliable form of protection and should be the last line of defence. It should be used only as a last resort after you have exhausted all other possible methods of reducing a hazard, or in the short term until you have organized a better and more reliable method of hazard control.

If you require your workers to use PPE, you must ensure that the right type of PPE is selected for the job. You must also ensure that the PPE fits the worker properly and is comfortable under working conditions, that your workers are trained in the need for PPE and how to use and maintain it, and that the PPE is stored in a clean and fully operational condition. Examples of PPE use include gloves to reduce potential hand injuries, respirators, hearing and eye protection, high-visibility clothing, and fall-arrest harnesses when working at heights.



Refer to your [workbook](#) for the following sample codes of practice for respirators, fall protection, and hearing conservation.

Respirators

If using respirators, a respiratory protection program is required. See the [workbook](#) for a sample code of practice, an inspection checklist, and an instruction sheet to help you understand what needs to be inspected on a respirator or mask to ensure it is in the condition for in which it was designed. Remember a respirator must be fit tested and the type for the hazard identified.

Fall Protection

If using fall protection, a fall protection program is required. See the [workbook](#) for sample code of practice, fall arrest checklist, and fall protection plan. Workers should be formally trained in the use of fall protection to understand which type is required for the scope of work while working at heights.

Hearing Conservation

If workers are exposed to noise, then as per Part 8 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020, a hearing conservation program is required. A sample noise protection policy, a hearing conservation plan checklist, and an annual hearing conservation checklist are available in the [workbook](#).

Establishing Safe Work Practices & Written Work Procedures

Safe work practices and written work procedures are terms that are often used interchangeably; however, that is not the case.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES (SWP) AND WRITTEN WORK PROCEDURES (WWP)

Safe work practices (SWP) are a written method of how to perform a job safely, with minimum risk to the people, animals, equipment, and environment. SWP provide general safety precautions, but do not necessarily outline the step-by-step process to be followed. They highlight the do's and don'ts of hazardous tasks.

Written work procedures (WWP) are a step-by-step guide on how to perform a task from start to finish including safety precautions that must be taken while performing the task.

Many farms have standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed for certain tasks. For the purpose of your farm safety plan, you do not need to re-create these procedures but should add a safe work practice section to the existing procedure or refer to the SOP in the SWP.

So, then the question remains, how do you determine whether a safe work practice is required or a written work procedure? Written work procedures are often dictated by regulation. There are several regulations that require written work procedures be developed.

You must also consider the hazard and risks associated with the task and determine which is most appropriate for that task. Higher risk tasks often require more detailed instruction, and therefore a written work procedure. Tasks involving lower risk may simply require a safe work practice. Using the task hazard analysis to develop the SWP/WWP makes the task of writing them much easier.

There are several ways to draft a SWP and a WWP. The most important thing to keep in mind is that it must be in a format that is appropriate for your workers. This may mean using photos to illustrate the steps would be more appropriate than formally writing the procedure.

To develop a safe work practice, use the hazard assessment and/or the task analysis and put the steps identified in the form of do's and don'ts. Describe what to do or what not to do at the various steps.

For example:

Safe Work Practice 1.1 – Changing a flat tire

1. Park the vehicle
 - a. Drive the vehicle off the road to an area clear of traffic, even if it requires rolling on a flat tire. Turn on the emergency flashers to alert passing drivers so they will not hit you.
 - b. Choose a firm, level area so you can jack up the vehicle without it rolling.
 - c. Apply the parking brake, leave transmission in gear or PARK, place blocks in front and back of the wheel diagonally opposite the flat. This will also help prevent the vehicle from rolling.
2. Remove the spare tire and tool kit
 - a. To avoid back strain, turn the spare tire into an upright position in the wheel well. Stand as close to the trunk as possible and slide the spare tire close to your body. Lift the spare tire out of the trunk onto the ground and roll it to the flat tire.

And so on...

Other ways to write safe work practices include:

- using a flow-chart format
- creating a table with column headings of “Task Steps | Potential Hazards | Hazard Controls”
- using photos or pictograms to illustrate the steps (helpful for workers with literacy challenges)
- creating a bulleted list of steps

As you develop your safe work practices, ensure any hazard controls that are repeated throughout are identified early in the document. In the changing tire example, you could include a note at the beginning to advise workers that the activity requires them to use correct lifting, carrying, and handling techniques.

And most importantly ensure your workers are made aware of and trained in the safe work practices.



Reference your **workbook** to develop practices for your operation. Use the existing list and adapt them to the specific conditions on your farm to get you started.

Confined Space Entry

A confined space is an enclosed or partially enclosed space that is not meant for or intended for human occupancy except to perform a task in the space and has restricted means of access and egress. It is best to use an alternative means to perform the work that will not require the high risk of confined space entry.

If there isn't an alternative to perform a task and a worker must enter a confined space a qualified person such as the farm owner, will conduct a hazard assessment specific to the confined space.

Written procedures specifying the means to eliminate or minimize all hazards likely to prevail shall be developed based on the hazard assessment.



