AgSafe ALBERTA

ALBERTA FarmSafe PLAN

— A SAFETY PLANNING GUIDE FOR FARMS —

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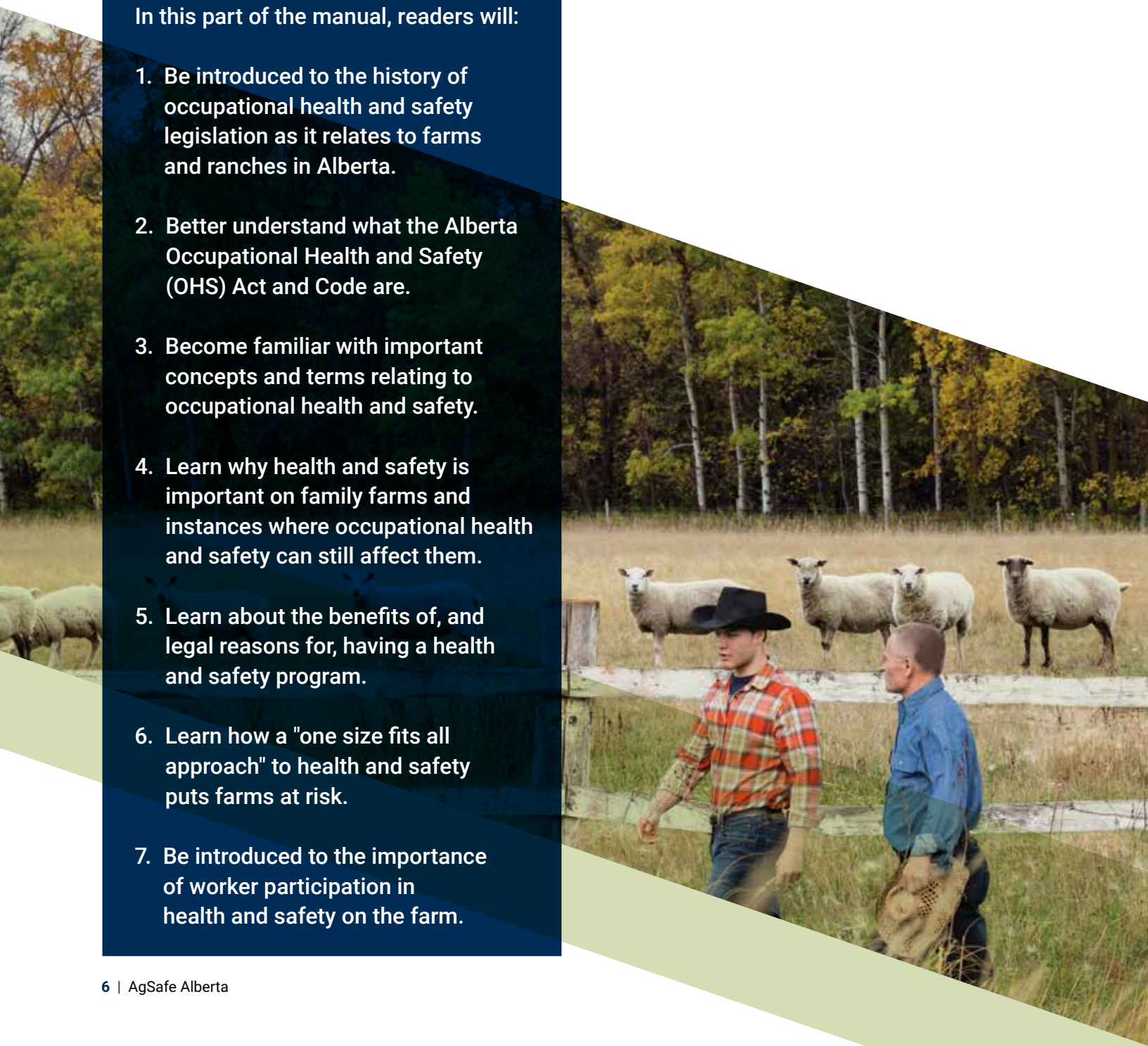
KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

There is an Abbreviations List and Glossary at the end of this manual to support your understanding of common abbreviations and the meanings of certain terms.

Forword & Introduction

In this part of the manual, readers will:

1. Be introduced to the history of occupational health and safety legislation as it relates to farms and ranches in Alberta.
2. Better understand what the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act and Code are.
3. Become familiar with important concepts and terms relating to occupational health and safety.
4. Learn why health and safety is important on family farms and instances where occupational health and safety can still affect them.
5. Learn about the benefits of, and legal reasons for, having a health and safety program.
6. Learn how a "one size fits all approach" to health and safety puts farms at risk.
7. Be introduced to the importance of worker participation in health and safety on the farm.



Foreword

Welcome to the AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan Manual, a resource designed to help you build a health and safety program that meets the needs of your specific farm or ranch.

AgSafe Alberta is the health and safety association for agricultural producers in our province. It is a non-profit organization that works with and supports farms and ranches of all types and sizes in becoming safer. The AgSafe Alberta Board of Directors is made up of producers who represent various commodity groups and producer organizations, this helps ensure that the work being done is truly ***producer driven safety.***

Background

In 2011, the Minister's Farm Safety Advisory Council recommended increased education, training and certification opportunities for Alberta farms. As a result, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry worked with the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association and Alberta's Partnerships in Injury Reduction (PIR) to develop the original Alberta FarmSafe Plan, a tool to help farms and ranches develop a health and safety program.

In 2019, AgSafe Alberta licensed the Alberta FarmSafe Plan from the Government of Alberta. The manual and workbook are updated regularly to stay current, and a certification program has been developed to help farms and ranches show their ongoing commitment to health and safety on their operation.

We are confident that this resource will help you to create a more productive operation, and more importantly, a safer place to live, work, and grow up on.

A Brief Timeline of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation in Alberta

January 1, 2016: Bill 6 Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act

- Made Alberta farms and ranches subject to occupational health and safety legislation.

January 31, 2020: Bill 26 Farm Freedom and Safety Act

- The entire OHS Act remained applicable to farming operations, but the OHS Code was no longer being directly applied. With these changes the "technical rules" that had been added to the OHS Code to address some aspects of safety on farming and ranching operations were lost.
- Some producers mistakenly thought their operations were exempt from all OHS legislation or that they were only responsible for "basic safety," when in reality they remained responsible for doing everything reasonable to protect the health and safety of workers.

December 1, 2021: AR 27/95 Farming and Ranching Exemption Repeal Regulation

- When the Farming and Ranching Exemption Repeal Regulation came into effect, it made part of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code applicable to farming and ranching operations.
- At the time of publication, farming and ranching operations are exempt from most of the OHS Code, however the expectation for a farm owner, employer, or manager to take every practicable measure to protect the health and safety of the people working on the farm is the same as in any other industry.

The OHS Code is reviewed every few years. It is reasonable to expect additional changes that will affect farming and ranching operations to occur with each of these reviews. You will want to make efforts to stay informed of these changes and updates.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Alberta farms and ranches are "exempt" from most of the OHS Code, but not all of it.
- All employers in Alberta, including farms and ranches, should have a health and safety program; however, those with 20 or more regularly employed workers are required by OHS legislation to create and implement a health and safety program (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.16).
- Volunteers are people who perform or provide services without being paid, however, they are still considered to be workers (but not regularly employed workers) and have the same health and safety rights and responsibilities as any other workers under Alberta OHS legislation (Government of Alberta, 2022, p.1).

RESOURCE

AgSafe Alberta has a free monthly newsletter that focuses on farm safety affairs and highlights legislative health and safety matters that affect agricultural operations. Visit **agsafeab.ca** to subscribe to the AgSafe Alberta newsletter and to view past newsletters. In addition, you can follow AgSafe Alberta on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook to help you stay current.

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act and Code

Occupational health and safety legislation is meant to keep workplaces healthy and safe. It is intended to protect the people working at a worksite as well as those who may be impacted by the work being done.

Part 1 of the Alberta OHS Act assigns obligations, responsibilities and duties to individuals and organizations. The Alberta OHS Code provides minimum technical requirements for health and safety in Alberta's workplaces (Government of Alberta, n.d.). It is important to be aware that the requirements set out in the OHS Code may not be enough to protect an employer from charges should an incident occur. This is because workplace parties are required to protect the health and safety of themselves and others at the worksite as far as it is reasonably practicable. The minimum requirements outlined in the OHS Code may not be enough to control the particular hazards of a situation or set of work conditions.

What is Reasonably Practicable?

The term "reasonably practicable" is a recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)? When determining what is reasonably practicable, the following relevant matters are taken into account:

- The likelihood of the hazard and/or the risk associated with it.
- How severe the harm to someone might be.
- How much the involved person knows or should reasonably know about the hazard or risk and how to eliminate or reduce the risk.
- The availability and suitability of hazard and risk control measures.
- What the cost associated with available ways of eliminating or minimizing the hazard and risk is, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

(Adapted from Safe Work Australia, n.d., p.1)

DISCUSSION

When it comes to health and safety, you will want to make every reasonable effort to protect the people working on the farm while keeping farm operations productive. At times it may be difficult to find balance, but it is possible, and a health and safety program will help you achieve this.

Take a moment to think about someone you care very much about. This could be a child, spouse, parent, sibling, dear friend, etc. Imagine them going to work for someone who is only going to do the bare minimum to keep them safe, healthy, and alive. Now ask yourself:

- Are you comfortable with that?
- Do you think it is right?
- Would you want them to work there?
- Would you try to get them to work someplace else?
- Knowing how little effort was made to protect this person, if they were seriously injured, how would you feel?

Once you have had a moment to think about these, discuss your answers as a group.

Act: A form of law that allows a government to regulate an area, such as Occupational Health and Safety (Government of Canada, 2011).

Codes: Codes are pieces of legislation that can be enforced.

Guidelines: Documents that provide instruction on how to do something; sometimes guidelines are created by a jurisdiction, such as the Government of Alberta, on how to comply with legislation but they typically cannot be enforced by law (CCOHS, 2022).

Jurisdiction: An authority or power to make decisions and apply law; for example, there is federal jurisdiction and provincial jurisdiction.

Reasonably practicable: 1. Meeting a legislated occupational health and safety obligation in a way that is sensible, realistic and would be thought of as making sense for the facts and conditions by a reasonable person. 2. A recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)?

Regulations: Regulations commonly list the requirements for specific workplace conditions and work practices in more detail than the Act. Regulations can be sector specific (as we have seen with farming and ranching) or hazard specific (Government of Canada, 2011).

Standards: A voluntary way of doing something that has been agreed upon by a company itself, by an industry, or by a recognized organization such as the CSA Group.

NOTE

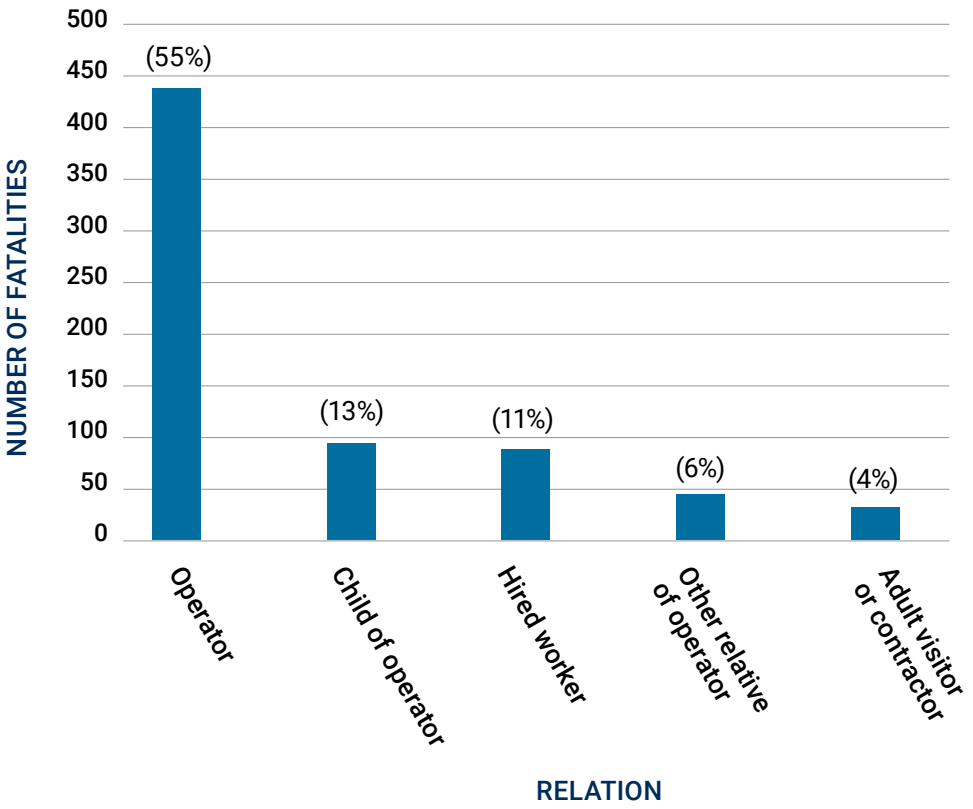
The OHS Act is the part of legislation that outlines the offences, penalties and authority of occupational health and safety officers. If you are curious as to the types of convictions that have resulted, visit **https://www.alberta.ca/convictions-under-ohs-legislation.aspx#toc-2**.

Why Health And Safety Matters On Family Farms

There are many reasons why health and safety is equally as important on a family farm as it is on a farm with employees. Let's look at just a few of these reasons.

1. **It is primarily farmers and their children who are dying.** According to Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting, between 2003 and 2012, it was found that 55% of farm fatalities were owner/operators and 13% of fatalities were the children of owner/operators.
2. **A farm business is still a business.** Failing to recognize health and safety as a business risk that needs to managed is incredibly costly. Can your farm afford to be down a person because they were injured, or without a key piece of equipment because it was damaged by a family member who did not have the skill and experience to operate it?
3. **Family farms are not entirely free from OHS Legislation.** In the OHS Act, owners are assigned legal obligations. It is also important to remember that when you bring a contractor or other worksite party onto your farm, you will have legislated occupational health and safety obligations when it comes to keeping them and their workers safe.

Fatal Agriculture-Related Injuries by Relationship to Farm Operator



(Canadian Agricultural Injury Reporting, 2016, p.26)

DID YOU KNOW?

AgSafe Alberta is sometimes told by farmers and ranchers that they don't have contractors or other worksite parties coming onto their farm. The reality is that nearly all farms do, they just don't recognize it. Examples of other worksite parties who may come onto a farm or ranch may include:

- Custom harvest crews
- Cattle liner drivers/livestock haulers
- Veterinarians
- Tire repair trucks
- Milk truck drivers
- Septic truck/sewage hauling services
- Fuel or propane delivery services
- What others can you think of?

Introduction

The Government of Alberta defines a health and safety program as “a coordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures that is designed to be implemented by organizations in order to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.1(s)).”

Think of your health and safety program as your action plan; your farm’s strategy and the specific tasks that will help you achieve your health and safety goals. The AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan Manual is a tool that you and your farm team can use to develop a health and safety program that will meet the specific needs of your farm business.

The objectives of the AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan are to:

- Teach you basic health and safety terms and concepts.
- Help you in creating a health and safety program.
- Guide you in how to put your health and safety program into effect.
- Assist you in maintaining and improving your health and safety program.

Health and safety program: “A coordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures that is designed to be implemented by organizations in order to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.1(s))."

Action plan: A course of action; a strategy.

Safety Is Good Business

What are the benefits, or return on investment (ROI) of having good health and safety practices? According to the American Society of Safety Professionals, the return on investment comes from:

Good public image: Farm owners want their employees, customers, and the general public to view them and what they do in a positive way.

