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# Safety Training for New Employees

 by Libby Eiholzer

Dairy farms are getting pretty good at providing annual safety training, which is an important part of maintaining and creating a positive culture around farm safety. But what about new employees? Farm employers can't assume that employees will know how to avoid all the safety hazards that they might encounter on the farm. People who have never worked on a farm, or in any case have never worked on *your* farm, will need to be trained on the safety hazards unique to their new place of work. This must be done before the employees are exposed to dangers in the workplace. Here are a few simple ways to get new employees started off on the right foot.

1. Share your farm's **safety expectations**. This can be as simple as 1-2 sentences that set an expectation. *"It is important for our employees to work safely both to protect himself/herself and to protect others"* or *"We want everyone to go home safe and healthy at the end of every day."*
2. Share the **top 5 safety concerns** for the new employee's job. This will vary between jobs, but you could create a few different lists for employees depending on their work areas (i.e. barn versus field crews). Go ahead and fill this out below!

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Safety Risk	How to avoid it...
<i>Example: PTO drive lines</i>	<i>Never work around unshielded PTO's. Don't step over a PTO. Don't wear loose fitting clothing around equipment. Let manager know about any unshielded or damaged PTO shields.</i>
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2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	


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3. Point out any safety posters on the farm and discuss why the material is important. This is a great way to have a more informal training and encourage conversation. NYCAMH has many posters available in English and in Spanish on their website, with topics like Animal Handling, Tractor & Skid Steer Safety- <https://www.nycamh.org/resources/posters.php>. They are available for download, but you can also call NYCAMH and request that they send you printed posters- these are large and durable, great for the farm.
4. Show employees the location of **personal protective equipment (PPE)** that they may need as well as first aid equipment and emergency phone numbers.
5. Encourage employees to **communicate about safety concerns** and instruct them to tell the owner/supervisor immediately if they hurt themselves on the job. Explain how Worker's Compensation works and the process for filing a claim.
6. **Document!** While it might not feel like what you think of as "safety training," taking the time to cover the material above is teaching your employee about safety. Write it down and save a copy in your safety training records.

These materials are part of the *Onboarding Template*, designed to help farm employers develop a plan for creating safe, productive and engaged employees from day one. View the Onboarding Template and other materials at <https://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/onboarding/>.



"There's a mindset that precision agronomy is only for large Midwest farms when in fact this is what will keep us all profitable. Understanding where the small details that we control lie will keep us moving forward."

- Bob Pawlowski, Zennyl Farm,  
Verona, NY



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