

In this issue of the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Listserv – October 14, 2020

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1. Mitigate Hazards Associated with Harvest

Agriculture is among the most hazardous industries according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Harvest is an intense time due to the quantity of work to be accomplished and the time frame in which it must be done. That urgency, often leading to fatigue and inattentiveness, can result in an increased incidence of injury. Maintaining awareness of and avoiding potential hazards is key to avoiding injury. Here are a few harvest time safety tips to consider:

- Read operator's manuals prior to equipment use and be sure all operators are familiar with and properly trained in safe use.
- Install and use safety devices such as Slow-Moving Vehicle signs and seat belts. Have roll-over-protective devices fitted on tractors.
- Keep all equipment/machinery guards in place. Wait until all mechanisms have stopped moving and have been secured from restarting before attempting to service/unclog.
- Take breaks and get enough sleep. Fatigue, stress, medication, alcohol, and drugs cause lack of focus on tasks. Stay hydrated to maintain awareness.
- To reduce fall hazards, use grab bars when mounting and dismounting machinery, and wear non-slip footwear.

Working safely helps avoid injuries so you can get the job done.

Resources

- EHS **Ag Safety** SOPs <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/ag-safety>
 - **Harvest Safety** https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-harvest_safety.pdf
 - **Tractor Safety** <https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-tractor.pdf>
- 10 Harvest Safety Tips to Prevent Accidents On The Farm (with links to a number of farm safety resources) <https://www.ruralmutual.com/resource/farm/harvest-safety-tips/>

- Your Harvest Safety Checklist <https://www.cenex.com/about/cenex-information/cenexperts-blog-page/safety-tips/Harvest-Safety-Checklist>
- Mihalovic-Bayer, Dawn. "Harvest safety tips for farmers." *Mayo Clinic Health System*, 18 Sept. 2015, <https://mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/harvest-safety-tips-for-farmers>
- OSHA Quick Card "Protecting Farmworkers from Tractor and Harvester Hazards" (English/Spanish) <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3706.pdf>
- OSHA Quick Card "Backing Up Farm Vehicles and Equipment Safety" (English/Spanish) <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3733.pdf>

2. On the Road – Driver Safety for ALL During Harvest Time

Being 'stuck' behind a slow-moving vehicle can be aggravating for drivers. Motorists need to be more cautious and patient when traveling around farm trucks, tractors, combines and other implements.

Most farm equipment is designed to travel about 15-25 mph. Farm equipment is often wider than other vehicles and sometimes wider than the lane. Extra room must be allowed when traveling near an implement on the road. For the sake of farmers and the motoring public:

- **Don't assume the farmer knows you are there.** Implements are very loud so farmers may not hear your vehicle approaching. Farmers mostly look ahead to stay on the road and to see oncoming traffic.
- **Pass with extreme caution.** Be sure before passing you can clearly see ahead for the whole passing path. Never pass in a "No Passing Zone" or if you are within 100 feet of any intersection, bridge, railroad crossing, etc.
- **When a farm vehicle pulls to the right side of the road it does not mean it is turning right or allowing you to pass.** Due to the size of the equipment, the farmer must execute a wide left turn. Be alert to see if there is a turn into a driveway or field.
- **Be patient.** Don't assume the farmer can move aside to let you pass. Shoulders may be soft, wet, or steep. The farmer understands you are being delayed and will move aside when/if it is safe to do so.
- **Think of the slow moving vehicle sign as a warning to adjust your speed.** When you see this emblem, you should immediately slow down. While the emblems are visible from quite a distance, it can be difficult to judge how quickly you are closing in on the equipment.
- **Pay attention.** Always focus on the drive not your phone, eating, conversations or anything else! Lack of focus increases the chance of a collision, especially with a slow-moving farm vehicle.

Resources

- Harvest Safety (on the roads)
<https://www.kansashighwaypatrol.org/423/Harvest-Safety>

3. Eye Injury Prevention – You Only Get One Set

While October is recognized in the United States as Eye Injury Prevention Month, protecting your eyes from potential hazards should occur year around. According to the Prevent Blindness organization, more than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. Up to 20 percent of work-related eye injuries cause temporary or permanent vision loss. The good news is that 90 percent of eye injuries are preventable with use of appropriate safety eyewear. Review the Prevent Blindness Workplace Safety Quiz and answers to see if you know as much about eye injury prevention as you think you do!

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides an Eye and Face Protection eTool that guides the user through selection of the appropriate safety eyewear, considering the hazards present (e.g., impact, dust, chemical, optical radiation, heat).