Compliance with legislation: Non-compliance has many costs; these can be financial (i.e., legal fees, fines, settlements) or could change people's opinions about working for you or doing business with you.

Cost savings: Worker injuries, illnesses and equipment damage are all very costly. Having a health and safety program can reduce the costs associated with these, including insurance costs, production delays, medical fees, legal fees, etc.

Increased operational efficiency: A safety program supports increased productivity, revenue and sustainability.

Increased employee satisfaction: Keeping and attracting good workers is easier when the workplace is safe, the employer cares about the workers & their wellbeing and takes efforts to protect the environment.

(American Society of Safety Professionals, n.d.)

Return On Investment (ROI): A performance measure that is used to assess the efficiency or profitability of something in business; a financial ratio used to calculate gain or benefit.

The Relationship Between Sustainability and Safety

The Government of Canada defines sustainability as "achieving and maintaining a healthy natural and built environment, a vibrant and just society, and a well-functioning economy for both present and future generations (Government of Canada, 2022)." In simpler terms, it is reducing the negative impact that results from business operations so that our needs today do not prevent future generations from meeting their needs.

There are three pillars of sustainability, these are:

- Environmental sustainability
- Economic sustainability
- Social sustainability

Many producer and commodity groups in Canada recognize the importance and benefits of sustainability. These groups are building their own sustainability programs around the three pillars, and because protecting the health and safety of workers falls into the social sustainability pillar, the sustainability programs have a health and safety component to them. Having a health and safety program as laid out in this manual will in many cases meet or exceed the requirements of the health and safety component of a particular group's sustainability program.

The Internal Responsibility System (IRS) and Due Diligence

In Canada, each province and territory have their own OHS legislation that is based on the underlying philosophy of the Internal Responsibility System. The foundational belief of the internal responsibility system is that every worksite party (i.e., employers, workers, contracting employees, etc.) is responsible for their own health and safety, as well as for the safety of others in the workplace.

The Internal Responsibility System achieves the following:

(CCOHS, 2022)

Due diligence is defined by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety as "the level of judgement, care, prudence, determination, and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to do under particular circumstances (CCOHS, 2019)." Due diligence, when applied to occupational health and safety, means that employers, workers, and others in the workplace must take every reasonable precaution for their particular situation and conditions to prevent injuries or incidents relating to the work they do. This supports the internal responsibility system in that everyone involved in the work must act responsibly and take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Due diligence is an important legal defense for a farm or person charged under OHS legislation, but it can only be demonstrated by the actions taken before an incident occurred. This is just another reason why having a health and safety program is so important; it will help ensure that you are doing everything you can to protect the people on your farm and, in the event an incident does occur, it will form an important part of your due diligence defense.

Due diligence: "The level of judgement, care, prudence, determination, and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to do under particular circumstances (CCOHS, 2019)."

Internal Responsibility System (IRS): The foundational belief of occupational health and safety legislation across Canada that makes all workplace parties responsible for their health and safety and the health and safety of others.

Reasonable person: "A fictional person with an ordinary degree of reason, prudence, care, foresight, or intelligence whose conduct, conclusion, or expectation in relation to a particular circumstance or fact is used as an objective standard by which to measure or

determine something (as the existence of negligence) (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)."

Reasonable precaution: Also called reasonable care. The care, caution, measures or actions a reasonable person would be expected to take under the same or similar circumstances.

Reasonably practicable: : 1. Meeting a legislated occupational health and safety obligation in a way that is sensible, realistic, and would be thought of as making sense for the facts and conditions by a reasonable person. 2. A recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)?

Understanding The Legal Reasons For Protecting Health and Safety

Charges under OHS legislation

The Alberta OHS Act, Regulation and Code makeup the legislation (or laws) that set health and safety rules for Alberta workplaces. Alberta Occupational Health and Safety can prosecute a work site party who, following an investigation, was found to be in violation of the OHS Act, Regulation, or Code and as a result has been charged. Even though much of the OHS Code does not currently apply in the traditional way of thinking to farms and ranches, it is vital to be aware that many serious charges can be laid under the OHS Act. It is also important to note that individuals can be charged under OHS legislation. To see and better understand this for yourself, you can view who has been charged and what they have been charged with under OHS Legislation by visiting **https://www.alberta.ca/charges-under-ohs-legislation.aspx**.

(Alberta Government, n.d.)

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

If you are charged under OHS legislation, you (and very likely a lawyer) will need to prove that you did everything reasonably practicable to protect the health and safety of the people on your farm or others who may be impacted by the work you do.

Civil charges

A civil action or suit begins when people or legal entities disagree on a legal matter, however, a civil suit can also occur when someone becomes injured, or property gets damaged (Government of Canada, 2021). Many employers choose to obtain Workers Compensation Board coverage as it helps to protect them and their employees from being sued.

Criminal charges

Like businesses and individuals in other industries, farms and the people working on them may be held criminally responsible for deaths and injuries in the workplace. Section 217.1 *Duty of persons directing work* in the Criminal Code of Canada came into effect in 2004 and updated how criminal liability for workplace deaths and injuries is established. This section of law addresses how criminal responsibility is assigned to organizations for the actions (or inaction) of their representatives and creates a legal duty for anyone who directs the work of others to take reasonable steps to protect the safety of workers and the public (Government of Canada, 2019). In general, unlike regulatory charges, when someone is charged criminally, the accused is presumed to be innocent until they are proven guilty.

(Government of Canada, 2021)

DID YOU KNOW?

Generally speaking, an employer or worker who is covered by WCB cannot be sued. When an employer has Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) coverage, they are provided with no-fault insurance should a work-related injury occur. This coverage offers protection from a lawsuit when the injury is the result of the employer's normal insured activities. It is also important to remember that anyone who is a proprietor, in a partnership and/or is a director of a farm that has been incorporated will not automatically be covered by this type of insurance and may choose to take out personal WCB coverage for themselves (WCB, 2021, p.1).

Prosecution: When legal courses of action are initiated against a worksite party.

Worksite party: Worksite parties regulated by the OHS Act include employers, supervisors, workers, suppliers, service providers, owners, contracting employers, prime contractors, and temporary staffing agencies (Alberta Government, n.d.).

No fault insurance: Also called No Fault Benefits. For the purposes of this manual, this is where the Workers Compensation Board takes on the responsibility for a work-related injury regardless of who is at fault (i.e., an employer or a worker).

Liability: Being legally responsible for something.

A 'One Size Fits All' Approach Puts Farms At Risk

For a health and safety program to work, it must be farm specific. No two farms are exactly alike, this includes the type of farm, size of operation, products used, machines used, hours of work, farm layout, available resources, etc. Policies, procedures, hazard assessments, training requirements, contractor management plans, and other items will need to be tailored to each individual operation. What is created and used will have to make sense for the farm and the people working on it.

From a legal standpoint, it is important to remember that any policies and rules put in place will need to be both reasonable and justifiable. If they are not, they may be considered discriminatory and result in other financial and legal issues. For example, if someone's job on the farm requires them to drive large equipment it would be both reasonable and justified to require the person to meet certain fit for duty conditions (i.e., not be under the influence) and have a valid, appropriate driver's license. Using this same example, it would not be reasonable or justifiable to require someone be a male in order to operate equipment or to not have tattoos. This requirement of being both reasonable and justifiable is critical when developing farm rules, establishing safety sensitive positions, creating fit for duty policies, and addressing accommodation measures for injured or disabled workers.

Similarly, if you find a work procedure or another document that was created by someone else and adopt it as your own without making any changes, you again may be taking on unnecessary risk. This can result from the statements made in a document created for someone else:

- Not being suitable for how things are done for your farm.
- Not applying to the particular machines and equipment that you use.
- Referring to tools, training or resources that you do not have available.
- Possibly violating what is required by OHS legislation.

You will want to ensure that your farm's policies and procedures are tailored to your operation, align with OHS legislation, and that you are doing the things you say that you are. Remember, there may come a day when these documents will need to be given to an OHS officer and could ultimately even be brought into a courtroom. Without thoughtfully developed farm specific documents in place, you may have a hard time defending yourself and using another farm's policies and procedures could create legal challenges. The health and safety related documents that you create don't have to be perfect, but they do need to make sense for your operation and keep the people on your farm safe.

Important considerations before adopting a rule or policy

Printing your farm's name on a template document and making no other changes is not only ineffective but can place your farm at risk legally. While it is acceptable to use templates as examples and guides, you must tailor these documents to your specific farm and needs. As you create rules and policies on your farm, ask yourself these questions:

1. **Is the policy and its purpose related to carrying out the work?**
    a. What is the purpose of the policy? Is it related to safety or something else?
    b. What are the requirements of the job? What duties or tasks does it apply to?
    c. Is there a rational link between the purpose of the policy and the requirements of the job?
2. **Has the policy been created honestly, in good faith and out of necessity?**
    a. What are the reasons behind its creation?
    b. Who has determined the need for it and why?
    c. What other conditions have been or should be included in this policy's creation?
3. **Is this policy reasonably necessary?**
    a. Is this policy based on facts or assumptions?
    b. Could this policy treat a group of people more roughly than another? If so, has a less discriminatory approach been considered?
    c. Of all the options considered, is this truly the best approach for everyone working on the farm?
    d. Are all employees required to comply with the policy in order for the farm to successfully achieve its true purpose?

(Alberta Human Rights Commission, 2010)

When developing policies and procedures relating to more complex matters, such as substance use and abuse, it is recommended to contact a subject matter expert and/or legal counsel for advice.

Rational: Based on logic or reason.

Justifiable: Shown to be valid, sensible, supportable, and defensible.

The Importance of Family Member and Worker Participation

To support the success of your health and safety program, everyone on the farm will need to participate in it. This does not mean that your casual farm hand will need to write a policy, but that they are at the very least involved in some of the discussions. When developing or updating procedures and safe work practices, it is essential to involve the people who do the work, as their experience and perspective will ensure that these key documents make sense and are accurate.

In an effective health and safety program, family members and workers should:

- Be part of the health and safety program planning and development, as they will be able to identify obstacles and how to remove or address them (i.e., workers not wanting to participate due to poor communication).
- Be part of the hazard identification, assessment and control process.
- Be involved in setting goals and tracking progress.
- Be able to openly communicate with farm leadership, this includes the ability to report hazards and safety related concerns without fear of negative consequences.
- Have access to the health and safety information they will need to work safely and participate in the program.

IMPORTANT NOTE

All workers have three legislated basic rights and supporting abilities in the workplace. These are:

1. The right to be informed of work site hazards and how to eliminate or control those hazards.
2. The right to meaningful participation in health and safety activities relating to their work and work site, including the ability to raise health and safety concerns.
3. The right to refuse dangerous work.
4 The ability to not be subjected to disciplinary action for exercising a right or fulfilling a duty imposed by this Act, the regulations or the OHS Code.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.2(d))

How to Gain Worker Participation

To gain worker participation in the health and safety program, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends the actions listed below.

Action 1: Encourage workers to participate in the health and safety program.

- Give them the time and resources needed to participate effectively in the program.
- Recognize and provide positive reinforcement to everyone who does participate.
- Keep open lines of communication at all levels to discuss health and safety; workers should feel comfortable bringing suggestions to a manager.

Action 2: Encourage the reporting of health and safety concerns.

- Create a simple process for the reporting of injuries, illnesses, equipment damage, near misses, hazards, etc.
- Involve workers in finding solutions to their health and safety related concerns.
- Communicate back to the farm team what actions have been taken as a result of what has been reported.
- Ensure workers know that nothing bad will happen if they exercise one of their three basic legislated rights.

Action 3: Ensure everyone has access to health and safety information.

Workers must have access to the health and safety information they require to perform their jobs safely and effectively. This type of information can include:

- Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)
- Manufacturer's recommendations
- Worksite inspections
- Product labels
- Alberta OHS Act and Code
- Hazard assessments
- Operator's manuals
- Equipment inspections
- Corrective actions taken as a result of hazard reports, incident investigations, etc.

Action 4: Involve the farm team in all aspects of the program.

Opportunities for involvement and active participation in the health and safety program can include:

- Setting program goals
- Performing hazard assessments
- Performing worksite, building and equipment inspections
- Developing and documenting procedures for working safely and efficiently
- Conduct pre-job meetings and toolbox talks
- Reporting hazards and finding solutions
- Participate in incident investigations
- Participating in program evaluation and continuous improvement
- Participate in all aspects of training current and new team members (i.e., development, implementation and evaluation)

Action 5: Remove barriers to participation.

Meaningful participation in the health and safety program is not only a legislated right of workers, but also fundamental to the program's success.

- Everyone working on the farm can participate, regardless of their role, education level, or language.
- Don't just tell workers they can report a health and safety concern without worrying about retaliation, put it in writing and use your actions to prove it.
- Provide enough time and resources to support everyone's participation.
- Ensure policies and other supporting measures don't discourage workers from participating (i.e., incentives that may result in workers hiding incidents).

(Adapted from OSHA, n.d., p.2-3)

The Foundation of Your Health and Safety Program

Much of your health and safety program will be based on the process of hazard identification, assessment, and control, with the goal of preventing injuries and illnesses ***before*** they occur (you will learn about hazard identification, assessment and control in greater detail in Modules 2 and 3 of this manual). As the process of hazard identification, assessment and control is foundational, you will notice this common theme in other modules as well. By the end of this manual, you should have a solid understanding of the process and be comfortable putting it into practice on your operation.

The steps that you will become familiar with are:

Step 1: Create an inventory of jobs.

Step 2: Create an inventory of tasks associated with each job.

Step 3: Identify the hazards associated with each of the tasks.

Step 4: Assess the hazards you have identified (Risk = Severity x Likelihood).

Step 5: Identify hazard control measures.

Step 6: Select appropriate hazard control measures.

Step 7: Put the hazard control measures into place.

Step 8: Communicate and train your farm team on hazard control measures.

Step 9: Monitor the hazard controls for use and effectiveness.

Step 10: Review and revise as needed.

ACTIVITY

Before you begin working on your health and safety program, identify who the people on your farm are and what their role or position is. To do this, go to the AgSafe Alberta online FarmSafe Plan Workbook and complete the Position List Worksheet. For a large operation or colony, each department, work area, or barn may need to complete their own Position List Worksheet.

Using the Position List Worksheet(s) that have just been completed, you will now create a simple organizational chart. An organizational chart outlines how your farm functions; it is a visual representation of the relationships between people and roles in your farm business. It will help identify who the most senior people or positions are and who takes direction from who. Go to the AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan Workbook and use the Organization Chart Worksheet to help you with this.

RESOURCE

Downloadable versions of the AgSafe Alberta Position List Worksheet and Organization Chart Worksheet are available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Organizational chart: A visual representation of the relationships between people and roles; it outlines how a farm functions, who the most senior people or positions are and who takes direction from whom.

MODULE

1

Leadership, Commitment & Accountability

In this module, readers will:

1. Be introduced to several important concepts, such as safety culture and business risk management.
2. Create health and safety program goals and develop a health and safety policy.
3. Learn about and create written roles and responsibilities.
4. Learn about accountability and the role of progressive discipline.

INTRODUCTION

While everyone on a farm has a responsibility for health and safety in the workplace, the ultimate responsibility for it starts at the top, with those who are considered senior leadership. On a family farm this could be grandparents, parents, an aunt or an uncle. If a farm has employees, this could be the farm owner, operator, or director. On a colony, this would be the colony leadership such as directors and bosses. It is important that the farm leadership's commitment to health and safety is made known to family members, workers, contractors, and anyone else who may be visiting the operation.

IMPORTANT HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCEPTS

Before you begin working on your health and safety program, there are some important concepts that you will need to understand, as well as some unique challenges farms have that other workplaces may not and should be recognized. As you work through this module, think about how these concepts apply to your farm, what challenges you face, and identify things that you can do on your operation.

