



CRASH! BOOM! SMASH!

WE NO LONGER WANT TO HEAR THESE SINISTER COMIC BOOK CAPTIONS IN REAL LIFE. SO, LET'S WRITE A DIFFERENT STORY, ABOUT PREVENTING ACCIDENTS AT WORK IN AGRICULTURE.

SOLVING BIG PROBLEMS WITH SMALL SOLUTIONS

Safety at work is not just about following rules. It can become **a daily habit.**

Adopting a few simple precautions can make a big difference, like keeping your workplace tidy, being alert and promptly reporting any potential hazards and avoiding distractions.

These small and easy solutions can help prevent big problems down the line. Before starting work, always be mindful and pause for a quick hazard check:

-  Make sure the workplace is free of any obstacles and safe.
-  Check the condition and functioning of equipment and tools.
-  Check that personal protective equipment is available and put it on properly.

Regardless of their tasks, agricultural workers have a **shared responsibility** to provide a safe environment. You must take care of yourself, because by protecting your own safety you can also protect the safety of your fellow workers.



HAZARD AWARENESS AND ALERTNESS

Agriculture is one of the work sectors most exposed to risks and accidents.

The most common accidents are caused by **tractor rollovers**, **falls from height**, incorrect use of work tools, such as electric shears, and exposure to **chemical and biological agents**.

WHAT TO DO?

1

Be alert and pick up on any small signs. The most frequent accidents are caused by tractors without rollover protection systems (roll bars and seat belts), defective tools and the lack or misuse of personal protective equipment.

2

Take prompt action to remedy any hazardous situation.

3

Always report near misses to reduce the possibility of recurring accidents with a less fortunate outcome.

PROTECTION UNITES US

Collective protective equipment (CPE) is designed to make the workplace safe and employers are required to provide adequate training to ensure that all workers can learn about and use CPE correctly.

Examples of CPE are storing flammable materials in suitable locations and strategically placing fire extinguishers to protect against the risk of fire, installing guards and physical barriers to protect against moving mechanical parts on shredding, cutting and chipping machines, marking safe pathways and keeping passageways clear. A safe workplace must also provide suitable sanitary facilities (showers, eye wash stations), safety cabinets for chemicals and for the correct storage of plant protection products, and ventilation and extraction systems for indoor spaces (warehouses, silos, stables). Finally, adequate lighting and signage should also be installed (especially in loading and unloading areas), as well as safety systems for working at height, such as lifting baskets and other elevating work platforms (EWPs).



Workers are the first beneficiaries of appropriate preventive measures and protective equipment, and are also the first to suffer the consequences of any safety shortcomings, which is why you must always **report any unsafe conditions** to your employer.

SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as protective work clothing, gloves and suitable respiratory masks, are not accessories. Using them correctly protects you against impacts, splinters, cuts and dust.

Always make sure you put on your PPE properly, because an unadjusted harness on a basket or unsuitable gloves can in fact become more dangerous than useful.

Agricultural workers can contribute to their own safety by checking for **signs of wear and tear** and the **expiry dates** of PPE, as well as by following the instructions provided during mandatory company workplace safety training.



PREVENTION BY ANY MEANS

In agriculture, loss of control of machinery is one of the most frequent causes of accidents. These are not accidental incidents. Machinery can **overturn** on sloping and unstable ground or due to load imbalance.

These, however, are only indirect causes and the absence of preventive devices, such as **roll bars** and **seat belts**, can lead to accidents like crushing, or worse. Simply observing the lay of the land, however, is not enough and fatal accidents can be avoided by using the right safety equipment.

Another risk associated with agricultural machinery is **burns**. Some vehicle parts can reach very high temperatures and must therefore be protected from contact, particularly those used as handholds for climbing up and down.

Similarly, **moving mechanical** parts must also be adequately guarded to ensure that workers do not accidentally come into contact with them.

Finally, **regular maintenance** of agricultural machinery is a crucial procedure for accident prevention.



CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Chemical hazards in agriculture consist of the misuse or careless handling of plant protection products and pesticides, among other substances, resulting in **skin contact, inhalation or ingestion** and posing a health risk. The consequences can range from mild disorders (skin irritation, headaches) to more serious symptoms (breathing difficulties, loss of consciousness), and cause permanent damage, sometimes even leading to death.

Health risks can be minimised by adopting appropriate behaviour at every stage, from purchase to transport, storage to preparation, use to disposal. An example of practical precaution is not to transfer hazardous products to containers lacking a label with the name of the substance contained in them. Moreover, anyone handling plant protection products must have a plant protection licence.



Biological hazards consist of coming into contact with microorganisms and parasites that can cause **infections, allergies or poisoning**.

Agricultural activities in general, and involving contact with animals or animal materials, expose workers to a high possibility of contact with biological agents.

Employers must provide prevention and protection measures, such as compulsory vaccinations (e.g. tetanus), emergency procedures to protect staff in the event of accidents or suspected exposure, and, finally, adequate protective clothing.

ABOUT SAFETY

Doing the same job day in, day out, over long periods of time, can make you complacent and repetitive work can eventually make you lower your level of attention. This complacent attitude is the cause of many accidents because you come to underestimate the real risks and neglect using safety procedures and personal protective equipment.

Keep in mind that **self-confidence** must never replace caution and **safety at work**.



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