

Working at Night

Employees in the agricultural industry are sometimes required to work at night due to the harvest schedule or other operational needs, e.g. irrigation. Additional hazards for employees are often created in these situations and need to be proactively addressed to prevent injury. There are some simple things you can do to prepare for working at night that will assist in creating a safe work environment.

PLANNING

It is critical to plan in advance for nighttime hazards so you will be prepared when an issue arises. Develop a written plan and procedures for employees working at night, which should address, at a minimum, the following:

- Review the worksite and the task to determine specific equipment needed to work safely at night. This may include flashlights, headlamps, batteries and extension cords. Reflective vests and bright colored or white clothing should be worn when working at night.
- Prior to the beginning of the shift, have a team meeting to review the scope of work.
- Notify management and security that you will be working at night.
- Check the weather forecast for potential weather concerns.
- Notify your neighbors or other affected parties that you will be working at night so you do not startle or scare them.
- If employees are working alone, there are additional safety concerns. Ensure employees

have a working communication device (cell phone, radio, etc.), and that there are procedures for employees to check in. A "Buddy System" is one way to ensure communication takes place.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Safe work practices and procedures, along with a plan to control any hazards employees may face, should be established for night time work to ensure employees are able to work safely. There are several things to consider when establishing your procedures, including:

- Be knowledgeable about the nocturnal habits of animals and other creatures in the area where you are working such as skunks, snakes, spiders, etc.
- Check for pesticide application in adjacent fields and the area around where the work will be performed. At night you may not notice warning signage on your neighboring property.
- Ensure lighting is sufficient for employees to work safely and perform the task at hand. Lighting should be appropriately equipped for the location, such as ground fault circuit interruption protection (GFCI) for outdoor locations.
- Inspect the lighting, including any equipment lighting, that will be used before the shift begins to ensure it is adequate working properly.
- Keep extra bulbs on hand.

- Employee(s) should be prepared and work safely. If they need assistance with lighting, they should prepare for the task by asking for help in advance.
- Employees should be well rested to prevent fatigue. Ensure they have adequate breaks and water.

TRAINING

Employees should be trained so they are prepared to work safely at night. All training should be documented. Consider the following training for employees who work at night:

- Train employees on proper procedures for working at night, including the safe work practices and controls you have established.
- Train employees on heat illness procedures and ensure first aid/CPR trained employees are on site. It is always a good idea to be prepared for emergency situations and any unique hazards that may occur at night.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Ensure employees are prepared to work safely and know what to do in an emergency situation that might occur at night. The following emergency situations should be part of your nighttime emergency procedures:

- Responding to an emergency that takes place at night can create challenges for emergency responders. Be prepared for these challenges and provide them information they need.
- Develop procedures for escorting emergency responders to injured employees in remote areas by using flags, flashlights or other visual aids.

- When calling 911, employees should be instructed to remain calm.
- The caller should provide their name, location (know the closest cross streets), nature of the emergency and where they can be reached.
- Injured employee(s) should not be moved unless there is an imminent danger, otherwise wait for emergency responders.
- For employees working alone at night it is critical to maintain check in procedures should an emergency arise and an employee cannot help themselves.

EQUIPMENT/MATERIALS

The following is a basic list of supplies to assist employees who work at night:

- Lighting, such as flood lights
- Cell phone/radio
- Safety cones, flags, flashlights
- Reflective safety vest
- Emergency numbers (posted at worksite and in vehicles)
- Medical kit

For additional information or assistance, contact your Zenith Safety and Health consultant.

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

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