Management Versus Leadership

A manager is someone who directs the work or actions of others in a workplace, and that person doesn't necessarily need to have the title of a manager in order to be one. In comparison, a leader is someone who has the ability to influence others and engage them in working towards goal, but not all leaders have a title or have people reporting to them.

These are two very important points when it comes to farms. To illustrate why these points are important, consider the scenario below:

Joe Jones owned and operated a mixed beef and crop farm until just a few years ago. He retired, and his two adult children have taken the farm over and continue to operate it. The farm has five full-time employees and hires seasonal workers as needed. Joe continues to live on the farm, and while he has no financial interest in it, he continues to watch over things. He often uses his all-terrain vehicle (ATV) to see how the work is going... unfortunately, he does this without a helmet.

Recently, Joe's teenage granddaughter, Sarah (who lives on the farm with her parents), has started riding the ATV without a helmet as well and despite the fact it is an unwritten family rule that a helmet always has to be worn. When her father, Joe Junior, found out and asked her why, Sarah told him it was uncomfortable, looked silly, and that Granddad didn't wear his. Joe Junior had a discussion with her where he reinforced why a helmet is so important and took away her ATV privileges until she demonstrated that she could be responsible enough to get them back.

Later that same day, Joe Junior stopped a new worker who was operating an ATV without a helmet and asked why he didn't have his helmet on, especially after having just completed his ATV training where he learned that he was required to wear one. The new worker replied to Joe Junior saying, "I thought it was just something that you had to say as an employer, I haven't seen anyone else wear one and thought it was not important or enforced."

This scenario demonstrates how easily someone who is not in a position of authority can influence the perceptions and actions of others. Many farms face challenges that other workplaces don't, for example, it is unlikely that you would find a child or grandparent living at a drilling rig or in a manufacturing facility. These additional challenges will need to be recognized and thought about as you develop your health and safety program. It is for this reason that any individuals who have influence on your farm should also be committed to, and included in, the development of your health and safety program.

Safety Leadership, Commitment and Culture

Safety leadership is the act of influencing others to make health and safety their work goal as well. Leaders will need to clearly and regularly communicate their commitment to health and safety in the workplace, and they will need to actively demonstrate their commitment by:

- Working safely themselves.
- Ensuring that everyone working on the farm has the training, tools and resources to work safely.
- Complying with the health and safety program, even when it is inconvenient or requires paperwork.
- Recognizing and rewarding safe actions and behaviors.

- Holding people accountable for unsafe actions and behaviors in a productive and meaningful way.
- Encouraging worker input and not dismissing their health and safety related concerns.

Safety leadership and commitment lays the foundation for the farm's safety culture, and the farm's safety culture has a significant impact on the farm's safety outcomes (i.e., injuries and equipment damage). Safety culture can be defined as "the characteristics of the work environment, such as the values, rules, and common understandings that influence workers' perceptions and attitudes about the importance that the organization places on safety (CNSC, 2018, p. 1)." Having a health and safety program in place will help you improve your safety culture and support you in monitoring it.

Culture: The learned and shared behavior of a group.

Safety culture: "The characteristics of the work environment, such as the values, rules, and common understandings that influence workers' perceptions and attitudes about the importance that the organization places on safety (CNSC, 2018, p. 1)."

Safety leadership: The act of influencing others to make health and safety their work goal as well.

A Safety Culture Has Five Important Factors

Dr. James Reason, a significant person in the field of health and safety, proposed that a safety culture was affected by several important factors. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) took Dr. Reason's model and modified it slightly; this is the model that is shown here. Each of these five factors should help guide you and be addressed in your health and safety program.

1. **Flexible Culture:** This is a culture where the farm is able to change and adapt when faced with challenges like fast-paced work, a lack of manpower, equipment breakdowns and different types of hazards while ensuring safety needs are always being met. A flexible culture will allow for the farm's organizational structure to change in a way that allows employees to be more self-directed and take on more responsibility when necessary.

2. **Learning Culture:** This represents a culture that is both willing and able to improve itself using lessons learned from incidents that have or nearly occurred and share these learnings as well. This also includes promoting continuous learning and education on the farm.

3. **Just Culture:** This represents an atmosphere of trust on the farm; one where both unacceptable behaviors and model behavior are fairly addressed. It is a culture where reporting safety related information (even when the information is not something the farm may want to hear) is encouraged and rewarded. This culture ensures that both acceptable and unacceptable behaviors are made clear. It also ensures that incidents are properly investigated, rather than simply laying blame on individuals.

4. **Reporting Culture:** A reporting culture is one where everyone on the farm reports incidents and near misses, even when they themselves made an error. For this to happen, there must be a high degree of trust. Reporting needs to occur for the farm to be able to investigate reports, learn from incidents and near misses, and improve safety. User friendly and easily accessible methods of reporting will need to be in place for there to be a reporting culture.

5. **Engaged Culture:** This is a culture where there is communication not only from the top down (from farm leadership to the workers), but also from the bottom up (from the workers to farm leadership). This is a culture where employees can and do raise safety concerns and make suggestions for improvement. There is an engaged culture present when everyone at all levels is participating in all of the other four factors.

(NASA, 2014)

ACTIVITY

Safety cultures can be positive or negative, and they can change over time. You can go online and score your farm's safety culture using a checklist made available by the Government of Canada. Go to your internet browser and search Score Your Safety Culture—TP 13844. While this was developed for aviation, the questions still apply to other industries.

Business Risk Management

Farmers are already familiar with managing risk; things like production risks, market risks, and financial risks always being considered. Just like these other risks, health and safety is a business risk that needs to be properly managed. When health and safety risks go unmanaged, incidents occur and the farm experiences losses.

Which of the following losses are you willing to, and can afford to accept?

- Having a family member or other member of your farm team be seriously injured or die?
- Paying a lawyer to help you navigate criminal, civil and/or OHS charges?
- Having a key piece of equipment that you are still paying off completely written off or seized and in the custody of OHS for up to two years?
- Paying increased private insurance and/or Workers Compensation Board (WCB) rates?
- Having a stop work order issued by OHS and not being able to continue operating?

Risk is already everywhere in normal life, and it is nearly impossible to avoid some form of risk. Farming commonly involves a high-risk work. One of the problems is that so many people living and working on farms have become blind to the risks they face every day. In an article, *The Risk of Risk Blindness* published by Integrity Governance®, an organization that works with companies worldwide to better manage their businesses, six factors that contribute to risk blindness are identified:

1. **Recency:** Greater energy and attention are often given to events that have happened recently, rather than on the probability of risk.
2. **Visibility:** Humans tend to focus on the things that we can see over the things that we cannot see.
3. **Assumptions:** Too many decisions are made because people make assumptions about risk.
4. **Too much or too little confidence:** Too much confidence results in people ignoring certain risks, where too little confidence results in overestimating the impact of some risks.
5. **Skills:** People simply do not know what they do not know; this results in not being aware of the risks that they are taking on.
6. **Culture:** You should be familiar with culture, particularly safety culture, at this point. This is where what the farm considers to be acceptable risk-taking behavior becomes clear (what is it acceptable to do and what is not).

(Integrity Governance®, n.d.)

DISCUSSION

Think of an event on the farm or someplace else, where something went very wrong and could have been avoided had appropriate measures been taken sooner. Which of the six factors of risk blindness do you think contributed to those measures not being taken in the first place?

Assumption: Something that is accepted as being true or certain without any proof.

Business risk management: The process of identifying, assessing, and controlling threats to a business's capital, earnings, operations, or general security.

High risk: More likely to result in harm and/or the harm that results will be greater, such as a disabling or fatal injury.

Likelihood: The chance or likelihood of a potential risk occurring based on informal measurements such as low, medium, or high.

Probability: The possibility of something happening based on measurable methods.

Risk: The chance or likelihood of injury, damage or loss.

Risk blindness: Being unaware of a risk.

Risk-taking behavior: How inclined someone is to do something that has the potential to be harmful or dangerous.

STARTING YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM

Now it is time to start planning and creating your health and safety program. You should be thoughtful during this process and clear on what your health and safety goals are, but don't put too much pressure on yourself and your farm team to ensure everything is perfect right away. Policies, procedures and forms will change, and your health and safety program will evolve; this is natural and what you want to see happen.

Create Specific and Measurable Health and Safety Program Goals

Have the farm's leadership team and other members of the farm team sit down together (if possible) and identify approximately three specific and measurable goals for the farm's health and safety program. Do not create too many goals, as it could make the program seem overwhelming.

Examples of goals might include:

- The prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Support and enhance sustainability/social responsibility.
- Greater compliance with legislation.
- Increase worker engagement and productivity.

ACTIVITY

Complete the AgSafe Alberta Health and Safety Program Goals Worksheet or use any sheet of paper to write down your top 3 health and safety program goals.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of the AgSafe Alberta Health and Safety Program Goals Worksheet is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Identify and Assign Health and Safety Resources

Resources will be needed to develop your health and safety program, put it in place and maintain it thereafter. What resources your farm will need will depend on its type, size, hazards, its existing safety culture and if there are already elements of a health and safety program in place or not. Examples of resources include:

- Farm team member time.
- Money and budgets.
- Equipment and supplies.
- Tools and resources (i.e., computers, printer, safety data sheets, operator's manuals, etc.).
- Training.
- Access to health and safety practitioners or other specialists for support.

Now consider the following:

- What will be needed to create your health and safety program?
- What will be needed to achieve the programs goals?
- Who will be available to work on developing the program?
- Who on the farm will help implement the program and support it thereafter (i.e., training and recordkeeping)?
- How much time and money can be put towards the health and safety program and its goals?
- What other support will be needed?

Take a deep breath. It can seem overwhelming and like there may never be enough time or money to achieve the farm's health and safety goals but be assured that it can be done. Breaking the development and implementation of your health and safety program into smaller, easily achievable parts and making steady (not overnight) progress on them will get you farther than you might realize. Sharing the workload among your farm team will not only prevent one or two people from becoming overwhelmed, but also increase their "buy-in" to the health and safety program.

RESOURCE

AgSafe Alberta is the health and safety association for producers across the province and is a resource for farms and ranches of all types and sizes. AgSafe Alberta provides free health and safety advice and support to Alberta producers. If you find yourself not knowing what to do next with your health and safety program or are unsure about how to best address a hazard, let us help you. For support, simply call us at 1-833-924-7233 or email info@agsafeab.ca.

Buy-in: "Acceptance of and willingness to actively support and participate in something (such as a proposed new plan or policy) (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)."

Goal: A desired result of a person's effort.

Health and safety practitioner: An individual with demonstrated competence in occupational health and safety (i.e., the tasks and responsibilities) and a reasonable level of professional knowledge.

Implement: To put something in place.

COMMUNICATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

The leadership team on your farm creates the vision and direction for your health and safety program, as well as provides the resources to create it, put it into action, monitor it, and ensure it is continually being improved or updated to meet the farm's changing needs. Leadership starts at the top, with the highest-level of leaders (i.e., owners or directors), however, leadership also comes from managers and supervisors. Farm leaders will all need to be committed to:

- Making health and safety a core value on the farm.
- Demonstrating and communicating their personal commitment to health and safety.
- Identifying, assessing, and eliminating or controlling hazards on the farm.
- Providing the time, training, equipment and other resources necessary to develop, implement, maintain and improve the health and safety program.

Steps for Creating a Health and Safety Policy

A written health and safety policy will help communicate your farm's commitment to safety and form the foundation of your health and safety program. A good health and safety policy will inform the people who work on the farm, as well as visitors, suppliers and contractors that their health, safety, and wellbeing are valued.

You will want to identify key people on the farm to be involved in the development and review of your health and safety policy. Throughout this process, refer to Alberta OHS legislation, particularly the Purposes of this Act and the General Obligations to help you. As you create a new policy or review an existing policy, remember that it can and should change over time in response to changing business practices, changing legislation, and an always changing world.

RESOURCE

Downloadable copies of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code are available online. Visit https://www.alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx to view or download pdf versions of this legislation.

Step 1: Explain why health and safety is important on the farm.
Using the health and safety program goals developed earlier, write a policy statement that clearly states the farm's intentions to protect the people living and/or working on it.

Step 2: Explain the goal(s) or purpose of the health and safety policy and program.
Clearly state the overall goal(s) of the policy and health and safety program.

Step 3: Detail who this policy applies to.
For example, does it apply to family members, employees, contractors, service providers, or visitors to the farm?

Step 4: Explain the roles and responsibilities of the people working on the farm.
The roles and responsibilities included in the health and safety policy will reflect more general health and safety related responsibilities. Roles may include the employer, family members, managers, supervisors, contractors, service providers, and visitors. As it is important for individuals to understand their position and what is expected of them, it is recommended that detailed roles and responsibilities be developed separately and included as part of the health and safety program.

Step 5: Explain how the goal will be achieved.
Identify ways that the farm will achieve its goal of preventing work related injuries and illnesses. This should include things like hazard identification, assessment, elimination and control to a reasonable level, training, maintenance, inspections, etc.

Step 6: Other information to be communicated.
Other important health and safety related statements can include:
- How the farm will ensure people who raise health and safety concerns are protected.
- Address how safety non-conformances and willful violations of the policy will be addressed.
- How and when the policy will be communicated.
- Include any other important, farm specific statements you think should be included in the policy.

Step 7: Decide how often this policy will be reviewed.
Think about how frequently the farm will review this policy. What is reasonable? If your farm has a certification that requires the policy to be reviewed at a specific frequency (i.e., annually), then you will want to state it here.

ACTIVITY

Using another businesses health and safety policy for guidance is acceptable, but copying it is not. Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Health and Safety Policy Template to help you create a draft of your farm's health and safety policy. Remember to refer to the Alberta OHS legislation, particularly the Purposes of this Act and the General Obligations to help you.

Once you have your draft created, check it against the AgSafe Alberta Health and Safety Policy Checklist to see if there is anything else that you should add or expand on.

RESOURCE

Downloadable versions of the AgSafe Alberta Health and Safety Policy Template and Health and Safety Policy Checklist are available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Health and safety policy: A statement written by an employer that outlines a commitment to health and safety and the protection of employees and others involved in or affected by the work being done.

Policy: Written general guidelines that set the direction for accomplishing an outcome and are used to guide decision-making.

Policy statement: A written statement about the plans or intentions of an organization, such as a farm business.

Procedure: A document with a narrow focus which describes step by step what actions are to be taken (especially when performing a job or task) in order to achieve the desired outcome.

Finalizing Your Health and Safety Policy

Once there is a draft of the health and safety policy written, there are still a few more steps you will need to take. These steps are detailed below.

Step 1: Have senior leadership (particularly those who will be signing it) and other employees, including workers, review the draft of the policy and provide their input. Make any necessary revisions.

Step 2: Once the policy is finalized, print it and ensure that it gets signed by senior leadership.

Step 3: Keep the original policy on file someplace, such as in a binder. Post copies of the policy in highly visible areas as a reminder of the farm's commitment to health and safety.

Step 4: Communicate the policy to everyone on the farm regularly (at minimum once a year). Ensure that new workers, contractors, service providers, and visitors review it before starting work or going onto the farm.

Step 5: Review the policy as often as stated in the policy. This helps to ensure that it stays current and continues to meet the needs of the farm.

CREATE WRITTEN HEALTH AND SAFETY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is essential that everyone one on the farm clearly understands what is expected of them, and having written functions and duties supports this. When everyone on the farm understands their role and responsibilities, they are able to get more work done, the farm team works more effectively together, and the risk of frustration or conflict on the farm is reduced. Written health and safety roles and responsibilities will make it easier to hold people accountable when safety non-conformances (safety violations) or other performance issues occur.