Reference your **workbook** for a sample confined space policy, an entry permit, and a rescue plan to adapt to use for the conditions specific to your farm.

Orientation and training

As an employer, it is your obligation to provide instruction and training for your employees. The type of training will depend on your operations and the hazards identified for your farm.

Training in the Act means “to give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject-matter and to require a practical demonstration that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject-matter.”

Some formats of training are ongoing, such as the ongoing review of the farm’s safety practices during team meetings, regular inspections, and hazard assessments.

Other training is specifically regulated (e.g., WHMIS, First Aid, Confined Space). While the regulations specify certain training requirements it does not exclude you from providing other training (e.g., training employee to harvest or operate specific equipment). As the employer, you are responsible to make sure that your employees receive all required training to perform their tasks safely.

There are several supports employers can access to make sure their employees are properly equipped to work safely on the farm.

The [Agriculture Health and Safety Network](#) provides a few opportunities for orientation and safety training support and resources.



Use the Training and Communication Policy example found in the **workbook** to show your commitment to training.

New Employee orientation

While training and orientation is imperative for new employees to the farm for obvious reasons, this training is also a good refresher for all employees. It provides an opportunity to review the day-to-day operation, emergency procedures, an overview of first aid facilities, restricted areas (if any exist), hazard controls and any other applicable health and safety procedures, plans, policies, or programs.

Basic training should cover the content of the farm’s safety plan and must be conducted before the new employee is exposed to any of the assessed hazards on the farm.

The key focus areas for orientation training include:

- Overview of the farm operation.
- The rights and responsibilities of workers.
- Overview of communication process.
- How to safely perform each task.
- Hazard identification and control management.
- Emergency protocol.
- Incident response and reporting.



Use the sample New Worker/Contractor Orientation Checklist found in your **workbook** to introduce your workers to the Farm Safety Plan. This checklist will ensure all components of the program are covered.

On-the-job training is an important aspect of a new employee's orientation. This allows them to job shadow their employer, or another employee, in their designated role to learn how a task is done properly before attempting it, under supervision, themselves. You may have a formal sit-down orientation with a new worker to review the basics of the farm's safety plan, but then on-the-job training will continue with that worker as they are introduced to their tasks.



Use the sample On-the-Job Training Form found in your **workbook** to document this training as it notes the competency level of the worker to indicate if they require more training or if they are competent to work independently.

TIP

It is important to keep a record of all training programs that take place on the farm. Information should include the date, time, specific training program, and participants. Have participants sign the documentation to confirm they received the training and understood what was taught.

Safety Meetings

Safety meetings are an excellent tool to train workers on a specific topic in a short period of time. This is an opportunity to identify one of the high-risk hazards on the hazard assessment and conduct further training to ensure workers understand the controls required to be implemented to mitigate the risk.



See your **workbook** for a sample template to document your safety meeting to include examples of questions to ask to prompt two-way communication and an attendance record to track those who are present at the meeting. You may need to follow up with those who consistently miss meetings.

Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals are an excellent tool to follow up with employees once a year or more often when necessary to check their overall health and safety performance to include near miss reporting, inspection participation, safety meeting attendance, on the job training, competency, and farm safety plan support.



See your **workbook** for a sample performance appraisal template with instruction for managers, supervisors, and workers.

Training Plan



Also, see your **workbook** for a suggested training plan to ensure workers receive the required training for each position on the farm.

Be Careful of Residual Hazards

Whichever method or combination of methods of hazard control you use, you must ensure it does not create a new or different hazard. For example, if you install a ventilation system to resolve an air-quality issue, you need to also ensure that the ventilation system does not create a noise problem.

Similarly, if the hazard requires the use of safety footwear, make sure they fit the worker properly and do not cause a tripping hazard.

(Source: Small Business Toolkit 2:7 and 2:8)

Remain Focused

Establishing a strong workplace health and safety culture on your farm requires constant vigilance and a commitment to open and transparent communication with everyone on the farm. Training and education needs will evolve as team members and equipment change with the seasons.

A farm safety plan is most effective if it is reviewed and adapted periodically to accurately reflect the changes and advancements on your farm. The regulations require a review of the program at least every three years.

Section Five:

Staying Prepared

To Do:

- ☐ Develop incident investigation plan.
- ☐ Develop emergency response Plans
- ☐ Map your farm
- ☐ Complete the farm contact form



If an Incident Occurs

With leadership, ongoing training, and communications, workplace injuries are preventable.

You can establish a strong safety culture within your organization through an understanding of your environment, continual education, and by empowering your employees to not take on any task unless it can be done safely.

The goal of any farm should be to avoid a workplace injury or incident, but if one does occur you need to be prepared to act quickly.

If an incident occurs, do not disturb an accident scene that has resulted in serious injury or death unless it is necessary to:

- Attend to an injured or deceased person;
- Prevent further injuries; or
- Protect property that is endangered because of the accident.

