

Alcohol, Drugs and Safety

Thousands of farm accidents occur every year as a result of drug and alcohol use. Employees who abuse drugs and alcohol are:

- hurt on the job more often;
- more likely to injure co-workers;
- more likely to be absent or late; and
- less productive.

Drug and alcohol use costs employers millions of dollars a year.

TRUE STORY

A tractor operator drank a few beers during lunch. At the time, he was also taking cold medicine, but he didn't read the medication's instructions that advised against using power equipment or machinery. While driving to the orchard, he hit a field worker who sustained multiple fractures to both legs.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Never operate equipment, or even attempt to work, after drinking alcohol.
- Never mix alcohol and prescription drugs.
- Read the instructions when taking prescriptions.

Drugs, Alcohol and Work Do Not Mix

Operating power equipment, such as tractors, and working on ladders or elevated surfaces, while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, can lead to severe and sometimes fatal accidents. Employees under the influence of drugs or alcohol lack alertness and do not make sound decisions.

Rule No. 1 for any farm operation

No employee shall report to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

When taking prescription drugs or over-the-counter drugs, follow the instructions on the label. Check whether it's safe to operate power equipment while medicated.

Warning: Alcohol does not quench thirst, but dehydrates the body. Drinking beer at lunch will not replenish your bodily fluids, and it can impair your ability to work safely.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Educate employees on company policy regarding the use and possession of drugs and alcohol.
- Enforce rules pertaining to drugs and alcohol.
- Ensure that all employees work in a drug-free environment.
- Investigate any suspicion of drug or alcohol use at work.

Employee:

- Never possess illegal drugs or alcohol at work.
- Never work while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Alert a supervisor if others possess, or appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol--or if you're taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs.

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com**[®]