

## Irrigation Safety

Irrigators perform many potentially hazardous tasks. Their failure to follow safe practices can cause a wide range of injuries. Examples include dermatitis (rashes), heat- and cold-related problems, strains and sprains, broken bones, and insect and animal bites.

### How to Prevent Irrigation Injuries

#### All irrigators must:

- Follow company safety rules at all times, and receive safety training.
- Dress appropriately to avoid extreme temperature-related problems, such as heat stroke, heat exhaustion, and frostbite. Wear proper footwear and keep feet as dry as possible.
- Move sprinkler pipe with care, particularly to prevent it from coming into contact with overhead power lines. Always maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance.
- Drive all terrain vehicles (ATVs) at safe speeds when traveling to work sites.
- Avoid riding on tractors and pipe trailers unless the vehicle is equipped to carry passengers.
- Follow proper techniques to shovel mud and dirt, and lift pipe, to avoid back injury. Move only one sprinkler line at a time. Complete warm-up exercises beforehand, especially in colder weather.
- Ensure that pumps are off before disassembling mainline and sprinkler pipes. This prevents injuries from pressurized lines.
- Enlist at least one co-worker to help lift mainline.
- Avoid horseplay at all times.
- Avoid jumping ditches and canals whenever possible. Only walk through shallow ditches when wearing proper footwear, and when using a shovel for stability. Use walk-over platforms to cross deeper, wider ditches.
- Avoid swimming in water in ditches and canals. It's often cold and swift, making swimming dangerous.
- Watch for snakes and spiders in valve boxes, pipe joints, and other hiding places. Get prompt medical treatment for any bites.
- Avoid drinking irrigation water. It may be treated with hazardous pesticides or fertilizers, making it unsafe to drink.

## EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

### Employer:

- Develop and enforce rules for all workers, including irrigators and tractor drivers.
- Provide initial training to irrigators, and conduct seasonal review of safety policies and procedures.
- Note dangerous situations, such as work sites with overhead power lines, and follow appropriate procedures to prevent injury.
- Make transportation available to take workers to job sites as necessary. Instruct them to avoid riding on tractors and pipe trailers, unless the vehicle is equipped to carry passengers.

### Employee:

- Follow all safety rules and procedures.
- Avoid working too quickly and taking short cuts that increase your risk of injury.
- Report any unsafe actions or conditions to a supervisor.

Zenith provides workplace safety resources at: **TheZenith.com**<sup>®</sup>