

# Harvest Safety

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During its broadcast period in the 1980s, a sergeant on the NBC television show Hill Street Blues (for those of you under about 35 years of age, look it up, it was a great show) would tell the officers under his command “Stay safe out there” or “Let’s be careful out there”, prior to beginning their daily patrols. Those same statements apply to producers here in the Midwest as we are moving into one of the most exciting times of the year for many -- fall harvest. It’s the time in the crop cycle where all the hard work expended begins to show tangible results. Unfortunately, it’s also the period of time when a large segment of the injuries and death in the agricultural community occur.

This is a phase of heavy utilization for multiple types of equipment. Combines, grain carts, semi-trucks and trailers are either already in the fields and on the roads or will be shortly. Most, for many hours per day. Grain bins are another item whose daily use will peak during this period.

The equipment I referenced above is typically involved in a significant portion of farm related accidents. Most producers with whom I am acquainted know or knew some who have been injured or killed in a farming accident. It is a risk that comes with the occupation and one that deserves discussion for the purpose of helping others be mindful of perils of their jobs during this time of year.

Based upon data obtained from the International Labor Association, over half of the 335,000 workplace accidents worldwide occur in agriculture. Additionally, information from the cdc.org website also states there were 20.7 deaths per 100,000 agricultural workers during the 2017 calendar year.

Experience is not necessarily a predictor of safety as it pertains to farming. The Health and Safety Authority website (hsa.ie) cites farmers greater than 65 years of age as accounting for 43% of total agricultural deaths during the 2010 through 2019 timeframe. Additionally, those on the other end of the age spectrum are subject to injury or death while participating in agricultural activities. Based upon the marshfieldresearch.org data, there were 28.21 deaths per 100,000 workers between the ages of 15 and 17 in this job segment.

Outside of agriculturally focused television and radio programs, podcasts, internet and magazine articles, the volume of risk to those participating in agricultural is seldom discussed or referenced. Farmers and Ranchers work diligently every day to ensure we have the food and fiber this country and the entire world needs. This is a great opportunity to say THANK YOU for what you do, and please “stay safe out there”.



Have a

SAFE & BOUNTIFUL

Harvest Season!