General tips to promote eye safety include:

- Safety eyewear must be marked with "ANSI Z87" and worn at all times whenever eye hazards are present.
- Workers should know where the nearest eyewash station is at their job site and how to use it.
- The correct style of safety eyewear must be based on the hazards present. For example, goggles are needed when there is risk of chemical splash to the eyes. Safety glasses are not an appropriate choice for this type of hazard.
- Employees should have regular eye exams to make sure their vision is adequate to do their jobs safely.
- Standard prescription eyewear is not a substitute for safety eyewear. However, prescription eyewear can be designed to also serve as safety eyewear. Consult your supervisor if you have a need for prescription safety eyewear.

Protect your eyes...you only get one set!

Resources

- Prevent Blindness America "Workplace Safety Quiz"
http://preventblindness.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/MK32_WorkSafetyQuiz_1.pdf

- OSHA Eye and Face Protection eTool
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/eyeandface/index.html>
- EHS SOP Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – Eyes and Face
https://ehs.unl.edu/sop/s-PPE_eyes-face.pdf
- American Academy of Ophthalmology “Preventing Workplace Eye Injuries”
<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-work>
- Occupational Health & Safety “Tips: Workplace Eye Safety”
<https://ohsonline.com/articles/2008/03/tips-workplace-eye-safety.aspx>
- ALL ABOUT VISION “Eye safety basics”
<https://www.allaboutvision.com/safety/eye-safety-basics.htm>
- Awareness Days “Eye Injury Prevention Month 2020”
<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/eye-injury-prevention-month-2020/>

4. Biosafety & Biosecurity Month

The American Biological Safety Association (ABSA) promotes biosafety every October and encourages all institutions conducting biological research to participate to reinforce biosafety and biosecurity awareness among faculty, staff and researchers. This year, the UNL EHS Biosafety Team is encouraging all researchers on campus working with biological materials to “**Remember Your ‘P’s’**”, the Practices and Proper PPE to use to keep you safe.

The practices you should always observe are: 1) Properly disinfect your work area; 2) Practice good personal hygiene; 3) Wear proper lab attire; and 4) Keep your IBC protocol current. Proper PPE includes a lab coat, eye protection, gloves and face covering (as mandated by current UNL COVID-19 Health Guidance).

Remember that biosafety starts with you! Remember your “P’s” and keep you and your coworkers safe! #biosafety_biosecuritymonth. Contact EHS with any questions or comments 402.472.4925 or ehs@unl.edu.

Feel free to reproduce the following poster and share:

ABSA
INTERNATIONAL

N ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH AND SAFETY
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

OCTOBER 2020

Biosafety and Biosecurity Month

REMEMBER YOUR "P'S"

Practices



Properly disinfect
your work area



Practice good
personal hygiene



Wear **Proper** lab
attire



Keep IBC **Protocols**
current

Proper PPE



Lab coat



Eye Protection



Gloves



Face covering*

**As mandated by UNL Health Guidance*

BIOSAFETY STARTS WITH YOU!

#biosafety_biosecuritymonth
UNIVERSITY of NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

Contact EHS for questions or comments:
Environmental Health & Safety
402.472.4925

5. You Need a Helmet for Horseback Riding

Some UNL workers ride horses to accomplish their job tasks, mainly to herd cattle. While riding horses can be helpful and often exhilarating, it provides unique hazards to a rider, particularly if the rider is without a riding helmet.

Each year, 70,000 people are treated in emergency rooms because of horse-related activities. Wearing a riding helmet would reduce all riding-related head injuries by an estimated 50% and severe head injuries by 30%. Wearing a riding helmet greatly improves rider safety as 60% of horse-related deaths are caused by head injuries.

UNL workers who ride horses for their jobs may think they do not need riding helmets because they are experienced riders, or because their work activities are not as high risk as horse race jockeys or show jumpers. However, a horse-related injury may happen to any rider, experienced or not experienced. Only about 20% of horse-related injuries occur with jumping. Horses are notoriously unpredictable. Even a well-trained horse may unexpectedly “spook” resulting in the rider losing control.

There are different varieties of riding helmet available. Here are a few items riders need to be mindful of when choosing the right riding helmet:

- The helmets should be designed specifically for riding horses. Bicycle helmets should not be used in place of riding helmets because bike helmets are designed for a fall from a bike seat, not for a fall from a horse. Most falls from a bike affect the top of the head and the impact is forward. A fall from a horse is from a higher height and the impact to the head could be in any direction.
- Riding helmets should be certified by ASTM (American Society for Testing and Material) or SEI (Safety Equipment Institute). A seal attesting to certification can be found inside the helmet.
- A helmet should fit a rider snugly, without any space between the foam padding and the rider’s head.
- Care should be taken that the helmet is not positioned too high or too low on the head. Make sure the front rim of the helmet is about an inch above the rider’s eyebrows, and the back of the helmet does not touch the top of the rider’s neck.
- Side straps should make a “V shape” directly under the rider’s ears.
- The chin strap should be centered under the rider’s chin with no more than one or two fingers space between the chin and the strap.
- Check the helmet for damage before each use. Replace the helmet if damage is noted and when it was impacted from a fall even if there is no visible damage.

