

Portable Auger Safety

Agricultural augers come with many different operating characteristics. That's why it's especially important to read the operating instructions before using any type of auger. Anyone who uses or works around a portable auger must be trained in its proper use.

TRUE STORY

An employee was operating a portable auger at a rice drying and storage plant. He left the auger running while cleaning it. He inspected the auger's receiving bin and noticed the safety gates were loose and out of place. Grabbing the gates with his right hand, he tried to force the gates into place when his hand slipped and his index and middle finger made contact with the rotating auger. His fingers were amputated. Hearing his cry for help, a co-worker arrived quickly, stopped the machine, administered first-aid and drove the injured employee to the hospital. The fingers were too badly mangled for the doctors to surgically reattach them.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Never perform auger maintenance while it's running. Always use a lockout/tagout method to ensure the machine will not start accidentally.

Safety Tips In Handling Augers

- Prior to starting up an auger:
- Check that the work area is clean and free of debris and tools that might cause accidental tripping and falling. Secure footing prevents auger accidents.
- Inspect the auger to ensure it's anchored properly and in good repair.
- Arrange for a worker to monitor the auger operation, and be alert to unusual vibration, noise, and loose fasteners.
- When servicing or adjusting augers, always shut down and lockout/ tagout your power source to prevent accidental start-up.
- When transporting augers, make sure the auger is empty and in the down position. Never transport the auger at high speed.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Develop rules for proper operation and maintenance of augers, including procedures for locking out and tagging out auger drives and power sources.

- Supervise auger operators continually.
- Instruct employees in the proper procedures for auger inspection, transportation and placement.

Employee:

- Understand the different operating characteristics of each agricultural auger.
- Keep all safety shield devices in place. Never modify or remove any safety features of the auger, and never use attachments unless specifically authorized by the auger manufacturer.
- Keep all unauthorized personnel away from the operating zones.
- Transport and move empty augers in the down position, checking constantly for overhead obstructions and electrical wires.
- Never allow anyone to ride on the auger when it's in transit.
- Wear protective clothing and personal safety devices issued by your supervisor.
- Inspect your equipment thoroughly before starting.
- Stay away from the auger operating drive lines.
- Keep hands, feet, hair and clothing away from moving parts.
- Report all unsafe conditions and equipment damage to your supervisor immediately.

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