

WORKING AT HEIGHTS ON THE FARM

PHOTO CREDIT: ALBERTA WHEAT

INTRODUCTION

Every year we hear about someone that falls from a bin, a ladder or a roof that gets injured. Unfortunately, falls usually result in serious injuries and the affected worker can end up in the hospital for days or suffer from long term injuries into the future.

Fall management programs help to provide workers with awareness regarding how the job can be performed safely at heights. The fall protection program will also aid the worker to assess the potential hazards, what equipment might be needed and how to perform the job task in a safe manner. The program will assist farm managers to understand the basic requirements for training that should be provided to all workers on the farm.



Here are the steps to QuickStart your: **WORKING AT HEIGHTS PROGRAM**

STEPS FOR FALL MANAGEMENT

STEP 1

Identify job tasks to be performed at heights

Evaluate areas around the farm where jobs performed could cause a farm worker to fall greater than 10 feet (3 metres). Examples might include changing lights in the barn, working from ladders, working around openings in the floor of the barn, changing roofing materials, performing maintenance on equipment mounted on the sides and tops of facilities. Think about job tasks that will require the worker to work at heights for an extended period of time.

List the job tasks in a table and identify the potential hazards and concerns that may be associated with the job to be worked on. By listing the jobs and hazards, you will have a document that the farm can refer to over time.

Design a Plan

Design a plan for performing the work at heights in a safe manner. There are six key elements for the farm fall protection plan.

STEP 2

1. Identify all the hazards for the job.
2. What type of fall protection will be required?
3. Where will the fall protection equipment be anchored?
4. How will the full protective equipment be assembled, disassembled, inspected and maintained?
5. If the farm worker falls, identify how they will be protected from hitting structures or the ground below?
6. If a worker falls, how will they be rescued?

Document the plan on a form that is prepared before the job is started.

STEP 3

Training

Train all farm workers that perform work at heights.

With the evaluation of the work that is considered “work at heights”, identify the farm workers that will be expected to perform those job tasks. Farm workers that perform work at heights will need to have specialized training that includes procedures to assemble, maintain, inspect, use and disassemble the fall protection system or systems in use. Any of the farm workers that will be expected to rescue another worker who has fallen must be trained in rescue procedures.

SUMMARY


Your fall protection program will help to raise awareness about your safety concerns for all work performed at heights. You have the power to customize your program to meet the specific needs of your farm operation. Grow your program as your operation changes and consider improvements for training, equipment and facilities that enhance your pathway to a safe work plan.

LET IT GROW FEED THE PROGRAM

Your farm-based fall protection program will grow over time as your farm changes and you setup new facilities or buy new equipment. You will likely find that you will consider how to protect your farm workers as you make new purchases. Here are some ideas to grow your program:

1. Identify your fall protection champion. Whether the farm owner or an experienced farm worker, pick someone that will be well trained and can manage the farm fall protection program. This will help keep your program right-sized to your operation.
2. Maintain your equipment. Fall protection equipment should not be stored in the cab of the tractor, or behind the seat of the pickup. Small nicks, tears and even poor cleanliness of the equipment could cause failure when needed. Plan a space for storing fall protection gear so that it is in excellent condition when you go to find it.
3. Complete formal hazard assessments for specific work environments where fall protection equipment is required. By having a well thought out plan you will be better equipped to start work at heights with a full understanding of the hazards ahead of you.

EXAMPLE



Farm Fall Protection Plan			
Farm Location Where Work Will Be Performed: <i>Main bin yard</i>			
FALL HAZARDS <small>Identify all existing & potential fall hazards associated with the work site</small>			
<i>Fall from opening bin lids, positioning augers, fixing roof leaks, checking bin levels, probing, climbing ladders for inspections</i>			
FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS TO BE USED <small>Identify the fall protection systems to be used at the work site to protect workers from the fall hazard (e.g. travel restraint, personal fall arrest system, safety net, control zone, etc)</small>			
<i>If work is to be longer than 5 minutes must use fall harness / tie off</i>			
ANCHORS TO BE USED DURING THE WORK <small>Identify the anchors, both engineered and improvised, that workers are to use</small>			
<i>use identified anchors on the ladder system and at the bin lid</i>			
CLEARANCE DISTANCE(S) TO BE CONFIRMED <small>Clearance distances must be sufficient to prevent a worker from striking the ground, an object, or level below the area</small>			
<i>Only 3' lanyards are to be used to prevent contact with ground</i>			
PROCEDURES <small>Identify detailed procedures to assemble, inspect, use, maintain & dismantle the fall protection system identified above</small>			
<i>inspect all fall arrest equipment before use to check for damage, inspect tie off points for damage</i>			
RESCUE PLAN <small>Describe the procedures that will be followed if a worker falls and needs to be rescued</small>			
<i>We will use the loader and attached man cage to position next to fallen worker, rescue workers will assist fallen worker into the basket and lower to ground</i>			
<small>This fall protection plan was developed by:</small>			
Name:	<i>John Smith</i>	Signature:	<i>John Smith</i>
Date:	<i>01.12.XXXX</i>		
<small>Farm Workers signing this form acknowledge that they have reviewed and understand this fall protection plan.</small>			
Date	Print Name	Signature	Trained in the safe use of fall protection Equipment?
<i>01.12.XXXX</i>	<i>Peter Strong</i>	<i>Peter Strong</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
<i>01.12.XXXX</i>	<i>Jim Watcher</i>	<i>Jim Watcher</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
			<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO





BE SURE TO VISIT

www.AgSafeAB.ca

FOR MORE INFORMATION

AgSafe AB Resources

Our AgSafe website contains a lot of information for you to use. Here are some examples of information that you can download.

- Hazard Management Training for the Farm Worker
- Fatigue Management on the Farm
- Emergency Response Planning QuickStart
- Risk Management System Information
- Formal Task Hazard Assessment Templates



RESOURCES

AgSafe Alberta – www.agsafeab.ca Alberta OH&S Regulations - https://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-LEG_ohsc_p09.pdf

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Bulletin – Fall Protection Plan - <http://work.alberta.ca/documents/WHS-PUB-gs010.pdf>

FORMS

Fall Protection Plan Form

Formal Hazard Assessment Form

Hazard ID Form

Emergency Response Plan Form



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Disclaimer – These documents have been designed to assist the farm with a quick introduction to safety at the farm gate. To comply with legislation, farm management will need to evaluate legislation in your local jurisdiction and seek the advice of a safety professional to help you meet regulatory requirements that apply to your specific farming operation.