

The Season of Danger is Here!

This is harvest! Farmers are heading to their fields with huge combines and powerful tractors pulling grain wagons. This is a very dangerous time of year in farm country and there is that ever present danger of serious injury or death among agricultural workers.

According to the National Safety Council in Itasca, Illinois, nearly 800 fatal injuries occur on U.S. farms and ranches each year. Many of these incidents happen during the harvest season, as farmers work long hours getting their crops from field to market. Most of these incidents are preventable.

Harvest could be safer for farmers if they would follow these simple guidelines:

- Get plenty of rest before and during these long work days.
- Eat hearty, well-balanced meals to keep up your stamina.
- Always let family members know where you will be harvesting each day.
- Carry a cell phone or 2-way radio for use during an emergency.
- Conduct an extensive farm machinery safety walk-around before operating the machinery.
- Carry a fire extinguisher, field fires are relatively common.
- Wear hearing protection around noisy farm equipment.
- Make sure warning lights are functioning on equipment operating on public highways.
- Never fuel a tractor in an enclosed building or when the engine is hot.
- Use extra caution when transporting machinery over railroad crossings.
- Never carry extra-riders on farm tractors and machinery.
- Never crawl under a raised combine header that has not been protected from falling.

Final thought: Machines do not have brains or a heart. They don't know the difference between a corn stalk and a human leg. You need to use your head to protect your body!