

Preventing Slips and Falls

Falls are the second leading cause of accidental death in the United States. They include slips or trips, or falls from heights such as ladders. Falls can often be prevented.

TRUE STORY

A cotton-picker driver suffered severe knee and ankle injuries when he jumped from the ladder of his picker instead of climbing down. He fell when his foot hit a dirt clod as he landed on the rough ground. His injured knee required two surgeries, preventing him from returning to work that season.

What could have prevented this accident?

- Never jump from equipment. Climb down.

How Does It Happen?

Here are some of the most common causes of serious injury from falls on a farm:

- Jumping from trucks, tractors, harvest equipment, or other agricultural implements, instead of using ladders or steps.
- Jumping off ladders, building roofs, hay bales, etc.
- Standing on forklift forks, pipe trailers, or machinery, where standing is not intended.
- Running through storage yards, fields, and buildings.
- Jumping over ditches and canals.
- Tripping or slipping on fruit, dirt clods, weeds, wire, cuttings, etc.
- Poor housekeeping.

Take safety precautions to prevent slip, trip and fall injuries. For example, build footbridges to cross canals, and make sure they are securely in place. Do not remove them.

EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employer:

- Encourage employees to report hazards to you, and take corrective action, including providing safety equipment, additional training, and improving housekeeping.

- Discipline employees who violate your safety policy. Document all violations.
- Provide adequate lighting, particularly in packing sheds, shops, and during night operations in the field.
- Contact your local Zenith office and ask for our Safety and Health Ag Specialists if you have questions.

Employee:

- Notify a supervisor of any hazard.
- Wear proper footwear when working around agricultural equipment. Tennis shoes or open-toed shoes are not acceptable footwear.
- Keep walkways, stairs, and steps (including equipment steps) clean and clear of obstacles.
- Ask a supervisor if you're unsure about your job assignment or have a safety concern.

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