

# Harvest safety: Tips to save a life

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Harvest is a farmer's busiest time of the year and unfortunately one of the most dangerous. Fatigue and stress often lead to shortcuts and unsafe practices during this time. It is essential to take breaks, slow down, follow safe practices, and ensure everyone on the farm is trained to do the task at hand.

## **Safety Tips at Harvest:**

- Develop a “safety first” approach with family members and workers. Follow safe practices and set good examples for others.
- Train workers/family members on the safe operation of harvesting equipment.
- Before moving a piece of machinery, do a walk around check to ensure no one is near the equipment and warn anyone in the immediate area that the machinery will be moving.
- Keep bystanders away from high traffic areas in the farmyard.
- Inspect equipment and ensure everything is in good working condition.
- Stay alert and take breaks! Get out of the cab and walk around every few hours.
- Do not allow extra riders on equipment. One Seat, One Rider!
- Clear plugged equipment after the power is turned off and keys removed.
- Never mount or dismount moving equipment.
- Avoid climbing/reaching into combine hopper unless engine and augers are stopped.
- Never trust hydraulic systems when working under a machine. Always use a safety prop if you must work under a header or other heavy machinery.
- Never step over a rotating power take-off.
- Watch for overhead power lines.
- Ensure a working alone plan is in place.

## **Harvest Inspections:**

- Ensure PTO shields and guards are in place.
- Ensure guards and shields are in place on all equipment.
- Ensure equipment has proper signage, reflectors, and lighting.
- Ensure first aid kits/fire extinguishers are stocked/full and in good working condition.
- Keep equipment platforms clean and free of tools and objects to avoid slips or falls.
- Wear high visibility vests in high traffic areas on the farm.

## **Children at Harvest:**

- Keep children away from busy areas of the farm.
- Keep children away from grain bins, grain carts, and farm machinery.
- Supervise children at all times and have a designated play area.

## **Preventing Fires on Farm Equipment:**

- Have operational fire extinguishers mounted on equipment and everyone trained to use them. (recommended to have one in cab and one accessible from ground)
- Ensure bearings and drives are lubricated and adjust tension as needed.
- Check exposed wiring for damage, wear, deterioration.
- Remove crop residue, dust, debris, and excess lubricant around all heat sources.
- Take safety precautions when refueling equipment.
- During the day walk around machinery and watch, listen, and smell to check everything is in good working order.
- Have a shovel accessible on farm equipment for fires.

This is from MAFRI's SAFE Farms program. Email [SafeFarms@gov.mb.ca](mailto:SafeFarms@gov.mb.ca) or visit [safemanitoba.com/farms](http://safemanitoba.com/farms)