More comprehensive information for proper selection and wearing of a helmet for rider safety while on horseback can be found in the resources provided.

Resources

- CDC Heads Up “Equestrian Helmet Safety”
https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/helmets/headsup_helmetfactsheet_equestrian_508.pdf
- University of Connecticut “Riding Helmet Safety”
<http://animalscience.uconn.edu/equine/helmet-safety.php#:~:text=The%20American%20Medical%20Equestrian%20Association,cumulative%20damage%20to%20the%20brain>
- Utah State University 4H and Youth “Helmets, Head and Health for Horse Enthusiasts”
<https://extension.usu.edu/equine/files-ou/Helmets-Heads-and-Health-for-Horse-Enthusiasts.pdf>

6. Safety Shorts – Horseback Riding Safety for ALL Levels

This series features links to short safety resource(s) each month. Provided this month are resources related to horseback riding safety. Experienced riders sometimes become complacent and safe practices should be periodically reviewed.

- **Horseback Riding Safety Check** (NC State 4-H Horse Program, 33:48 minutes) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGdBr_S1m_I
- **Concussions: Signs, Symptoms, and Helmet Safety** (US Equestrian, 10:13 minutes) <https://www.usef.org/learning-center/videos/concussions-signs-symptoms-helmet-safety>

NOTE: Resources are provided for informational purposes only. Publication does not in any way endorse a particular company or product or affect current UNL policies and procedures.

7. Situational Preparedness – Roadway Safety & Covid-19

Situational preparedness is so important that we will be looking at various aspects over time, as well as providing resources to assist you to “be prepared” for whatever situations you may encounter at UNL.

Nearly 40,000 lives are lost on the roads each year. Our focus has been and continues to be reduction in roadway injuries and fatalities. Now, more than ever we need to make our streets safer so first responders and healthcare workers can remain focused on treating and containing the virus. People are acting quickly, decisively and collectively around the issues of safety. Roadway safety should be part of this. While currently, fewer people may be driving,

driving safely has become a form of civic responsibility to avoid overburdening our healthcare system by redirecting resources to preventable crashes.

For the Road to Zero Coalition (<https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/get-involved/road-to-zero>), managed by the National Safety Council, the actions and discussions taking place at the local, state and national levels demonstrate that we can change the way people use and think about transportation to create systemic changes and reduce fatalities and injuries. A report by this group emphasizes three main initiatives to reduce roadway fatalities:

- Double down on what works through proven, evidence-based strategies
- Advance life-saving technology in vehicles and infrastructure
- Prioritize safety by creating a positive safety culture

In time, we can realize the goal of zero roadway deaths if we have the will to make necessary changes.

Resources

- *Focus on the Drive Newsletter*. (n.d.). NSC (National Safety Council) Summer 2020. Retrieved September 4, 2020, from https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/tools-resources/newsletters/focus-on-the-drive?utm_campaign=COM%20382672&utm_medium=email&hsmi=89536070&hsenc=p2ANqtz-9SNZVYRweu3gb4yuOadRKb-dbpDmFQ154aimHyyHWi13iXfQGlngbiQeVBdq2isSMgRN_geVnKW3CY1XkYUQ-bw4eq&utm_content=89536070&utm_source=hs_email#Covid
- Join Road to Zero Webinars <https://www.nsc.org/road-safety/get-involved/road-to-zero/events>

8. EHS Needs Your Feedback...

...on our service. Environmental Health and Safety is committed to excellent customer service and offers a *Customer Satisfaction Survey* as an easy method for the campus community to provide feedback on our services and staff. By taking a few moments to complete the survey (<https://ehs.unl.edu/survey>), you will be helping us to identify areas where we might need to focus our attention.

In order to effectively evaluate potential areas for improvement, please provide specific information or examples and your name and contact information. The Director, Brenda Osthus, follows up on all submissions. We greatly appreciate your participation.

Please feel free to contact Brenda Osthus, EHS Director, at 402.472.4927 or bosthus1@unl.edu if you would rather communicate outside the parameters of this survey.

Remember...SAFETY IS AN ATTITUDE!

Environmental Health and Safety

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