Step 1: Identify each role (position) on the farm.
In the first part of this manual, the Foreword and Introduction, you should have completed a Position List Worksheet. If you have not done this already, do so now. For larger operations, it may be easier to have each work area or barn identify the roles for their area. If you have youth working on the farm, you will want to include them in this process.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of the AgSafe Alberta Position List Worksheet is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Step 2: Identify the tasks each role (position) on the farm performs.
Have each person who works on the farm complete the Job and Task List Worksheet. Doing this will provide an opportunity to see what everyone on the farm is doing, as well as identify gaps and overlap in responsibilities. To make this step easier, think of a job as the larger scope of work and a task as a part or step of that work. For example, the job could be a tractor operator and the tasks associated with that job would be things like refueling it, performing pre-inspections, stacking bales, and hauling bales with it.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of the AgSafe Alberta Job and Task List Worksheet is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Step 3: Identify the legislated health and safety obligations for each role (position).
It is important to not only state the farm's expectations relating to each position, but also what has been written in legislation for that role (i.e., employer, supervisor, worker, etc.). For this part, you will need to refer to the Alberta OHS Act, Part 1 Obligations. It is possible to fall under more than worksite party as listed in the OHS Act; for example, someone could have both the duties of a supervisor and a worker, and you will want to reflect that in their responsibilities.

RESOURCE

A downloadable copy of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act is available online. Visit **https://www.alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx** to view or download the pdf version of this legislation.

Step 4: Obtain input before finalizing.
Have each person who works on the farm review the roles and responsibilities for their position and provide input, especially if they were not involved earlier in the development process. This can be done in a group meeting, using one-on-one conversations, etc.

Step 5: Finalize, review and make the roles and responsibilities accessible.
Once complete, keep these documents on file and use them to help create job descriptions, job postings, performance reviews and training plans as needed. Ensure new team members become familiar with the responsibilities for their position before starting work and keep copies in an area where the people working on the farm can refer back to them.

Step 6: Review the roles and responsibilities regularly

These roles and responsibilities should be reviewed on a regular basis. Ideally, this would happen annually. Like everything else, things will change on your farm, and this will result in the roles and responsibilities needing updated. If annual reviews are not possible, the roles and responsibilities can be reviewed as often as makes sense for the farm, however we do not recommend that reviews occur any further apart than once every three years. If the farm experiences major changes, such as the addition of a new barn or some form of diversification, a review will need to take place right away.

Role: The positions or purposes that someone has in a situation or organization; the positions held by various people on the farm.

Responsibilities: The tasks or duties that people in the various positions are expected to complete as function of their job.

IMPORTANT NOTE

If someone is not clear on what their role and responsibilities are, how can they be expected to perform their job well, let alone be held accountable for when they do not meet expectations?

Examples of Roles and Responsibilities

Below are examples that can be used as a guide when developing farm-specific roles and responsibilities. Keep in mind that these relate to what is required by worksite parties under the Alberta OHS Act and the farm will need to ensure that the roles and responsibilities it creates reflect legislation in addition to its own particular needs.

Employer/farm business role

The farm will ensure that:

- The health, safety and welfare of workers and others who may be present at or near the worksite and anyone who may be affected by the identifiable and controllable hazards relating the work performed is protected.
- Workers are aware of their rights and duties under Alberta OHS legislation.
- No person on or working for the farm will be subjected to or participate in any form of bullying, harassment or violence.

- Workers are supervised by a competent person who is familiar with applicable Alberta OHS legislation.
- The health and safety committee or the health and safety representative (if applicable) perform their duties as assigned under the Alberta OHS Act, Code and Terms of Reference.
- It will work with the health and safety committee or the health and safety representative to resolve health and safety matters in a timely manner.
- All workers employed by the farm will be adequately trained in all matters necessary to perform their work in safe and healthy manner.
- Workers will be informed of the health and safety hazards relating to the farm and their work, in addition to how to control these hazards.
- It has developed policies, job procedures, and emergency response procedures for the farm.
- It will investigate incidents, near misses, and potentially serious incidents (PSIs), and using the findings of these investigations, identify and take corrective actions to prevent them from happening again.
- Everyone employed by the farm is aware of their health and safety roles and responsibilities, as well as what is considered acceptable and unacceptable performance, and ensuring that all workplace parties are held accountable for safety violations and unacceptable performance in a way that is fair and fitting for the circumstances.
- It ensures that the work is performed by a competent worker, or the work is being performed under the direct supervision of a competent worker.
- Information relating to workplace hazards, controls, procedures, practices and other safety related information such as safety data sheets and operators' manuals are kept available and easily accessed by workers and a prime contractor, if one is present.
- A current paper, downloaded or stored copy of the Alberta OHS Act, Regulations and Code is available and easily accessed by workers and the health and safety committee or health and safety representative.
- Every self-employed person performing work on the farm but not employed by it works in a safe and healthy manner and complies with all requirements imposed by Alberta OHS legislation and their employer.
- Ensure that getting the job done quickly or in a cost-effective manner does not take priority over safety or compromises health and safety.
- It will cooperate with any person exercising a duty imposed by the Alberta Act, the regulations and the OHS Code.
- It meets or exceeds other legislated requirements.

Supervisor role

Supervisors will ensure that:

- As far as reasonably practicable, they will take all precautions necessary to protect the health and safety of every worker under their supervision.
- Workers under their supervision are working in a safe and healthy manner and following the farm's procedures, safe work practices and Alberta OHS legislation.
- None of the workers under their supervision are subjected to or participate in any form of bullying, harassment or violence.
- Workers under their supervision are advised of all known or reasonably possible hazards in the work area or relating to the work being performed.
- They will immediately report any health and safety related issues or concerns to the farm, including injuries, illness, equipment damage, near misses, potential for serious incidents (PSIs) and hazards that do or could exist.
- They will cooperate with any person exercising a duty imposed by the Alberta OHS Act, Regulations and Code.
- They will ensure all workers under their supervision have the proper training and equipment (i.e., tools, personal protective equipment, etc.) for the work they are expected to do.
- They know and communicate workers health and safety rights and responsibilities to those under their supervision.
- Everyone under their supervision is aware of their health and safety roles, responsibilities as well as what is considered acceptable and unacceptable performance, and ensuring that the farm is advised of any instances of unacceptable behavior or safety violations in a timely manner.
- Coach, mentor and request additional training for any workers under their supervision when they find a worker whose skills, knowledge or abilities require further development.
- Any health and safety concerns brought to them are immediately and properly addressed or escalated as per the farm's reporting policy and procedure.

Worker role

Workers will ensure that they will:

- Work in a safe and healthy manner, ensuring their health and safety and the health and safety of anyone else near or in the surrounding area of the work being done.
- Cooperate with their supervisor, employer and any other person for the purpose of protecting the health and safety of themselves and any other person at or near the where the work is being performed.
- Actively participate in and apply the training provided by the farm.
- Use the proper tools and equipment, including all personal protective equipment (PPE) required by the farm and/or Alberta OHS legislation.

- Not participate in bullying, harassment or violence.
- Ask their supervisor for help or additional training if they are unsure about how to perform any part of their task.
- Report to the employer or their supervisor any concerns about unsafe acts or conditions.
- Inform their supervisor if there is anything that could affect their ability to work safely.
- Cooperate with any person exercising a duty imposed by the Alberta OHS Act, Regulations or Code.

Competent: "In relation to a person means adequately qualified, suitably trained and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimal degree of supervision (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.1(d))."

Competent person: A person with the necessary qualifications, training, experience and attitudes to do something well or to a set standard.

Direct supervisor: A person who is present at all times and oversees the activities of the people they supervise, providing direction, feedback and assistance to the people they supervise.

Supervisor: "A person in charge of a worksite or (has) authority over a worker (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.1(nn))."

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Farm businesses must be compliant with the applicable rules and regulations created by legislators and governing bodies, otherwise, they may be held accountable for failing to do so. Farm employers are also responsible for ensuring that the people working on their farm are compliant with both legislation and the farm's health and safety program, as well as hold people accountable when they are not.

Accountability is what ensures the health and safety program is carried out as planned. This includes ensuring that everyone who has a responsibility assigned to them understands what is required of them. Without accountability, participation in the program will be thought of as optional and the health and safety program will not be treated as a legitimate part of the farm's operations and goals. When non-compliance occurs, the farm business must investigate why non-compliance happened, hold the workplace party accountable for it and take any necessary corrective actions.

Accountability can be built by:

- Developing clear rules, responsibilities and expectations for people to follow.
- Establishing consistent methods for addressing non-compliance.
- Communicating rules, responsibilities and expectations regularly.
- Conducting regular performance reviews.
- Following established methods for addressing safety non-compliances and consequences whenever required.

There can be many reasons why someone may not be compliant with a part of the farm's health and safety program. It is important for the farm to identify the reasons why the non-compliance occurred, rather than go directly to a disciplinary action. For example, if a worker has been non-compliant due to a substance use disorder, immediate termination of their employment may be in violation of the Alberta Human Rights Act and lead to legal issues for the farm. More commonly, it is possible that the worker did not know that they were doing something wrong because they had not been properly trained before being assigned to the work. For these reasons and many others, the farm should investigate safety non-compliance and misconduct. You will learn more about investigations in Module 5: Investigations.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Accountability isn't just about workers. How does the farm's leadership hold themselves accountable for their responsibilities? If the farm's leaders don't do what they are supposed to, how can they possibly expect their workers to?

Accountability: An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Compliance: The act or state of following or meeting rules, regulations or expectations.

Non-compliance: Failing or refusing to follow or meet rules, regulations or expectations.

Misconduct: Unacceptable behavior

The Progressive Discipline Process

Conversations around safety related behaviours and performance issues may be difficult to have, but by ignoring the problems you are choosing to allow them to occur. This can result in an unsafe working environment, serious incidents, and a breakdown of your farm's safety culture. To address these types of problems, the farm will first need to develop a progressive discipline policy and procedure that:

- Is focused on treating people fairly.
- Clearly communicates the farm's expectations.
- Clearly states what the procedure is.
- Can be applied consistently but is flexible enough to take into account the circumstances of each situation.
- Uses corrective actions rather than punishment.

Progressive discipline is a process where a series of increasingly more severe measures are taken in an effort to correct an employee's behaviour or performance. These behaviour or performance issues are commonly the result of incompetence (a person does not have the skills or ability to perform the job as required) or misconduct (a person breaks rule or ignores their responsibilities).

Employer Checklist for Progressive Discipline

Incompetence	Misconduct
A person does not have the skills or ability to perform the job as required.	A person breaks a rule or ignores their responsibilities.
• Set clear, reasonable job expectations in the farm's policy. • Clearly communicate job expectations to everyone who works on the farm. • Bring behaviour or performance issues to the person's attention right away. • Provide adequate supervision, training and instruction. • Give reasonable warning that failure to meet these expectations could result in dismissal. • Give the person time and opportunity to meet the job expectations using coaching and a corrective action plan. • As a final step in the process, if there is no improvement in the issue, dismiss the person. • Keep complete written records of everything.	• Give the person an opportunity to tell his/her story about the misconduct. • Collect all the relevant facts around the misconduct. • Give the person a verbal warning; where appropriate, provide the person time and opportunity to meet the job expectations using coaching and a corrective action plan. • Give the person a written warning. • Suspend the person from work. • As a final step in the process, dismiss the person. • Keep complete written records of everything.

(adapted from Government of Canada, 2022)

Disciplinary Considerations

While discipline needs to be consistent, there are factors that may provide grounds for increasing or decreasing the level of discipline applied to the situation.
These factors include:

- The seriousness or severity of the issue.
- The effect it has on others working on the farm, and/or the farm itself.
- How long the person has been working on the farm.
- What their previous record of performance and conduct is like.
- If the person was in some way provoked.
- Whether the misconduct was intentional or not.
- If the person was aware of the rules and those rules have been consistently enforced.
- Does the person admit their mistake and show remorse.

(adapted from BC Cook Articulation Committee, 2015)

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Disciplinary Policy template.
This and other templates are available at **agsafeab.ca**.

Coaching and Corrective Actions

Corrective actions are measures taken to eliminate the cause or reduce the risk of something (such as a hazard) and/or an action taken to prevent something from happening again (such as a behaviour). Coaching is considered a type of corrective action that focuses on improving a behaviour rather than punishing it. When issues arise with a person's behavior or performance, it is best to talk to the person first to ensure they are aware of the issue. Be specific about the nature of the problem and ensure that the person understands what additional disciplinary actions are possible if the behaviour or performance issue continues.

When having a coaching conversation with someone:

- Point out the objective facts of the issue (who, what, when, where).
- Ask the person to explain what happened (get their side of the story).
- Explain what the expected behaviour or performance level is and the impact the issue has on others and/or the workplace.
- Discuss ways to improve the behaviour or performance issue and ask the person what they need to perform successfully in this area of work.

- Develop a corrective action plan; decide on realistic ways to improve the behaviour or performance issue, how improvement will be measured and set timelines.
- Remember to point out areas where the person is performing well and build on those areas; coaching should not be crushing!
- Document that the conversation occurred and keep a copy in the employee's personnel file.
- Follow up with the person and measure how effective the correction actions have been.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of the AgSafe Alberta Coaching Worksheet is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Coaching: An informal corrective action (you will learn more about corrective actions later in this manual) that focuses on improving a behaviour rather than punishing it.

Corrective action: An action taken to eliminate the cause or reduce the risk of something; an action taken to prevent something from happening again.

Corrective action plan: A step by step plan of action that is developed and followed in order to achieve a desired outcome.

Progressive discipline: A process where a series of increasingly more severe measures are taken in an effort to correct an employee's behaviour or performance.

Incompetence: A person does not have the skills or ability to perform the job as required.

Misconduct: Unacceptable behavior; when a person breaks rule or ignores their responsibilities.

