



# NEWSLETTER

Monday October 1st, 2018

## CANNABIS LEGALIZATION ON THE HORIZON



On October 17, 2018, recreational cannabis will be legalized by the [Cannabis Act](#). What will the legalization of cannabis mean for Canadian employers? Though illegal, remember that employers have been dealing with the implications of cannabis, alcohol, cocaine, opioid and amphetamine use for years. However, the use of medical cannabis has been increasing and it is expected that recreational cannabis is also expected to increase as it becomes more available and socially accepted.

With the legalization of cannabis, employers may need to address some of the impacts on the workplace: including:

- Safety concerns
- Alcohol and drug policies
- Testing practices
- Problematic drug use or dependence
- Defining cannabis impairment
- Accommodating medical cannabis use

To prepare for the upcoming legalization of cannabis use, farm and ranch managers may want to consider the following recommendations:

1. Deliver training to all employees that educates on your farm's substance use policy.
2. Ensure employees are clear on the when and why of cannabis testing policies and practices.
3. Clearly define cannabis impairment, what fit for duty means, and the farm management's as well as employees' role in enforcing and supporting safety in the workplace – especially in safety-sensitive workplaces such as a farm or ranch.
4. Train all managers on how to monitor and manage employees' fitness to work with respect to cannabis use.
5. Provide all employees general information on cannabis, including its various strains, levels of THC in products, effects of different ingestion methods (such as smoking versus eating), and dangers of dependence to facilitate understanding of potential impacts on functioning, impairment risks, and legal implications.

[Cannabis Information from Health Canada](#)

[Cannabis Legalization in Alberta](#)

[Penalties for Drug Impaired Driving](#)

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## FARM & RANCH SAFETY TIP: MANAGING STRESS

A day in the life of a farmer can include stresses such as the markets, consumer demand, insects, diseases, weather, learning new equipment and technology. Add on top of this, looking out at the crop in the field, snow coming down and rain in the forecast. This leads to an incredible amount of stress that can be difficult to manage. Overpowering stress can produce long-term effects, anxiety, heart attacks and damage to personal relationships. Experts offer these management tips:

- First and foremost, make sure you're getting enough sleep. Once you get 10 hours behind on your normal sleep routine, your body will react just like you have a 0.08 blood-alcohol level, affecting your reaction time, judgement and making you irritable.
- Take time to restore your mind and body. A couple of times a day or when you're feeling strained, take five minutes to shut down the combine, get out, and stretch.
- Reach out for support when you're feeling bad. Talk to your spouse, friends, consultants or other trusted advisers and let them know what your concerns are.
- Exercise releases the brain chemical serotonin, which assists with stress relief.
- Meditate, pray, do yoga or whatever brings you peace and forces you to relax. This reduces stress-related hormones.
- The companionship of your spouse, a friend or pets can also be very helpful in reducing stress hormones.

Mental Health Hotline Call 1-877-303-2642  
[mymentalhealth.ca](http://mymentalhealth.ca)

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# SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

Short stories from producers who have been injured in a farming incident

## Tractor Runover

It just takes  
half a second



Tim was haying when he was run over by his tractor, putting him in the hospital and on a long road to recovery. After his incident, the 67 year old life long farmer wants to caution people of all ages and operating experience levels, to stay alert around farm machinery.

Tim was driving a tractor haying a field when the mower's rear tire broke off. He parked on a slight incline, put the tractor in neutral, and stepped out to assess the tire. He did not set the brake. Tim decided to unhitch the mower and took his eye off the tractor for a half a second, when it began rolling towards him. Tim remembers the rear tire hitting his shoulder and the next thing he knew, he was laying face down on the ground and having difficulty breathing. He thought his life was over. Luckily he had his cell phone with him, and he had cell coverage and was able to call 9-1-1 for help. Tim was airlifted to hospital, spending 3 days in intensive care and another 8 in patient care, with numerous broken bones and collapsed lungs. Almost a month after the incident, Tim returned home. He has since recovered and can get around but still has pain when he walks.

Tim looks back on his experience to assess what went wrong and to figure out how he survived the incident. It was great that he had his cell phone with him and lucky that he had cell coverage. He credits local emergency response personnel, and doctors and nurses for saving his life. He advises producers to carry their cell phone with them, even when jumping out of the tractor for a minute. He also suggests having a check-in policy when you are working alone in the field. Make sure someone knows where you are and when to expect you back.

He admits that he should have set the brake before leaving the tractor and advises people to always set the brake when stepping off of the tractor, even on level ground. Tim notes that he has been driving farm machinery for over 50 years and should have known better. He only took his eye off of the tractor for a half a second and was nearly killed. He recommends to always think ahead of what could go wrong and take that second to protect yourself and others around you. His injuries could have been prevented had he taken that one simple step of putting the brake on.

Another piece of advice is to keep your equipment serviced and in top operating condition. Check your equipment before going to the field to avoid breakdowns.

**SHARE YOUR STORY:** If you have a story and lessons learned from an incident that took place on your farm that you are willing to share, tell your story. Your experience may help prevent similar incidents from happening to a fellow farmer. Please send in your stories to [donna@agsafeab.ca](mailto:donna@agsafeab.ca)  
Read other stories from an organization in the US who is gathering lessons learned: <https://tellingthestoryproject.org/>

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## Ag Safe Alberta Society OUT AND ABOUT

The Ag Safe Alberta Advisor team is out working individually with farmers and ranchers in rural Alberta. If you would like to talk with one of our Advisors please sign up at the [AgSafe Alberta website](#) or call our Program Director at 403.348.9321.

Ag Safe will also be providing farm safety management information at the following events:

**October 12:** Cold Lake Ag Society Farm Safety Seminar, Cold Lake Exhibition Park

**October 24:** Swine Technology Workshop, Red Deer, Alberta

**October 25:** Environmental Farm Plan Technician Training - Farm Fire Safety

**November 5-7:** Alberta Beekeepers Commission Conference - Edmonton Alberta

**November 13-15:** Alberta Potato Conference, Edmonton Alberta

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR EVENT DETAILS

If you would like Ag Safe Alberta Society to attend or present at one of your fall/winter agricultural events in Alberta please email: [donna@agsafeab.ca](mailto:donna@agsafeab.ca) with details.



If an employee is injured on the job there are some new rules about how the employer handles the management of the employee post incident. Effective September 1, 2018, the Government of Alberta implemented new legislation regarding employer's obligations to reinstate workers after a workplace injury. WCB published a [FACT SHEET](#) to explain the new legislation and an employer's obligations after a workplace injury.

Also under the new legislation, employers are required to continue to pay the health benefits of their injured workers while they are absent from work. Injured worker health benefits [FACT SHEET](#).



## YOUR SAFETY YOUR WAY

Ag Safe Alberta is an agriculture based safety organization that is results-oriented, accountable and transparent to our stakeholders with focus on continuous improvement and best practices.

The overall goal of Ag Safe Alberta is to empower farmers and ranchers to integrate practical safety management programs into their everyday operations, in order to prevent illness and injury for everyone involved on the farm.



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