

A person is operating a combine harvester in a field. The harvester is yellow and red, and the person is wearing a blue shirt and dark pants. The background shows a clear blue sky and some trees.

Employment of Youth in Agriculture

*The Law, Training Programs, and
Tasks Classified as Hazardous*

**Helping Farmers, Ranchers,
Youth and Educators
Comply with the Law**

For more information visit: www.agsafety4youth.info

Work Opportunities in Agriculture for Youth under the Age of 16

Youth ages 14 and 15 can be employed in agriculture for work not classified as hazardous, as long as the work does not interfere with school and appropriate wages are paid. Some of the tasks youth are allowed to perform on a farm or ranch include:

- Hand pruning Christmas trees
- Mowing lawns
- Picking berries
- Milking cows
- Feeding hogs or chickens
- Operating a tractor/garden tractor 20 PTO horsepower or under
- Working on a transplanter
- Loading hay bales on a wagon
- Unloading hay bales onto an elevator
- Carpentry
- Painting machinery
- Trimming and pruning hedges, vines, etc.
- Handling irrigation pipes
- Harvesting or curing tobacco
- Fueling tractors and maintaining machinery
- Riding a horse
- Setting posts and repairing fences

Some tasks are particularly hazardous for youth and either cannot be performed by youth under the age of 16 without special training or cannot be performed at all.

For more information on age-appropriate tasks not specifically identified above, check out the resources available from the National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Safety and Health at: (<http://research.marshfieldclinic.org/children/>).



Agricultural Work Classified as Hazardous for Youth

The Agricultural Hazardous Occupation Orders (AgHOs) are an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which established safety and health standards for child labor in agriculture. The AgHOs identify specific types of farm and ranch work that have been classified as particularly hazardous for children below the age of 16. The different categories of hazardous work are identified in the poster portion of this brochure. Employers found hiring youth to perform these tasks can be fined. The AgHOs provide an exemption for youth ages 14 and 15 who wish to be certified to perform certain hazardous work by successfully completing an approved training program. General content of the training and the specific prerequisites for youth seeking certification are outlined in the AgHOs.

Youth who complete the AgHOs-required certification training on the safe operation of tractors and machinery are allowed to perform all of the tasks identified by items one and two in the poster portion of this brochure.

The other types of hazardous work identified in the poster cannot be performed for hire until age 16. Although allowable at age 16, some of the tasks are considered so hazardous that they should not be attempted without specialized training and adequate supervision.

All states must comply with the federal requirements set forth in the AgHOs, but some states have youth employment laws that are even more restrictive. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Service or visit <http://www.agsafety4youth.info> for more information.

Exemption

The AgHOs do not apply to any youth under the age of 16 who is employed by his/her parent or guardian on a farm owned or operated by the parent or guardian.



Training Requirements and Programs

Under the AgHOs, three avenues are approved for youth ages 14 and 15 to become certified to perform certain hazardous jobs in agricultural production. They are:

1. Student-learner programs — require enrollment in a vocational training program in agriculture and a written agreement concerning the nature of the work to be performed and safety training received.
2. 4-H/Extension programs — require enrollment as a 4-H member, at least 14 years of age, and familiarity with normal working hazards in agriculture.
3. Agricultural education programs — require enrollment in an agricultural education class, at least 14 years of age, and familiarity with normal working hazards in agriculture.

Presently, however, many eligible youth do not have access to these programs. In some cases, the training offered does not meet the specific training requirements of the AgHOs.

In 2000, USDA/CSREES established the Hazardous Occupations Safety Training in Agriculture Program (HOSTA) to support the development of new training resources and delivery strategies in order to ensure broader access to the required training on a national basis. Currently, the program is supporting curriculum development projects at The Pennsylvania State University and Purdue University. A national AgHOs certification clearinghouse is located at Purdue University. The new materials being developed will provide greatly enhanced resources for training and will include delivery methods designed for traditional instructional settings, interactive Web-based and CDROM-based instruction, and learners needing more visually based instruction.

For more information on these efforts, visit the national Web site at <http://www.agsafety4youth.info>, call 1-866-276-1049, or send e-mail to: agsafety4youth@ydae.purdue.edu

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1. TRACTOR - Operating a tractor of over 20 PTO horsepower, or connecting an implement or any of its parts to or disconnecting it from such a tractor.

2. GENERAL MACHINERY - Operating or assisting to operate (including starting, stopping, adjusting, feeding, or any other activity involving physical contact associated with the operation) any of the following machines: corn picker, cotton picker, grain combine, hay mower, forage harvester, hay baler, potato digger, mobile pea viner, feed grinder, crop dryer, forage blower, auger conveyor, the unloading mechanism of a nongravity-type self-unloading wagon or trailer, power post-hole digger, power post driver, or nonwalking rotary tiller.

3. SPECIALIZED MACHINERY - Operating or assisting to operate (including starting, stopping, adjusting, feeding, or any other activity involving physical contact associated with the operation) any of the following machines: trencher or earthmoving equipment; fork lift; potato combine; or power-driven circular, band, or chain saw.

4. LIVESTOCK - Working on a farm in a yard, pen, or stall occupied by a bull, boar, or stud horse maintained for breeding purposes; a sow with suckling pigs; or cow with newborn calf (with umbilical cord present).

5. WOODLOT - Felling, bucking, skidding, loading, or unloading timber with a butt diameter of more than 6 inches.

6. LADDER and SCAFFOLD - Working from a ladder or scaffold (painting, repairing, or building structures, pruning trees, picking fruit, etc.) at a height of over 20 feet.

7. TRANSPORT - Driving a bus, truck, or automobile when transporting passengers, or riding on a tractor as a passenger or helper.

8. TOXIC ATMOSPHERE - Working inside fruit, forage, or grain storage designed to retain an oxygen deficient or toxic atmosphere; an upright silo within two weeks after silage has been added or when a top unloading device is in operating position; a manure pit; or a horizontal silo while operating a tractor for packing purposes.

9. CHEMICALS - Handling or applying (including cleaning or decontaminating equipment, disposal or return of empty containers, or serving as a flagman for aircraft applying) agricultural chemicals classified under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 U.S.C. 135 et seq.) as Category I of toxicity identified by the word "poison" and the "skull and crossbones" on the label or as Category II of toxicity, identified by the word "warning" on the label.

10. BLASTING - Handling or using a blasting agent, including but not limited to, dynamite, black powder, sensitized ammonium nitrate, blasting caps, and primer cord.

11. FERTILIZERS - Transporting, transferring, or applying anhydrous ammonia.



AGRICULTURAL WORK CLASSIFIED AS HAZARDOUS

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