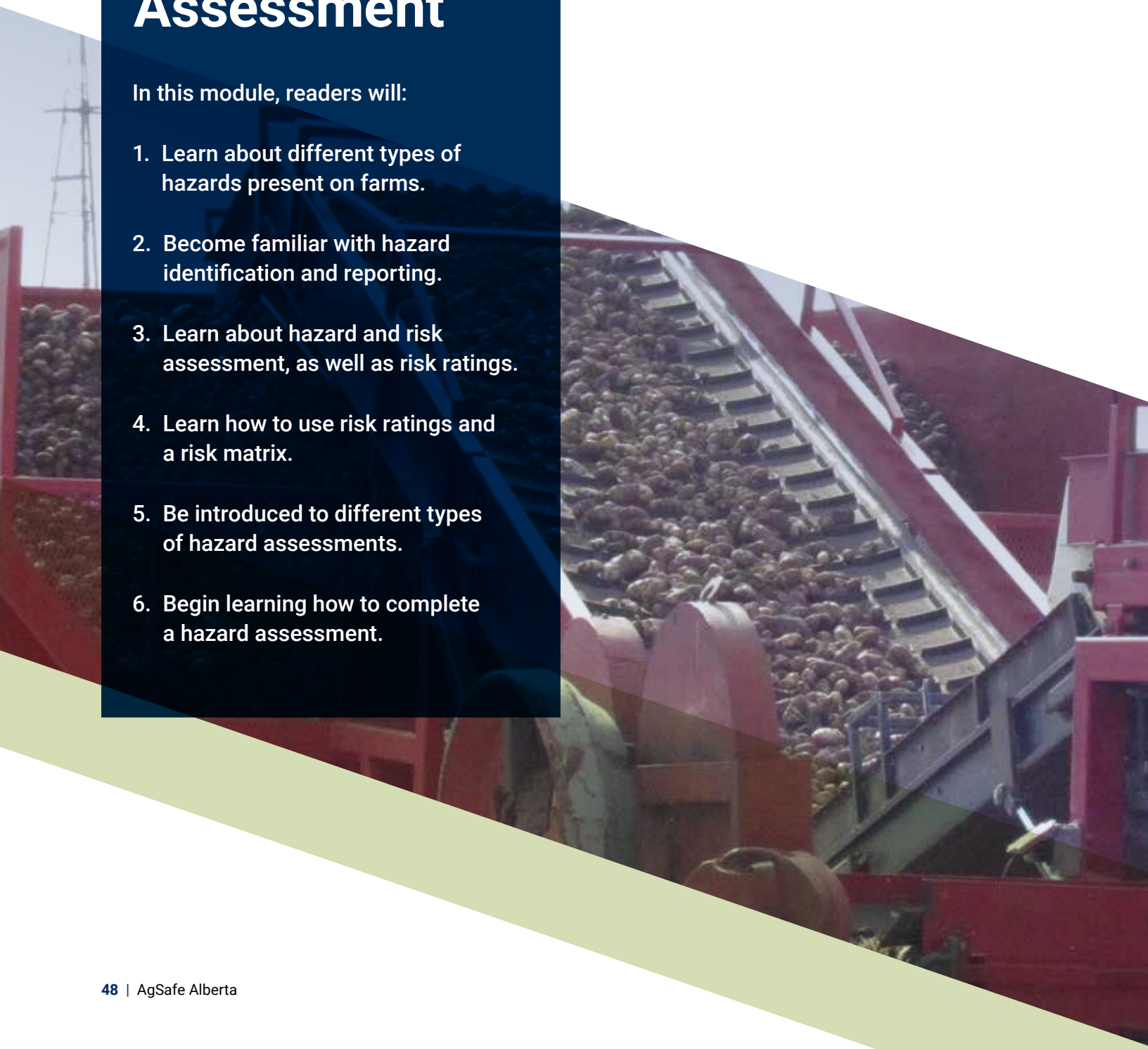
MODULE

2

Hazard Identification & Assessment

In this module, readers will:

1. Learn about different types of hazards present on farms.
2. Become familiar with hazard identification and reporting.
3. Learn about hazard and risk assessment, as well as risk ratings.
4. Learn how to use risk ratings and a risk matrix.
5. Be introduced to different types of hazard assessments.
6. Begin learning how to complete a hazard assessment.



INTRODUCTION

The ongoing identification, assessment, and control of hazards is essential to helping keep the people working on your farm safe. It is important to evaluate all jobs and tasks for hazards before work begins and regularly thereafter. As workers need to be involved in this process, you will want to ensure that they are trained on:

- What hazards are.
- How to identify hazards.
- How to assess hazards.
- How to eliminate and control hazards.
- How to use the hazard control measures put in place in their work areas.

At the end of the Foreword and Introduction, you were introduced to the hazard identification, assessment and control process. In this module, you will learn about the first four steps.

Step 1: Create an inventory of jobs.

Step 2: Create an inventory of tasks associated with each job.

Step 3: Identify the hazards associated with each of the tasks.

Step 4: Assess the hazards you have identified (Risk = Severity x Likelihood).

Step 5: Identify hazard control measures.

Step 6: Select appropriate hazard control measures.

Step 7: Put the hazard control measures into place.

Step 8: Communicate and train your farm team on hazard control measures.

Step 9: Monitor the hazard controls for use and effectiveness.

Step 10: Review and revise as needed.

WHAT ARE HAZARDS?

A hazard is something that could cause damage or harm to someone or something on your farm. Injuries, illness, and other workplace incidents are allowed to happen when the hazards of jobs and tasks are not identified, go unrecognized, or worse, are ignored. Some hazards are easier to identify, like an overhead power line. Other hazards, such as small particles of grain dust that have been breathed in countless times over many years is not so readily identified... that is, until someone becomes sick.

Hazards can be grouped into the following seven categories:

Safety hazards refer to anything that has the potential to cause immediate injury, such as using an unguarded grain auger or driving a truck without fully functioning brakes. Other examples include:

- Driving and operating equipment.
- Live electrical systems.
- Tool and machine use.
- Manual material handling.
- Ladder use and working at heights.
- Things that can result in slips, trips, and falls.

Health hazards refer to anything that has the potential to cause an acute or chronic condition, illness or disease from exposure, such as working in extremely cold temperatures or working in a poultry barn where ammonia is present for many years.

- Respiratory hazards, such as grain dusts, ammonia, mold spores, etc.
- Noise.
- Exposure to things that may cause skin conditions such as contact dermatitis, heat rash, infections, etc.
- Exposures to things that may cause cancers such as asbestos, aflatoxins from fungi, or diesel exhaust.

Chemical hazards are hazards associated with the storage, handling or use of chemicals. The term chemical refers to a substance or mixture of substances. These substances can potentially cause harm to people, livestock, and the environment. Examples include:

- Sanitizers, solvents, and common cleaning products.
- Pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, fumigants, animal systemics).
- Veterinary drugs.
- Fuels and petroleum products.
- Welding gases, fumes and smoke.

Biological hazards are organic substances that can harm someone's health. Examples include:

- Bacteria and viruses that can cause illness and disease such as Lyme disease, ringworm, brucellosis, leptospirosis, listeriosis, q-fever, hantavirus, etc.
- Molds and spores from spoiled feed or in damp storage areas.
- Plants and pollen.
- Animals, including their body fluids and fecal matter.

Physical hazards are hazards that pose a threat to someone's physical safety. These include:

- Exposure to vibrations that can have negative vascular and neurological effects.
- Moving parts on machines and equipment that can cut, crush or entrap someone.
- Exposure to temperatures that could result in heat stress, cold stress, burns, or frostbite.
- Weather, such as hail or lighting.

Psychosocial hazards are those things that can harm someone's mental health and wellbeing. Examples include:

- Bullying and harassment, such as name calling, making jokes at someone else's expense, etc.
- Stressful working conditions, such as expecting too much to get done in the time available or expecting a task to be completed without having the right tools or labor available.
- An unsafe working environment, such as one that does not have guards on equipment or where people are permitted to operate equipment while under the effects of drugs or alcohol.

Ergonomic hazards are physical factors that may cause musculoskeletal injuries. These include:

- Sitting or holding the same position for long periods of time, such as long hours in a tractor cab.
- Repetitive motions, such as pressing a clutch or shifting gears in a grain truck.
- Awkward working positions, such as those needed when welding and repairing equipment.
- Excessive force injuries, such as when hammering spikes into a wooden pen or fence panel.
- Carrying heavy, awkward and/or moving loads, such as a sick calf or sheep.
- Long hours standing on a hard surface, such as in a barn or on a dairy parlor floor.

Health Hazards and Safety Hazards

Many hazards can belong to more than one of the seven hazard categories. For example, sitting for long periods of time can be a physical, health and an ergonomic hazard. Inhaling grain dust that contains mold over many years is a biological, physical and a health hazard. It may be helpful to think of the two main categories of hazards as health hazards and safety hazards, however, breaking them out into smaller categories will make it easier to identify more specific types of hazards. As this module continues, other categories of hazards will be introduced (i.e., respiratory hazards); it is important not to overthink the information, but simply to become familiar with the types of hazards you will need to be able to identify while working on the farm.

Acute condition: Of sudden onset, lasting a short time or requiring short-term medical care.

Chemical: Refers to a substance or mixture of substances.

Chronic condition: A problematic condition or illness that lasts for a long time or happens repeatedly.

Exposure: Being exposed to and unprotected from a hazard.

Hazard: Something that could cause damage or harm to someone or something on your farm.

Health hazard: Anything that has the potential to cause an acute or chronic condition, illness or disease from exposure.

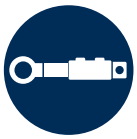
Musculoskeletal: Involving both the musculature and skeleton of the body.

Safety hazard: Anything that has the potential to cause immediate injury.

Hazardous Energy

There are several types of hazardous energy, all of which are common on farms but not always recognized. Hazardous energy can be defined as any electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, nuclear, thermal, gravitational, or other energy that could cause damage or harm to someone or something. When identifying hazards, take a moment to consider the different types of hazardous energy.

Electrical energy: This type of energy relates to the movement of electrically charged particles. It can be live (i.e., powerlines) or stored (i.e., batteries). Our bodies, equipment and even tools such as a ladder can conduct electricity. Injuries from this type of energy are electrocutions, electric shocks, burns and falls.



Hydraulic energy: This type of energy involves the power and energy in a pressurized liquid. Braking systems and tractor loaders use this type of energy. When released in an uncontrolled way, people may be crushed or struck by machinery, equipment, or their parts.

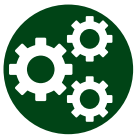
Pneumatic energy: This energy relates to the power and energy in pressurized air. Air brakes, spraying devices and air tools use this type of energy. When released in an uncontrolled way, people may be crushed or struck by machinery, equipment, or their parts.

Chemical energy: This type of energy is stored in the bonds of chemical compounds. It is released when a substance undergoes a chemical reaction. The energy that is released may be in the form of heat or pressure, and commonly results in a fire or explosion. Injuries may result from the chemical exposure or a resulting fire and/or explosion.

Thermal energy: This energy is in the form of heat and is sometimes called heat energy; it is the energy in an object or system as a result of its temperature. This type of energy includes explosions, flames, high/low temperatures, and radiation from heat sources. Burns, dehydration, and frostbite (an injury that results from exposure to excessively cold temperatures and heat loss) are common injuries that relate to this type of energy.

Radiation energy: Radiation is energy that travels from a source in the form of waves or particles through space or a material at the speed of light. There are different types of radiation; the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety identifies ionizing, low-frequency electromagnetic, optical and radio-frequency electromagnetic radiation. Injuries that can occur are burns, changes to genetic material or reproductive systems and such disorders as headache, insomnia, and other functional disorders (CCOHS, 2021).

Gravitational energy: This energy is stored in an object and relates to both the objects distance from the ground and its weight. This type of energy increases as the object gets further from the ground and/or goes up in weight. People can be crushed, struck, or impaled by falling objects; even seemingly small and harmless objects falling from the right height can cause serious or fatal injuries.



Mechanical energy: An object, machine, tool, etc. has this type of energy due to its motion or its position. Mechanical energy can be either kinetic energy (energy of motion, such as a moving tractor) or potential energy (stored energy of position, such as a coiled and compressed spring). When released in an uncontrolled way, people may be crushed or struck by machinery, equipment, or their parts.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2021)

DID YOU KNOW?

High pressure injection injuries occur when substances (i.e., hydraulic fluid, compressed air, water, etc.) from some form of pressurized equipment (i.e., air hose) break the skin. These small puncture wounds are often underestimated, and the injection can lead to significant tissue damage, loss of a limb or even death under the right circumstances.

(Dailiana, H.Z., et at, 2008, p.33-36)

Chemical energy: This type of energy is stored in the bonds of chemical compounds and is released when a substance undergoes a chemical reaction.

Electrical energy: This type of energy relates to the movement of electrically charged particles.

Gravitational energy: This energy is stored in an object and relates to the object's mass and distance from the ground; this type of energy increases as the object gets further from the ground and/or goes up in weight.

Hazardous energy: Any electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, nuclear, thermal, gravitational, or other energy that could cause damage or harm to someone or something.

Hydraulic energy: This type of energy involves the movement of a fluid and is stored in a pressurized liquid.

Kinetic energy: Energy that is in motion.

Mechanical energy: This type of energy results from an object's motion or its position.

Potential energy: Energy that is stored.

Pneumatic energy: This type of energy involves the power and energy in a pressurized liquid.

Radiation energy: Radiation is energy that travels from a source in the form of waves or particles though space or a material at the speed of light.

Thermal energy: This energy is in the form of heat and is sometimes called heat energy; it is the energy in an object or system as a result of its temperature.

Respiratory Hazards and Oxygen Deficiency

Farming is filled with respiratory and atmospheric hazards, such as pesticide vapors and mists, crop and feed dusts, mold spores, and even toxic gases like hydrogen sulfide from manure pits or nitrogen dioxide in silos. As some of these hazards cannot always be sensed (seen, smelled, felt, or tasted) and sometimes the types of injury or illness they produce can go unrecognized for years, these hazards may not get identified until it is too late.

Gases: Gases are substances that do not exist as solids or liquids at room temperature. They can be used in a task (i.e., welding) or be produced by some other process occurring on the farm (i.e., composting). Gases can easily spread throughout a building, work area or other type of enclosure. Some gases are heavier than air and will settle in low lying areas, such as pits or trenches. They can be toxic, flammable or explosive.

Vapors: Evaporation produces vapors, which is to say that vapors are released from products such as pesticides or adhesives. Vapors are the gaseous form of a substance that is normally a liquid or a solid at room temperature and at an average pressure. An example of a solid that can produce vapors at room temperature would be mothballs.

Dusts and fibers: Dusts and fibers are small solid fragments or tiny pieces of something that may or may not be visible to the naked eye. They can be produced mechanically (i.e., by grinding, milling, crushing, cutting, sanding or drilling) or naturally by the shedding of skin cells (i.e., animal dander).

Mists: Mists are tiny droplets suspended in air that are produced by scattering or distributing a liquid over an area or by condensation (when a vapor or gas changes into a liquid form). Pesticide mists are an example of this type of hazard.

Fumes: Fumes are very small solid particles suspended in the air. They can be produced not only from a material itself, but the breakdown of any coatings or paints on a material during heating (i.e., welding, soldering, brazing, or cutting fumes).

Airborne biological contaminants: Airborne biological contaminants are biological hazards that are carried by or are in the air. Examples can include bacteria (i.e., mycobacteria tuberculosis or coxiella burnetti), viruses (i.e., hantavirus), mold and mold spores (i.e., mycotoxins) as well as plant and animal materials (i.e., animal dander, dried feces).

Oxygen deficiency: The normal air around us contains almost 21% oxygen. Air that contains less than 19.5% oxygen is called oxygen deficient. Low levels of oxygen can be caused by displacement by other gases (i.e., welding gases, carbon monoxide), the rotting of organic matter (i.e., when micro-organisms consume oxygen and produce flammable methane gas that can also displace oxygen), combustion processes and even oxidation processes (i.e., rusting). Potentially oxygen deficient areas to be mindful of on farms include manure pits, root cellars, storage bins with rotting feed and enclosed storage containers that are rusting on the inside.

Airborne: Something that is suspended in or carried by the air.

Biological contaminant: Bacteria, molds, mold spores, pollens, viruses, and other biological materials that are polluting or poisonous in some way.

Dust: Small solid fragments or tiny pieces of something that may or may not be visible to the naked eye.

Fiber: A small solid fragment or tiny piece of something with a threadlike or elongated shape that may or may not be visible to the naked eye.

Fumes: Very fine, solid particles that are suspended in air, such as in smoke, vapor or gas.

Gas: A gas is a substance that does not exist as a solid or liquid at room temperature.

Mist: Tiny droplets suspended in air that are produced by scattering or distributing a liquid over an area or by condensation (when a vapor or gas changes into a liquid form).

Oxygen deficient air: Air with a low oxygen content; Air that contains less than 19.5% oxygen.

Vapor: The gaseous form of a substance that is normally a liquid or a solid at room temperature.

Restricted and Confined Spaces

Restricted and confined spaces are surprisingly common yet unrecognized on farms and ranches. In order to recognize one of these spaces, you will first need to understand what they are.

Restricted spaces

A restricted space is a work area that:

- Is not meant to have someone in it all of the time or even very often.
- Would be big enough to enter and difficult to get in or out of.
- Would not have any other hazards or have the hazards properly controlled.

Think of a space with a small entry way or with obstructions that would make passage or moving around inside of it hard. An example of a restricted space may be the attic of a house, where the access ladder and hatch would make it difficult to go into and leave the space but would pose no other threat to someone's health or safety while being in it.

