

## Remote Farm Accidents

### KEY POINTS

- Develop a work site map on which can be designated where, and during what times, individuals will be working.
- Establish a check-in procedure for workers in remote areas.
- Contact the emergency providers who will be responding to your farm. Provide them with a site plan to aid in their response.
- If at all possible, the victim should not be moved until professional emergency responders arrive.
- Have a number of people on the farm trained in CPR and emergency first aid.

Every year many farm individuals die, or their injuries are aggravated, after a farm accident because they either were not located promptly, or the first individuals to arrive on the scene were not prepared to help them.

Farming, by its very nature, requires that individuals must often work alone in remote areas of the farm. Unless planning has occurred to establish check-in times and work locations, the potential for tragedy increases.

A few precautions can significantly reduce this risk.

- Give consideration to, and develop, a “what if” plan. This can be an all-inclusive project which can involve the whole family and cover a wide range of potential emergencies: fire, flood, earthquake, as well as farm work Injuries, such as tractor roll-over, machine or Power take-off (PTO) entanglement, electrocution, confined space entry (lack of oxygen/poison gas situations).
- Develop a work site map on which can be designated where, and during what times, individuals will be working. A farm site map with an erasable Mylar cover works quite well.
- If working alone, establish a check-in procedure with your base or with other workers. This can consist of a planned radio check or a physical location check, if applicable. Some companies that have remote job sites are experimenting with emergency beepers that can be activated if a worker gets into trouble.
- Contact the emergency providers who will be responding to your farm. Provide them with a site plan to aid in their response; review the nature of your operations and specialized equipment with them. Four-wheel drive vehicles, extrication equipment, hydraulic jacks, and air bags often prove to be necessary in farm equipment accidents. Is your local emergency response team properly trained and equipped to deal with farm emergencies?

Post your local emergency numbers to expedite the call for emergency response.

- If you are the caller, stay calm and talk in clear and concise fashion; let the emergency dispatcher be

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the first to hang up.

- Describe the nature of the accident, how many victims, type of equipment involved (if an entanglement).
- Give the location in terms of recognized crossroads and/or identifiable addresses. Arrange to have a vehicle with emergency flashers on at the access road to the field.
- Note any special access requirements, such as four-wheel drive for a muddy field or other extraordinary circumstances.

Guide the responders to the site of the accident and offer any other assistance, as needed.

All the aforementioned preparedness items may be useless if the initial responders to the accident scene are not prepared to render life-saving cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) or emergency first aid.

If breathing and blood circulation stop, life itself can quickly slip away. Restoring the victim's breathing and circulation are the paramount concerns, in combination with recognizing additional life-threatening situations (e.g. fuel leaks, etc.).

If at all possible, the victim should not be moved until a professional emergency response team arrives.

It is both positive and pro-active to have a number of people on the farm trained in CPR and emergency first aid. Classes to learn these lifesaving techniques are available in all communities, through charitable organizations such as the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association. Local fire and police agencies may also provide training, all at reasonable cost.

Following these guidelines can be a farm accident victim's best chance for survival and/or minimizing injury. Because of the rural nature of most farm work areas, plans and procedures are necessary to assure rapid detection of a serious work injury, enable quick notification of emergency response team, and aid their arrival at the scene with the appropriate equipment.

By working together with your local emergency agencies, your neighbors, family members, and farm employees, you can assure the best chance of survival and recovery for farm accident victims.