



Nationwide

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Five Safety Questions Farmers Should Ask Before Harvest

Nationwide Risk Management experts share safety reminders for farmers and their families as they prepare for harvest

It's a dilemma as old as farming itself – is it safe to have children help their parents on the farm? Farming presents very real dangers to children; in fact, more than 30 children get injured every day in ag-related incidents¹. But by taking the time to ask a few important safety questions and take proper precautions, farmers can safely involve the younger members of the family in the harvest.

“Harvest is a busy time on the farm, and accidents can happen in seconds,” said Jason Berkland, associate vice president of Risk Management at Nationwide. “Although safety should always be top of mind, farmers should be extra vigilant with safety when family members, children or less-experienced workers are involved.”

As farmers take to fields to work long hours, Nationwide, the No. 1 farm and ranch insurer in the U.S.², encourages them to ask a few key safety questions to help ensure their farm and family members stay out of harm's way.

1. Are all hazardous areas of the farm controlled? – Grain handling facilities, for example, have flowing grain, spinning PTO shafts, belt conveyors, augers, and other hazards in play during loading or unloading that can pose great risks to unsuspecting individuals. Other dangerous areas, like pesticide storage areas, manure pits, or other confined spaces should be strictly off limits to anyone without the proper knowledge, training, and personal protective equipment.

“Some regions will also need to make room for a large harvest, requiring bins to be completely cleaned beforehand as well as use of untraditional or alternative grain storage,” said Berkland. “Before anyone enters grain bins, it's critical to [assess for all the hazards involved](#) and to take the proper safety precautions, including using lockout/tagout, harnesses and a spotter.”

2. Are roles age appropriate? – When labor is in short supply and kids are eager to take on new tasks, it can be tempting to send a child, adolescent, or teenager to fulfill a role normally taken on by an adult. Before assigning new roles to youth, ensure they have the needed experience, understanding and protective equipment to handle the task safely.

3. Is equipment shut down with keys removed when not in use? – Do not leave equipment running and unattended at any time. Remove keys from all equipment when not in use, lower or de-energize any hydraulics, and use safety stops.

4. Will ride-a-longs be safe? – Consider designating a safe and supervised observation area for youth instead of allowing them to ride with you in equipment. In 2020, 60% of the children injured in agriculture accidents were not participating in the work¹.

5. Are youth not involved in harvest being safe? – With caregiver attention on harvest, ensure that kids old enough to be left at home are being safe. Set expectations, communicate often, and limit temptation by locking up any ATVs, firearms, or other hazards that require adult supervision.

Nationwide's Grain Bin Safety efforts

Nationwide initiated its year-round [Grain Bin Safety advocacy and education program](#) in 2014 to combat accidents and equip fire

departments with the proper safety resources needed to respond to entrapments.

Through the [Nominate Your Fire Department Contest](#) and partnerships with sponsors across the country, Nationwide has awarded life-saving grain rescue tubes and training to 207 fire departments across 30 states, including 55 rescue tubes in 2021. The 2022 Nominate Your Fire Department Contest will open for nominations on January 1, 2022.

At least five workers have been rescued using the equipment and training provided through the program.

For more educational materials or to learn more about Nationwide's Grain Bin Safety advocacy initiative, visit thinkgrainbinsafety.com.

<https://news.nationwide.com/en-us/five-safety-questions-farmers-should-ask-before-harvest/>