(Occupational Health and Safety Code, Statutes of Alberta (2021, s.1))

Confined spaces

A confined space is a restricted space which is hazardous, or may become hazardous, to a person entering it because of:

- An atmosphere that has too little or too much oxygen, is flammable, explosive or toxic (i.e., silo gases in a silage bunker).
- A condition or changing set of events that may cause illness or injury (i.e., someone inside a grain bin and someone outside turns on the auger).
- The potential for an activity to produce dangerous or harmful results in the space (i.e., using a harsh cleaning product in the confined space may allow toxic fumes to build up).
- The basic characteristics of an activity that can produce dangerous or harmful results in the space (i.e., welding in a confined space).

(Occupational Health and Safety Code, Statutes of Alberta (2021, s.1))

Examples of Confined Spaces in Agriculture

- Grain and feed storage facilities
- Corrugated steel bins
- Silos
- Sprayer and chemical transport vehicles
- Bulk liquid storage tanks
- Fermentation vessels
- Feed mixer wagons/tanks
- Grain driers
- Composting ponds
- Pump sheds
- Trenches and open ditches
- Sumps, tunnels, and pump pits
- Forage storage
- Containment areas around diked storage tanks
- Tunnels (i.e. conveyor tunnel)
- Forage and silage dump wagons
- Wells, cisterns, dry wells
- Fuel storage tanks
- Sea cans
- Feed grinders/mixers
- Culverts
- Root cellars
- Manure storage tanks
- Manure/bio-digester units
- Manure transport vehicles (tanks and applicators)
- Storage and mixing tanks, bins and silos
- Climate controlled plant storage units
- Septic tanks
- Manure or silage pits
- Bunkers
- Grain wagons
- Dump pits

(adapted from U.S. Department of Labour, 2018, p. 1-2)

Less Recognized Hazards

Some hazards can be so common that we don't even recognize them as hazards (do you remember the term ***risk blindness*** from Module 1?). Here are just a few examples of hazards that may go unnoticed.

Fatigue: Fatigue is more than just feeling tired, it is having to push yourself through every day despite feeling constantly weak or exhausted. Many factors contribute to fatigue, such as a lack of sleep, long periods of mental and physical work, as well as long periods of stress. Fatigue is a form of impairment that impacts a person's ability to work safely, and research has shown that the effects are similar to alcohol impairment.

The Government of Alberta, Labour reports that fatigue can:

- Reduce mental and physical function.
- Impair judgement and concentration.
- Lower motivation.
- Slow reaction time.
- Increasing risk-taking behavior.

(Government of Alberta, Labour, 2017, p.1)

Stress: Stress is any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain and is the body's response to anything that requires attention or action (WHO, 2021). Everyone will experience stress to some degree, and not all stress is bad. Stress becomes an issue when it starts to impact someone's overall well-being.

Stress can affect health and safety when it:

- Becomes a distraction. When the source of stress can take a person's mind off of what they are doing, it can lead to mistakes.
- Motivates people to take shortcuts when there is a tight deadline.
- Leads to substance misuse, and in turn, the effects of substance misuse can create safety issues in the workplace.
- Contributes to violence and other inappropriate conduct in the workplace.

(Columbia Southern University, 2020)

Violence: Violence can be any act where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated, or assaulted (CCOHS, 2020). This can include threatening behaviors (i.e., throwing objects), threats (i.e., "I'm going to kill you"), verbal abuse (i.e., swearing at or insulting someone) and physical attacks (i.e., hitting, shoving, pushing, or kicking).

Harassment: Harassment is an unwelcome behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, scares, or verbally abuses someone and is often included as a form of violence (CCOHS, 2020).

Substance use and misuse: The term substance use refers to any use of alcohol or illicit drugs, the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs or any accepted use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs which results in adverse side-effects or reactions (Government of Canada, 2015). Substance use and misuse can result in impairment (that is, a loss of function or ability), which in turn can lead to mistakes being made and incidents occurring.

Fatigue: A form of impairment. A feeling of having to push yourself through every day despite feeling constantly weak or exhausted.

Harassment: An unwelcome behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, scares, or verbally abuses someone and is often included as a form of violence.

Impairment: A decrease in or loss of function or ability.

Stress: Any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain and is the body's response to anything that requires attention or action (WHO, 2021).

Substance misuse: A non-judgmental term that refers to the use of a substance in a way that it is not meant to be used.

Substance use: Any use of alcohol or illicit drugs, the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs or any accepted use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs which results in adverse side-effects or reactions (Government of Canada, 2012).

Violence: Any act where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated, or assaulted.

FARMERS CARE

AgSafe Alberta developed the FARMERS CARE program to be a simple and practical tool that can be used to help identify common agricultural hazards and introduce basic health and safety concepts. Each letter of the FARMERS CARE acronym represents a risk area, mechanism of injury, or outcome resulting from the uncontrolled hazard. There are many resources that have been built around FARMERS CARE, such as an online learning program, printed materials and a booklet. To register for, view or order any of these items, visit **agsafeab.ca**.

Acronym: A shortened form of a longer name or phrase formed by the first letter of each word.

Mechanism of injury: The transfer of energy from an external force to an individual's body which results in an injury.

Risk area: An area where there is a risk of injury, illness or damage.

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Fixing a work-related hazard after someone becomes injured or ill is not an acceptable approach to health and safety. Identifying hazards and controlling them before an injury or illness occurs is not only more effective, but also what is required of employers by legislation. Hazard identification is an ongoing process, which means that some form of hazard identification should always be taking place, as should corrective actions when needed.

Hazards can be identified at several points, such as:

- **When something new is being designed, built or installed.** This could be when you are designing a new work area (i.e., dairy parlor, barn or cattle handling facility), when a new process or procedure is introduced and when new equipment or machines are being brought in (i.e., a new conveyor).

- **Before jobs or tasks are done**. This can include a quick pre-inspection of the work area and equipment to be used, a pre-job meeting/toolbox talk, etc.
- **While jobs or tasks are being performed.** It is always important to remain aware of our surroundings, of any changes that occur and the development of any potentially unsafe conditions.
- **When performing inspections**. Inspections can include routine inspections, pre-job inspections, formal inspections, informal inspections, supervisor walk-throughs, health and safety committee inspections, etc. Inspections are a critical part of identifying hazards before an incident occurs; for this reason, Module 4 is dedicated to inspections.
- **Following a near miss, potentially serious incident (PSI) or incident.** Ideally, this would be following a near miss incident being reported. It may also be following an injury, illness or some form of equipment damage. While this is not the best time to identify hazards, it is still very important that this is done to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future. Module 5 focuses on incident investigations.

Tips for identifying hazards

- Take into account the physical work environment, tools and equipment, materials, products, etc. that are used.
- Consider how the work is scheduled, who is doing it, in what conditions and when (i.e., season or time of day).
- Look at all aspects of the job or task, including non-routine or rarely performed activities such as cleaning, maintenance and repair.
- Observe how the jobs or tasks are performed; talk to the people who perform the task (this includes all shifts) as they will be the most familiar and knowledgeable about the job and its hazards.
- Determine whether a product, machine or equipment can be intentionally or unintentionally changed (i.e., can a guard be removed or a safety feature disabled?).
- Examine risks to contractors, visitors (i.e., during open farm days) or the public (i.e., carrying a load of bales on a highway).
- Consider the groups of people that may have a different level of risk. This includes young or inexperienced workers, older workers, persons with disabilities, persons with medical conditions, and new or expectant mothers.
- Review the farm's injury, illness and incident records, workers compensation records (i.e., identify the types and sources of past injuries and illnesses for your farm or your WCB industry code), and reviewing industry information to identify the most common hazards faced by your producer group.

Hazard Identification and Reporting

It is important that workers report hazards to their supervisor, and the OHS Act even legislates that workers report concerns about unsafe acts or conditions to their supervisor or employer (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.5(c)). It is equally important that the farm has a process in place to report hazards and concerns, as well as that the supervisor or employer has the tools and resources to assess and control the hazard appropriately. A farm can support the hazard identification process by creating a system that enables workers to report any unsafe practices and conditions, such as using Hazard ID Cards. Having a system that allows workers to report new or different hazards and unsafe acts or conditions will help to ensure that hazards are being identified, assessed and controlled before an incident occurs.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of the AgSafe Alberta Hazard ID Card is available at **agsafeab.ca.**

The activity that follows asks you to use the AgSafe Alberta Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet and the AgSafe Alberta Hazard Identification Checklist. These resources are available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be downloaded and customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

ACTIVITY

Use the Position List Worksheet that you completed at the end of the Introduction and Foreword to help you complete these next steps.

1. Pick one of the positions listed in the Position List Worksheet that you completed.
2. Using the position you have chosen, complete the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet found at **agsafeab.ca**.
3. Select one of the jobs or tasks listed in the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet that you have just created. Next, think about the types of hazards you learned about earlier in this module. Ask yourself these questions:
   a. What hazards might someone be exposed to while performing this job or task?
   b. What can go wrong while performing this job or task?
   c. If something did go wrong, how bad could the outcomes be?
   d. What could set the hazard off and cause something to go wrong?
   e. What could play a part in or contribute to something going wrong?
4. To help you work through this, refer to the Hazard Identification Checklist found at **agsafeab.ca**.

HAZARD AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Once you have identified the hazards associated with a job or task, you will need to evaluate them. This is called a hazard assessment, and it involves considering what bad things could happen (i.e., injury, illness, or loss event), how likely these potential outcomes are to happen, and how bad any potential outcomes could be (consequences). As you likely already recognize, determining risk (the chance or likelihood of an injury, damage or loss occurring) is an important part of the hazard assessment process.

Why Hazard and Risk Assessment is Important

The importance of hazard identification, assessment and control cannot be overstated; your health and safety program is built on this foundational work, and without a solid foundation, your health and safety program will be weak. Hazard and risk assessments help to:

- Prevent injuries, illnesses and equipment damage.
- Create awareness of hazards and risks present on the farm.
- Identify who may be at risk (i.e., young workers, older family members, employees, visitors, contractors, etc.).
- Find out if existing hazard control measures are enough or if more still needs to be done to better address a particular hazard (i.e., develop and implement a fall protection program).
- Prioritize hazards and control measures when decisions need to be made.
- Meet the requirements of Alberta OHS legislation.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2017)

The Difference Between Hazard and Risk

It is important to be clear on the difference between a hazard and a risk. Where a hazard can be a thing, substance, material, energy source, condition, process, method or behavior, the risk is the chance or likelihood of harm (or potential harm) exposure to that hazard may result in.

Type of Hazard	Hazard Example	Risk Example
Substance	Exposure to Mycotil 300® (veterinary drug)	Cardiac arrest
Condition	Walking in an icy and rutted farmyard	Slip, trip, fall
Behaviour	Not using hearing protection in a loud hog barn	Hearing loss

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Hazard assessment: 1. The process of evaluating the hazards identified for a particular job or task. 2. The written or unwritten process of evaluating the hazards and risks of a particular job or task and determining appropriate methods to eliminate or control these hazards.

Risk: The chance or likelihood of injury, damage or loss.

Calculating Risk Ratings and Using a Risk Matrix

A risk rating is determined by considering the likelihood of an injury, damage or loss event occurring and the severity of the injury, damage or loss event. Calculating a risk rating is easy, the formula is simply:

Risk Rating (R) = Severity (S) x Likelihood (L)

Risk rating (R): A number that represents the risk associated with a job or task.

Severity (S): If something went wrong, how bad would the consequences be? Would it be a scraped knee, a broken bone, a lost limb or even a loss of life? While we have not talked about hazard controls much yet, the types of hazard controls in place will have an effect on the severity of the outcome (i.e., having a highly effect machine guard preventing contact with a rotating part versus relying on telling people to "be careful"). For our purposes, severity is scored on a scale of 1 to 5:

Score	Severity Explanation
5	**Catastrophic:** Death or permanent disability. Extensive property and/or environmental damage. Something the farm may not recover from. Cost over $1,000,000.
4	**Major:** Life threatening injury or illness requiring admission to hospital. Significant property and/or environmental damage. Something difficult for the farm to recover from. Cost between $20,000 and $1,000,000.
3	**Moderate:** Injury or illness requiring admission to hospital for something not life threatening and resulting in a full recovery. Property and/or environmental damage that may take 1 or 2 months to repair. Cost between $5,000 and $20,000.
2	**Minor:** Minor illness or injury requiring medical attention from a health care provider. Minor property and/or environmental damage. Cost under $5,000.
1	**Negligible:** Illness or injury that does not require medical attention. Property damage that does not require repair (i.e., scratched paint). No environmental damage.

Likelihood (L): How likely is it that the hazard and possible outcomes will occur? Think about how many people are involved in completing the job or task, how the job or task is performed (i.e., in broad daylight or at dusk?), and how often the job or task is performed (i.e., daily, weekly, monthly). For our purposes, likelihood is scored on a scale of 1 to 5:

Score	Likelihood Explanation
5	**Highly likely,** almost certain. Is expected to occur or could occur more than 10 times per year.
4	**Likely,** is expected to occur. Could occur at least once per year and up to 10 times per year.
3	**Moderate likelihood**. Might occur in some circumstances. Could occur once in the next 2 to 10 years.
2	**Unlikely,** but could happen. Could occur once in the next 11 to 50 years.
1	**Rare**. May occur but would be unexpected or could only occur in unusual circumstances.

Using the risk rating formula (Risk Rating (R) = Severity (S) x Likelihood (L)) and the scoring method provided, let's assess the risk associated with climbing into and out of a tractor.

Climbing into and out of the tractor:

What are some hazards that could result in an illness ,injury or damage to the equipment?	What would be the outcomes or consequences of these hazards?
A weak grip on the handrails.	Loss of balance, fall, soft tissue injury that may or may not require medical attention (i.e., from landing on the ground).
A slippery step or poor contact with the step.	Loss of balance, fall, soft tissue injury that may or may not require medical attention (i.e., from landing on the ground).

Severity	Likelihood	Formula
In most cases, the severity would be minor, resulting in soreness or bruising.	In this instance, the tractor is used once a day every day, so it is likely to occur.	R = S x L R = 2 x 3 R = 6

Important Consideration: The severity would increase if the person or people operating the tractor were older or had certain medical conditions like osteoporosis and the likelihood would go up if the tractor was used at least three times a day every day for an hour or more. How things are done, the equipment used, the hazards of the job or task, as well as the many factors that affect severity and likelihood will be different for every farm; this is why farm-specific hazard assessments need to be created.

So now you have a risk rating of 6. What does that mean? This is where a risk matrix can be a helpful guide to the people performing the hazard assessment. Immediately following this paragraph is a risk matrix and a risk rating explanation. Using the risk matrix below, climbing into and out of a tractor would pose a moderate risk and you would want to take reasonable hazard control measures to prevent an injury from occurring. You will learn about hazard control measures in the next module.

RISK MATRIX Formula (R) = (S) x (L)		**SEVERITY**				
		Negligible 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Catastrophic 5
LIKELIHOOD	Rare 1	1	2	3	4	5
	Unlikely 2	2	4	6	8	10
	Moderately Likely 3	3	6	9	12	15
	Likely 4	4	8	12	16	20
	Highly Likely 5	5	10	15	20	25

Risk Rating	Risk Rating Explanation
20 to 25 Extreme Risk	**Stop work immediately.** Is the job or task absolutely necessary? If not, don't do it. If so, the job or task needs to be rethought, redesigned, or needs serious modifications. Do not continue until actions are taken to eliminate the hazard(s) or reduce them to a reasonable level; seek professional advice or outside expertise on how to proceed.
15 to 16 Very High Risk	**Stop work immediately.** Is the job or task absolutely necessary? If not, don't do it. If so, do not continue until actions are taken to eliminate the hazard(s) or reduce them to a reasonable level; professional advice or outside expertise is recommended.
10 to12 High Risk	**Stop work immediately.** Is the job or task absolutely necessary? If not, don't do it. If so, do not continue until actions are taken to eliminate the hazard(s) or reduce them to a reasonable level. Professional advice or outside expertise may be required.
4 to 9 Moderate Risk	**Ensure actions are taken** to eliminate the hazard(s) or reduce them to a reasonable level. Review the hazard controls in place for effectiveness or if new hazard control measures should be considered. Be mindful of complacency.
1 to 3 Low Risk	**Keep monitoring the process.** Existing controls are likely adequate but should be monitored.

