Farm Safety
Contrary to the popular image of fresh air and peaceful surroundings, a farm is not a hazard-free work setting. Every year, thousands of farm workers are injured and hundreds more die in farming accidents. According to the National Safety Council, agriculture is the most hazardous industry in the nation.

Health and Safety Hazards on Farms
Farm workers—including farm families and migrant workers—are exposed to hazards such as the following:
• Chemicals/Pesticides
• Cold
• Dust
• Electricity
• Grain bins
• Hand tools
• Highway traffic
• Lifting
• Livestock handling
• Machinery/Equipment
• Manure pits
• Mud
• Noise
• Ponds
• Silos
• Slips/Trips/Falls
• Sun/Heat
• Toxic gases
• Tractors
• Wells

How You Can Improve Farm Safety
You can start by increasing your awareness of farming hazards and making a conscious effort to prepare for emergency situations including fires, vehicle accidents, electrical shocks from equipment and wires, and chemical exposures. Be especially alert to hazards that may affect children and the elderly. Minimize hazards by carefully selecting the products you buy to ensure that you provide good tools and equipment. Always use seat belts when operating tractors, and establish and maintain good housekeeping practices. Here are some other steps you can take to reduce illnesses and injuries on the farm:
• Read and follow instructions in equipment operator’s manuals and on product labels.
• Inspect equipment routinely for problems that may cause accidents.
• Discuss safety hazards and emergency procedures with your workers.
• Install approved rollover protective structures, protective enclosures, or protective frames on tractors.
• Make sure that guards on farm equipment are replaced after maintenance.
• Review and follow instructions in material safety data sheets (MSDSs) and on labels that come with chemical products and communicate information on these hazards to your workers.
• Take precautions to prevent entrapment and suffocation caused by unstable surfaces of grain storage bins, silos, or hoppers. Never “walk the grain.”
• Be aware that methane gas, carbon dioxide, ammonia, and hydrogen sulfide can form in unventilated grain silos and manure pits and can suffocate or poison workers or explode.
• Take advantage of safety equipment, such as bypass starter covers, power take-off master shields, and slow-moving vehicle emblems.

The Benefits of Improved Safety and Health Practices
Better safety and health practices reduce worker fatalities, injuries, and illnesses as well as associated costs such as workers’ compensation insurance premiums, lost production, and medical expenses. A safer and more healthful workplace improves morale and productivity.

Additional Information on Safety and Health
For more information about farm safety, visit OSHA’s website at www.osha.gov/SLTC/agriculturalopera

tions, the National Safety Council at www.nsc.org/farmsafe/facts.htm, the Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov/pesticides/safety/workers/workers.htm, and the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/nasd/menu/topic/topic.html. In addition, OSHA has a variety of materials and tools available elsewhere on its website at www.osha.gov.

OSHA Publications
OSHA has an extensive publications program. For a listing of free or sales items, visit OSHA’s website at www.osha.gov/pls/publications/pubindex.list or contact the OSHA Publications Office, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, N-3101, Washington, DC 20210. Telephone (202) 693-1888 or fax to (202) 693-2498.

Contacting OSHA
To report an emergency, file a complaint or seek OSHA advice, assistance or products, call (800) 321-OSHA or contact your nearest OSHA regional or area office.