Incident Investigation and Reporting

Incident investigation and reporting should be part of a farm safety plan whereby all incidents are documented, investigated, and follow-up action is taken to prevent similar incidents from reoccurring. Incident reporting is not a blaming process, but a means to identify and correct root causes and address the hazard to reduce the chance of re-occurrence.

Incident investigation involves the following:

1. Emergency response – eliminate any further hazards and respond to injuries.
2. Secure the scene – do not disturb the scene and identify any potential “witnesses” to the incident.
3. Survey the scene – review what happened, talk to “witnesses”
4. Prepare a report – a report of the incident should be documented and include any recommendations for corrective actions.

It is important to determine what types of incidents will be investigated so that everyone is aware. The information gathered should be consistent and documented accordingly.



You will find an example Incident Investigation Policy, near miss, incident and injury reporting procedures, and a report form in the [workbook](#).

Reporting an Accident

An employer is required to report any serious injury or incident that endangers life or causes permanent injury. You must immediately report:

- Fatality
- Serious injury
- Dangerous Occurrences

Call Occupational Health & Safety Branch: 1-800-567-7233

There may also be reporting requirements on incidents to Saskatchewan WCB or your private insurer, depending on your insurance choice. These are separate from the reporting to the Occupational Health and Safety Branch.

Preparing for an Emergency

The top priority is always to prevent an injury or incident from happening, but if one does occur, an injury to an employee or damage to equipment can be mitigated, if addressed quickly.

Being prepared for an emergency is in the best interest of your family, employees, animals, neighbouring farms, and visitors.

Creating an emergency plan will provide your family, employees, neighbours, and visitors with the confidence that you take their safety seriously as well as make sure that the decisions you make under pressure in an emergency have been previously thought-out and reviewed with your team.

1. **Assess Possible Emergency Scenarios:** Prepare a list of all the possible emergency situations that could occur on the farm, i.e., a chemical spill, machinery or livestock injury, a worker collapsing in a confined space, dangerous weather conditions, fires, explosions, etc.
2. **Plan for Action:** Next to each of the items you've listed as possible emergency scenarios, detail a plan for your team to follow to manage the situation including role descriptions. It's important that everyone on staff is trained in each role, so that the job will be carried through no matter who is present in the emergency. Use the sample emergency response plans in the workbook to get you started. Also, use the evacuation log to test each of your emergency response plans to ensure they are effective.
3. **Create a Communications System:** When at all possible, make sure that an employee is not working on a task in isolation of others. If more than one employee cannot be physically present to perform a task, make sure that a two-way radio or cell phone is made available. Check in regularly, both through the communications system and in-person. This system should also put in place for all employees to "check in" if an emergency occurs; this could be a meeting location off of the property or an outside number to call to act as a "roll call".
4. **Identify Resources:** Always make sure first aid supplies are monitored and replaced after use in every work location and vehicle. Remember that your best resource in an emergency is your team which means first aid training and CPR should be offered to all employees. Resources must also include a list of emergency contacts which should be present in multiple locations and routes to the hospital, police station and fire station.



A contact form for you to include emergency numbers, an emergency preparedness policy, and a first aid policy have been inserted in your **workbook**.

Farm Mapping

To have a clear picture of the farm property it can be useful to draw a map of your farm with all buildings. Buildings should be identified as residence, animal housing, storage, machinery, shop, etc. The hazards or important information for emergency responders should be included, such as: location of fuels, chemicals, shutoffs for power, fuels, etc.

It is also useful to map out the surrounding properties which are farmed so that you have a clear idea of how you will respond to an emergency at an off-site location.

This guide previously discussed the importance of ongoing and open communications with everyone on the farm. These conversations must include time to review the emergency preparedness plans on a consistent basis. Make sure everyone is comfortable with the plan, walk through the scenarios, and take part in drill exercises where people take on different assigned roles.

When an emergency occurs, decisions will be made at a rapid pace, adrenaline will be running high. Having gone over the process multiple times on an ongoing basis will give everyone the confidence they need to act quickly and effectively.



Use the sample of emergency response plans to start developing your own as well as use the sample Evacuation Log to test that your emergency response plans are effective in preserving human and material resources on the farm. These can be found in your [workbook](#).

TIP

Not all farm fields and properties have civic numbers or farmland locations such as Barn Quarter = NW-22-31-03-W2. Be sure to note the closest one so that it can be given in case of an emergency.

Make the Commitment

A successful farm safety program begins and ends with everyone on the farm making a real commitment to safety.

The commitment to farm safety requires that you take ownership of the health and safety of yourself, your family, and your employees by taking preventative and ongoing action to prevent incidents.

The best way to do this is through building and communicating awareness of potential hazards and by providing appropriate training to all persons on your farm.

The actions that you take demonstrate the values and ethics in your safe farm culture.

Keep that commitment and keep records of your progress, not only to track your positive trajectory but as proof of due diligence if an incident were to occur. To help you keep going and always keep connected with that commitment, visit, and use the personal assessment tools and safety training record logbook located in your workbook.

Stay focused, stay committed; and most importantly, stay healthy and safe.

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