Things To Remember When Using A Risk Matrix

A risk matrix is a helpful tool that provides a visual representation of the risk assessment and categorizes the risk based on its severity and likelihood. The examples provided here reflect a 5x5 risk matrix (where the severity and likelihood are scored on a scale of 1 to 5). The reason a 5x5 matrix and scoring method is used here, is that it allows for more flexibility in determining severity and likelihood; this is useful when you think in terms of operating over decades or taking into account that an injury may be more serious than a single trip to the Emergency Room, but not as serious as a fatality or permanent disability.

A risk matrix can be as simple (i.e., a 3x3 risk matrix) or as complex (i.e., a 10x10 risk matrix) as you want it to be. There are many examples that can be found on the internet, and whatever risk matrix you decide on, ensure that it makes sense to everyone who will be using it and that if fits your operation. Depending on the risk matrix you use, there may be times where you will need to increase the severity of something because the risk rating is not sufficient. This can be seen when using a 3x3 risk matrix, such as the one that follows. Think of a hazard where the likelihood would be 2 (might happen) but the severity would be a 3 (high), such as a fatality. Using a 3x3 risk matrix, it would only be assigned a 6 but should be reassigned a rating of 9 because a fatality should be considered major. While helpful, any risk matrix will have its weaknesses. It is important to recognize these weaknesses and make adjustments as needed.

The three by three risk matrix shown was used in older versions of the AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan Manual.

3x3 Risk Matrix Example

		SEVERITY		
		Low 1	Medium 2	High 3
LIKELIHOOD	Unlikely 1	1	2	3
	Might Happen 2	2	4	6
	Highly Likely 3	3	6	9

Risk Rating	Risk Rating Explanation
9 Major	A condition or practice likely to cause permanent disability, loss of life or body part, and/or extensive loss of structure, equipment or material.
4 to 6 Serious	A condition or practice likely to cause serious injury or illness, resulting in temporary disability or property damage that is disruptive but not excessive.
2 to 3 Minor	A condition or practice likely to cause minor, non-disabling injury or illness or non-disruptive property damage.
1 Substandard	Any substandard condition or practice that is not likely to produce an injury or illness under normal conditions.

Likelihood: The chance or likelihood of a potential risk occurring based on informal measurements such as low, medium, or high.

Risk: The chance or likelihood of injury, damage or loss.

Risk matrix: A tool that provides a visual representation of the risk level by taking into consideration the severity and likelihood of the risk(s).

Risk rating: A number that represents the risk associated with a job or task.

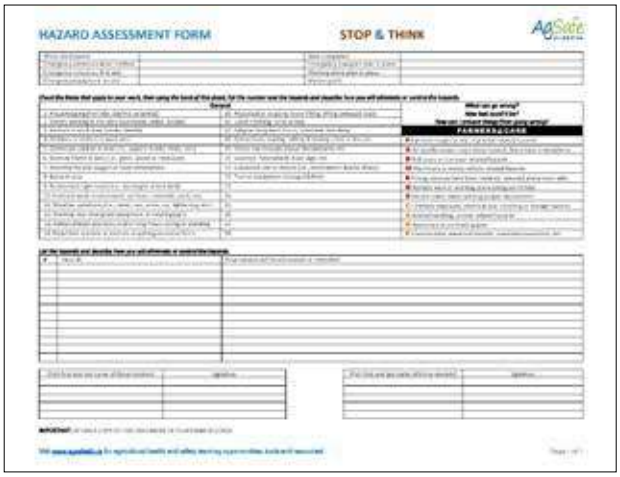
Severity: The seriousness of something bad or undesired; may be based on informal measurements such as low, medium, or high.

Hazard Assessments and OHS Legislation

Hazard assessments come in many forms, and this can get confusing. Alberta OHS Legislation does not provide a lot of detail regarding what is expected, and health and safety practitioners have many different opinions on this as well. For example, you have likely heard the following terms:


HAZARD ASSESSMENT FORM

Formal hazard assessment:
Many people think of these as a close look at the jobs and tasks performed to identify the hazards, assess risk, and then develop, implement and monitor hazard controls. Jobs or tasks are broken down into smaller parts and everything is written down and signed be the people who completed it.


HAZARD ASSESSMENT FORM

STOP & THINK

Field level hazard assessment:
Many people think of these as a site-specific hazard assessment that is performed before work begins, at a site where conditions can change and/or when non-routine work is introduced and when there is no formal hazard assessment already in place for that task or job.

OHS Legislation does not require a formal hazard assessment as defined here to be completed at one time and a field level hazard assessment to be completed at another. Notes on a sheet of paper detailing the hazards identified and what was done to eliminate or control them may be enough in some circumstances.

According to Alberta OHS, an employer must:

- Assess a work site and identify existing and potential hazards before work begins and control or eliminate those hazards.
- Prepare a report of the results of the hazard assessment, including the methods used to eliminate or control the hazards.
- Repeat a hazard assessment:
  - As often as necessary to prevent unsafe and unhealthy working conditions from developing,
  - When a new work process is introduced,
  - When a work process or activity changes, and
  - Before the construction of any major additions or changes to the work site.
- Involve workers who will be affected in the hazard assessment as well as in the elimination or control of the hazards identified.

Hazard Assessments	
Family Farm	**Farm with Employees**
It may be considered reasonable to not have written hazard assessments. A brief discussion about what the hazards are and what will be done about them to ensure that the job goes smoothly and safely could be enough. **Caution:** Family farms are still responsible for ensuring the health and safety of the service providers, contractors and visitors who come onto their farm. If a serious incident occurred involving one of these worksite parties, how might a farm prove it did everything reasonable to protect the person from harm? It would make sense to perform a hazard assessment with the other worksite party, and have it documented.	Not performing and documenting a hazard assessment it is problematic for the following reasons: • Employers are required to document hazard assessments and the hazard elimination or control measures used. • Employers are required to keep health and safety related information (such as hazard assessments) someplace that it is easily accessed by workers and others who may be present at the worksite. • If an incident occurs, the farm cannot prove that a hazard assessment was performed or perhaps even that steps were taken to control the hazard (how can the farm prove due diligence)?

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.7-8)

Worker Involvement When Performing Hazard Assessments

When performing hazard assessments, workers need to be involved for more reasons than just because is legislated. Remember, the people who perform the work should be the most knowledgeable about it and will be able to provide valuable insight. Involving workers in the hazard assessment process helps to:

- Ensure that as many existing and potential hazards as possible have been identified.
- Provide workers with an opportunity to take ownership of safety.
- Build a positive safety culture.

The OHS Act requires that employers train their employees in all matters necessary, and this applies to performing hazard assessments as well. In order to complete a hazard assessment, workers will need to know what hazards are, the types of hazards, the degree of danger that these hazards present, and ways to effectively eliminate or control them. This training will need to be documented.

Benefits of Written Hazard Assessments

There are many benefits to having written hazard assessments for the jobs and task performed on your farm. These include:

- Protecting the health and safety of everyone present on the farm.
- Helping ensure that the farm is complying with OHS legislation.
- Ensuring the farm up to date on workplace hazards and when things change.
- Being used to develop job procedures and safe work practices.
- Being used to train new workers and to develop training plans.
- If the worst ever happens, they can help support a due diligence defence.

From a financial standpoint alone, when done thoughtfully and regularly, hazard assessments save time and money. Being down a person, repairing damaged equipment, high Workers Compensation Board rates, fines and penalties, and even legal fees end up being far more costly in the end.

Steps to Completing a Hazard Assessment

The steps below are the same as those from earlier, but they are worded just a little differently.

1. Complete an inventory of the jobs performed on the farm.
2. List the tasks associated with each of the jobs.
3. Identify the hazards.
4. Assess the risk associated with the hazards: Risk (R) = Severity (S) x Likelihood (L).

5. Determine what hazards can be eliminated and what hazard controls are needed.
6. Put the hazard control measures in place.
7. Communicate the hazards and hazard controls needed to work safely.
8. Ensure everyone receives training on the hazard control measures.
9. Monitor the hazard controls to ensure they are working as intended.
10. Review, repeat and/or revise the hazard assessment as needed.

Sometimes a lot of emphasis is placed on prioritizing hazards without enough supporting context or understanding. While you don't want to ignore serious hazards, sending members of your farm team to the hospital regularly with injuries that may not cause long term disability but leave them on modified duties is not good either. The OHS Act requires employers, as far as it is reasonably practicable, to protect employees and others from identifiable and controllable hazards. The farm will need to make decisions regarding where to start, what can be done now, what needs to be done soon, what money can be spent, etc. Involving your farm team in this process is helpful, especially if your farm has a health and safety committee or health and safety representative. This involvement of team members allows for important discussions to occur, different viewpoints to be shared, and better decisions to be made.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

When prioritizing jobs and tasks for hazard assessment purposes, consider these points:

- **Incident frequency and severity.** These would be jobs and tasks where incidents occur often (but might be less serious) or where incidents occur less often but result in serious injuries.
- **Potential for severe injuries or illnesses.** Where an incident, hazardous condition, or exposure to harmful substances have the potential to be severe.
- **New or recently modified jobs and tasks.** Jobs and tasks that are new or recently modified (i.e., a change in a procedure) can result in a lack of worker experience and introduce new hazards that may not be obvious or expected.
- **Infrequently or rarely performed jobs and tasks.** The people working on your farm may be at greater risk when carrying out non-routine, seasonal and other rarely performed work. A hazard assessment is a way to review hazards before the work begins.
- **Complex jobs and tasks.** These are jobs and tasks that are complicated and require written instructions and other supporting hazard control measures. These jobs and tasks would include, but are not limited to, work in confined spaces (i.e., performing a repair inside a manure pit).

(adapted from CCOHS, 2016)

ACTIVITY

Using the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet that you completed earlier, you will begin filling out a Hazard Assessment Form available at **agsafeab.ca.**

1. Pick one of the jobs or tasks listed in the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet that you completed earlier; start with a simple task, one that does not have too many steps.
2. Fill out the Hazard Assessment Form, including the risk assessment portion, but do not complete the Hazard Controls section until you complete Module 3: Hazard Elimination & Control.

RESOURCE

Downloadable versions of different types of Hazard Assessment Forms are available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

NOTE

Important reminders

1. Hazard assessments need to be performed and repeated as often as necessary.
2. On a family farm, while not all of your hazard assessments may need to be written down, they should still happen.
3. It is hard to prove a hazard assessment was performed if it is not written down.

MODULE

3

Hazard Elimination & Control

In this module, readers will:

1. Be introduced to the Hierarchy of Controls.
2. Learn about different types of hazard controls, their effectiveness and their limitations.
3. Become familiar with policies, procedures, safe work practices and hazard control programs.
4. Learn about identifying, selecting and implementing hazard control measures.

INTRODUCTION

Now that you know what hazards are, how to identify them and how to assess the risks they pose, you are now going to learn about how to eliminate or control these hazards and complete the hazard control portion of a hazard assessment form.

In this module, you will learn about steps 5 and 6 of the hazard identification, assessment and control process in more detail. Steps 7 to 10 will also be discussed.

Step 1: Create an inventory of jobs.

Step 2: Create an inventory of tasks associated with each job.

Step 3: Identify the hazards associated with each of the tasks.

Step 4: Assess the hazards you have identified (Risk = Severity x Likelihood).

Step 5: Identify hazard control measures.

Step 6: Select appropriate hazard control measures.

Step 7: Put the hazard control measures into place.

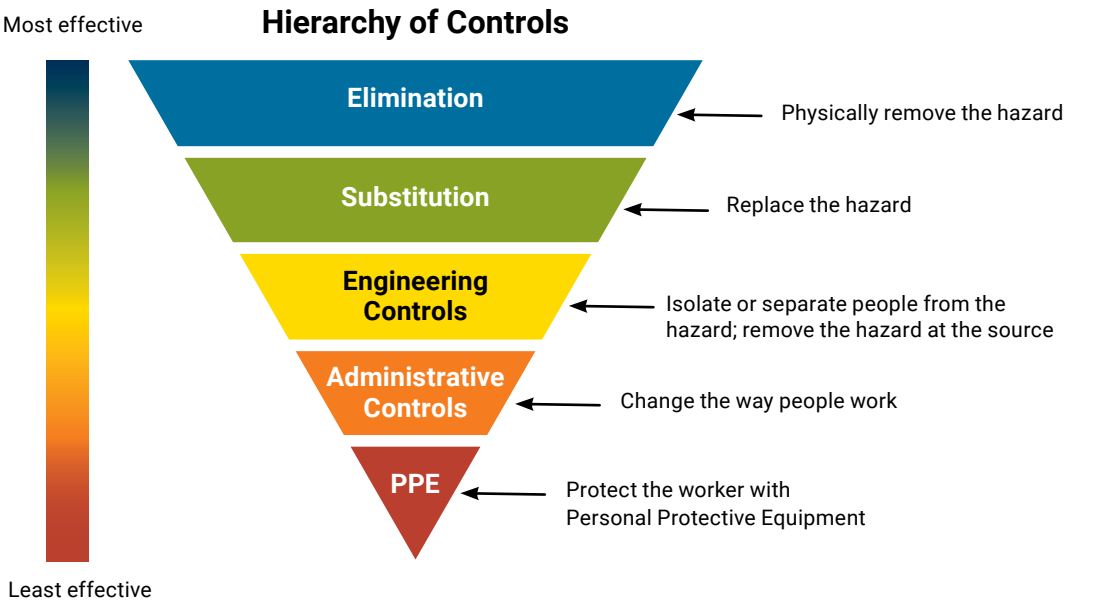
Step 8: Communicate and train your farm team on hazard control measures.

Step 9: Monitor the hazard controls for use and effectiveness.

Step 10: Review and revise as needed.

HAZARD ELIMINATION & CONTROL BASICS

Once the hazards associated with a job or task have been identified, steps to protect your people, livestock, property and the environment from these hazards must be taken. It is not always easy to identify the best method or methods of hazard control, so performing a hazard assessment and using the hierarchy of controls will help you do this.



(adapted from NIOSH, n.d.)

