

TAILGATE TOPIC



TOPIC: Fertilizer Safety

OVERVIEW: There are different types of fertilizer used in farming operations that come in different containers, in different forms and can be applied differently. Fertilizers are chemicals that can cause harm to employees in the workplace. Are you familiar with the precautions to take when handling fertilizers? Are you prepared to handle an emergency?

TALKING POINTS:

- Only trained employees are allowed to handle and apply fertilizers in the workplace.
 - Employees must be trained on proper procedures for handling and applying fertilizer, see your worker protection program.
 - Employees must be knowledgeable of the hazards presented by each fertilizer in the workplace. See your Hazard Communication program for more detailed information.
 - All fertilizers must have the material safety data sheet (MSDS) available for employees. In addition, the chemical label contains valuable safety information to review before use of any fertilizer in the workplace.
 - Equipment and/or machinery used to handle fertilizers (such as pumps/tanks used for anhydrous ammonia) should be inspected before each use to ensure they are in good working condition. Worn hoses, bad connections and other defects need to be repaired before use.
 - Proper personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn when handling fertilizers. PPE may include face shield and safety glasses, chemical goggles, respirator, apron, gloves, and spats. See the chemical label for requirements.
- In cases of accidental chemical contact with fertilizers; rinse the affected area for 15 minutes minimum, dial 911, and seek medical attention (call 911).
 - Ensure emergency plans, procedures and communication has been established in case of chemical release (for example, anhydrous ammonia tank leak).
 - Have a reliable means of communication available (i.e., cell phone, two way radio). Check to make sure it works in all parts of the field. Keep extra batteries on hand.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. Who can handle fertilizers in the workplace? (Answer: Only trained employees.)
2. Where can you get information on the fertilizers you are working with? (Answer: the Hazard Communication Program)
3. Do all fertilizers require a MSDS? (Answer: Yes)
4. How often do you have to inspect equipment that uses fertilizer? (Answer: Before each use)
5. Where can you find out what PPE is required to handle fertilizers? (Answer: the chemical label, the MSDS)

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