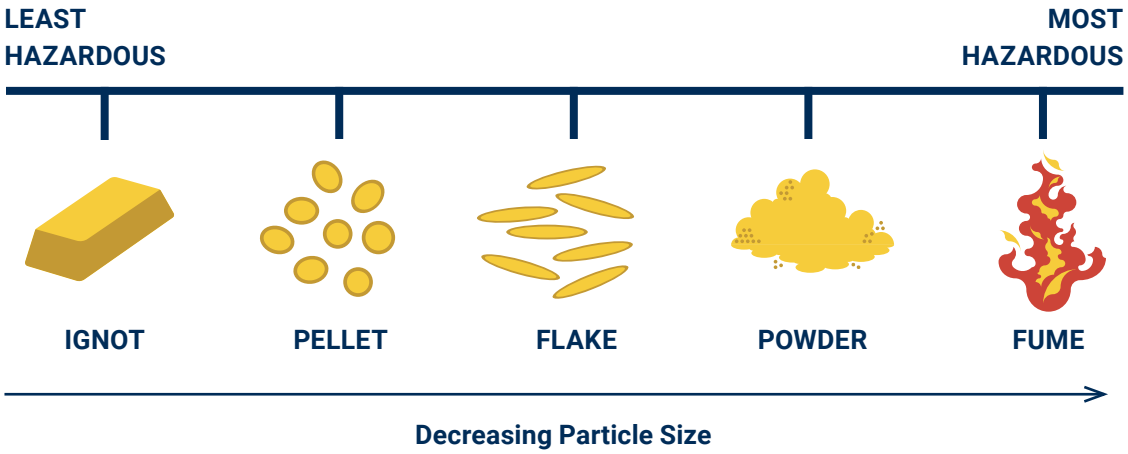
Elimination is where the hazard is removed from the job, task or work environment completely. This should be done wherever possible, as it is the best way to ensure that no one and nothing will be harmed by it. Examples of this include:

- Replacing ladders on grain bins with stairs. This would eliminate the need to climb a ladder on a grain bin.
- Installing a remote grain monitoring system so that you would not need to climb a grain bin for the purposes of checking the grain level or moisture content (you may still need to climb a grain bin ladder for other reasons, but you have eliminated the need to climb a grain bin for these tasks).

Substitution is where a hazard or the source of the hazard is replaced with something less harmful. This may be replacing a hazardous tool with something that is not a hazard or is less hazardous. Sometimes the same product can be used, but it is in a less hazardous form.

Examples of substitution include:

- Using a smaller bag or container when manually handling chicken feed as it will reduce the weight and potential for an ergonomic injury.
- Using a less harmful chemical for cleaning a barn.
- Using a pesticide that comes in a pellet form rather than a dust form to reduce the risk of breathing it in.



Engineering controls are used to isolate or separate workers from the hazard or to remove the hazard at the source before a worker can come into contact with it. Examples of this include:

- A Roll Over Protective Structure (ROPS) on a tractor with no cab or on an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV).
- A Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) to capture welding fumes at or near the arc.
- A ventilation system installed in a barn to move fresh air in and keep ammonia levels down.
- A guard on the power take off (PTO) shaft of a tractor.
- A safety switch under the seat of a piece of equipment that immediately shuts it down if the operator stands up or is bumped out of the seat.

Administrative controls change the way people work and involve developing a method or standard way of doing things that minimizes the hazard. Examples of these include:

- Developing procedures and safe work practices for the jobs and tasks that are performed.
- Training people how to perform jobs and tasks.
- Scheduling longer rest periods or shorter shifts to reduce exposure to a hazard.
- Posting signs to help make people in an area aware of the hazard(s) present.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is anything worn by someone to reduce their exposure to a hazard. Examples of PPE include:

- Wearing an N95 respirator to protect the person wearing it from hazardous airborne particles.
- Using hearing protection when working in loud areas or with loud equipment.
- Wearing cut resistant gloves and long sleeves when repairing a barbed wire fence.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2022)

Administrative control: These controls change the way people work and involve developing a method or standard way of doing things that minimizes the hazard.

Elimination: Where the hazard is removed from the job, task or work environment.

Engineering control: Methods to isolate or separate workers from the hazard or to remove the hazard at the source before a worker can come into contact with it.

Hazard: Something that could cause damage or harm to someone or something on your farm.

Hazard control: An action or actions taken to eliminate or minimize the risk of injury, illness or damage.

Hazard elimination: Removing a hazard from the workplace. The most effective and reliable means of addressing a hazard; should be used whenever possible.

Personal protective equipment (PPE): Anything worn by someone to reduce their exposure to a hazard.

Substitution: Where a hazard or the source of the hazard is replaced with something less harmful.

Ventilation: A means of moving fresh air into an area or removing contaminated or stale air from an area.

Hazard Elimination & Control Summary

The most effective hazard control measures are those that do not rely on a person's actions or behaviors. We are humans, we make mistakes, and we all have good days and bad days. It is too easy to forget to check the lights on your trailer before heading down the road or to not use the seatbelt in the side by side because you are in a rush to find out what is your chasing cattle in the far field.

MOST EFFECTIVE	**Elimination and Substitution**	Removes the hazard	Caution: The hazard can be reintroduced in processes, services and workplaces.
	Engineering Controls	Changes the work environment	Caution: Can sometimes be disabled, removed or ignored.
	Administrative Controls	Changes the way people work	Caution: These rely on the behaviours and actions of people.
LEAST EFFECTIVE	**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**	Reduces the hazard	Caution: These rely on the effectiveness of the PPE, the user's training, and their actions.

Where Hazard Controls Are Used

Hazard controls are usually placed at the source of the hazard, along the path and at the person.

Source
Where the hazard comes from, such as a tractor spraying pesticide.

Path
Where the hazard travels, such as drirft from air movement

Person
Someone working nearby

More Than One Type of Hazard Control May Be Needed

Eliminating the hazard should always be considered first, however, it is not always possible. Quite often, more than one type of hazard control will be needed to reduce the hazard to a reasonable level. Consider people who spend long hours in a livestock barn where the air quality can be hazardous due to contaminants like dusts and ammonia. The source of the contaminants cannot be eliminated (i.e., the animals). In an effort to reduce the hazards of these contaminants, the farm might decide to do the following:

- Change from a dry feed to a wet feed in order to reduce airborne endotoxin concentrations (an example of substitution).
- Install a mechanical ventilation system (an engineering control).
- Develop standards to ensure the barn's stocking density does not exceed the ventilation system's capacity to maintain reasonable air quality (an administrative control).
- Require everyone who works in the barn to be trained in the use, care, and maintenance of a reusable respirator with combination cartridges (an administrative control).
- Require everyone who works in the barn to wear their reusable respirator with the correct type of combination cartridges (a form of PPE attached to a reusable respirator that protects the person from both dust particles and ammonia).

IMPORTANT NOTE

It is important to make certain that the hazard controls you put in place do not create new hazards. You will need to check on the hazard controls you use to ensure that they are effective and that no new hazards have been introduced.

For example, think of someone using a table saw to cut wood for nesting boxes. The person could make the mistake of wearing gloves to protect their hands from wood slivers while performing this job. Gloves should never be worn while operating a table saw or anything with rotating parts, as the glove material can be caught (such as by a blade tooth) and the person's entire hand can be pulled into the blade of the table saw.

Hazard Control Limitations

Elimination and substitution can be difficult to bring into an existing work process, though not impossible. The ideal time to use elimination and substitution is when you are planning or designing something like a new barn, thinking about purchasing new equipment, or starting a new process. Performing hazard assessments at the planning stage can save the farm a lot of grief, time and money.

Engineering controls can cost more initially than administrative controls or personal protective equipment but result in lower long-term costs as less resources need to be spent on training and repeated purchases.

Administrative controls rely heavily on people, their behaviours, actions and attitudes. Examples of when failures can occur include when procedures are not written and therefore not always consistently or correctly communicated, when people do not follow procedures (i.e., out of error or by choice), or when people rely too heavily on passive communication methods (i.e., signage) which can be missed or ignored.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) requires that it be selected by someone qualified and the people who use it to be trained in its use, care, maintenance and limitations. It also requires that PPE users apply their training at all times.

DID YOU KNOW?

PPE is far more complex than most people recognize as it must be carefully selected for the hazards and conditions of the job or task.

For example, when selecting a chemical protective glove, the following points should be considered:

- The type or types of chemicals it will need to provide protection from.
- The temperature of the work area.
- The glove thickness and length.
- The potential for cuts and abrasions.
- Glove cost and availability.
- The chemical concentration(s).
- The material the glove is made out of.
- Textured versus untextured grip.
- Glove degradation and permeation rates, as well as breakthrough times.
- The length of the exposure time(s).
- The dexterity required by the task.
- The inner lining type or no lining at all.
- How to properly inspect and care for the gloves.

Dexterity: The ability to perform skilled or fine and controlled movements using one's hands.

Breakthrough time: The time from when a harmful chemical touches the outside of a glove (or other type of personal protective equipment) to the time when it breaks through the surface of the glove to reach the skin.

Degradation: The process of a substance degrading or breaking down a material.

Permeation: The process of a substance penetrating or passing through a material.

A Closer Look At Administrative Controls

While not considered as effective as engineering controls, administrative controls are still an important part of your farm's health and safety program.

Policies

As you learned in Module 1 when you created a health and safety policy, policies are written general guidelines that set the direction for accomplishing an outcome and are used to guide decision making. There may be times when you find it appropriate to combine a policy and procedure. In the next paragraph we will look at procedures. You will then be able to review a list of several policies and procedures which you may want or need to create for your farm.

Procedures

Policies are supported by procedures, which are an established or standardized way of doing things. Procedures are documents with a narrow focus that describe step by step what actions need to be taken (especially when performing a job or task) in order to achieve the desired outcome.

This is one of those times where you don't want to get confused by "safety lingo." Whether you call it a safe work procedure, a safe job procedure, or a safe operating procedure, it is still just a procedure. For the benefit of everyone on your farm, keep the language simple (including titles) and don't let your procedures become too long as they will not be read.

Creating procedures

Step 1: Select a job or task and break it down into basic steps. Where equipment is involved, you will need to refer to the operator's manual or manufacturer's instructions as well. It is also important to refer to any applicable legislation or standards.

Step 2: Complete a hazard assessment that looks at the existing and potential hazards of each step and identifies appropriate hazard control measures.

Step 3: Write down the procedure. Just like when performing a hazard assessment, you will need to involve the people who do the work in developing the procedure. When writing procedures, keep them clear, simple and written in plain language so that everyone working on the farm can read and understand them. Include pictures, diagrams, and flow charts where possible.

Step 4: Put the procedure into practice. Communicate the procedure to the people who need to know it; this includes ensuring everyone understands the procedure and is trained on it. Keep a copy of the procedure somewhere that workers can quickly and easily access it.

Step 5: Review the effectiveness of the procedure. Periodic reviews will tell you if the procedure is working, if something is missing, or if a part of it needs improvement. You will learn more about these reviews in Module 9: Program Administration.

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Hazard Identification, Assessment and Control Policy and Procedure
- Worker Orientation and Training Policy and Procedure
- Incident Investigation Policy and Procedure
- Working Alone Policy and Procedure
- Violence and Harassment Policy and Procedure
- Fit For Duty Policy and Procedure
- Progressive Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Emergency Preparedness Policy and Procedures

Policy: Written general guidelines that set the direction for accomplishing an outcome and are used to guide decision making.

Procedure: A document with a narrow focus which describes step by step what actions are to be taken (especially when performing a job or task) in order to achieve the desired outcome.

RESOURCE

Go to **agsafeab.ca** for downloadable tools, resources and customizable templates relating to various farm policies and procedures.

Safe Work Practices

Safe work practices are written, generalized statements about how to do things. They are much simpler than procedures and highlight what to do and what not to do in order to complete the job or task safely.

Creating safe work practices

Step 1: Select a job or task that you have completed a hazard assessment and ideally, a procedure for.

Step 2: Write a statement explaining the job or task.

Step 3: Write the hazards of the job or task. You may also want to list the outcomes, or consequences, of these hazards.

Step 4: Create a short list of the important things someone performing the job or task will need to do in order to work safely. You will want to refer to any applicable legislation or standards if you have not done so already.

Step 5: Create a short list of the important things someone performing the job or task must not do if they are to perform the work safely.

Step 6: Make a list of important general statements that will help guide someone in performing the work safely. If you find that you have more than 10 basic statements, you might be looking at two different jobs or tasks; if this is the case, create two separate safe work practices.

Step 7: List any reference documents someone should read if they need more information, for example, the farm's procedure for completing that job or task, or a standard issued by a commodity group or other governing body.

Step 8: Communicate the safe work practice to the people who need to know it. Keep a copy somewhere that workers can quickly and easily access it.

Step 9: Review the effectiveness of the safe work practice. Periodic reviews will tell you if the safe work practice is effective, if something is missing, or if a part of it needs improvement. You will learn more about reviews in Module 9: Program Administration.

DID YOU KNOW?

Written procedures offer many benefits, such as: :

- Being an important part of training new workers and ensuring that the work gets completed safely.
- When tasks are difficult or complex, they can be used to help ensure that nothing gets missed and that everything goes smoothly.
- They can be referenced at any time, such as before a task that is not performed often.
- They are helpful when conducting incident investigations.
- In the event of a serious incident, they can support a due diligence defense.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

Benefits of Safe Work Practices

- They can be used to introduce employees to a new task or job.
- They can be used at toolbox talk or pre-job meeting as a form of preparation for the job or task.
- They can be used as a form of refresher training when appropriate.
- Because of their simplicity, they may be more likely to be referenced by workers.

RESOURCE

Go to **agsafeab.ca** for downloadable tools, resources and customizable templates relating to safe work practices.

Safe work practice: Written, generalized statements about how to do things; simpler than procedures, they highlight what to do and what not to do so that a job or task can be completed more safely.

Other Types of Administrative Controls To Consider Developing

You may be thinking "I am already creating a health and safety program, why do I need to create more programs?" Like your health and safety program, the programs listed here are just policies, procedures, tools and resources that when combined help achieve a health and safety goal. Each of these are simply supporting parts of the overall health and safety program.

Contractor Management Program

Even as a farm owner with no employees and who only hires contractors, you still have health and safety obligations. Depending on the work being done, you could also have obligations as a prime contractor. You will want to ensure that you are keeping everyone who may be affected by your operations safe, regardless of whether you have someone coming to repair your tractor, a custom harvest crew doing silage, or multiple contractors upgrading your dairy.

There are four basic parts in a contractor management program, these are:

1. **Contractor pre-qualification:** Think about what things you would want the contractor to have in place in order to perform the work. This could be insurance (i.e., liability insurance or workers compensation insurance), valid driver's licenses, drivers abstracts, vehicle inspections (i.e., CVIP), their health and safety program, emergency action plans, etc.
2. **Contractor selection:** When choosing a contractor, look at their references and reviews, ask how they determine the competency of the people who work for them, what are their plans to ensure the work is done safely (i.e., do they perform hazard assessments?) and how prepared are they to deal with an emergency should one happen?
3. **Work in progress/executing the work safely:** Have they performed a hazard assessment or had a pre-job meeting? Are they doing everything they said they would?
4. **Contractor performance evaluation:** Was everything done according to plan, and did it meet your expectations? Did any incidents occur? Would you feel comfortable bringing them back?

DISCUSSION

Imagine hiring a custom harvest crew that you and others in the county know have a reputation for drinking on the job and frequently encountering issues like backing into other equipment or taking out the occasional fence post. You are running out of time and decide to hire them because they are the only ones available. While talking to one of the drivers the first morning, you can't help but notice the dents and damage to their truck. As the driver climbs in, a beer can rolls out of the cab. Knowing that the work needs to be done, you chose to ignore it.

While driving on a county road from the field to the silage pit later that day, the driver you spoke to hits another vehicle head on. While RCMP are addressing the criminal part of this incident, Alberta OHS is looking to the work-related aspects of it. You later come to learn that not only was the driver impaired at the time of the incident, but that they also lost their driver's license a month earlier.

Think about and discuss:

- How you might feel after that.
- If you were called into a courtroom, would you be able to say that you did everything reasonable to protect the health and safety of others or did something about a hazard or potential hazard?
- Think of an event on the farm or someplace else, where something went very wrong and could have been avoided had appropriate measures been taken sooner.

Preventative Maintenance Program

Preventative maintenance is an important part of your farm's health and safety program, and it is much more than just ensuring tools and equipment are kept in working order. Preventative maintenance not only reduces breakdowns and identifies defects which can result in injuries, property damage and production delays, but it also addresses many other things. For example, a preventative maintenance program should look at buildings to ensure that doors meant to be used in an emergency are not blocked, that a roof with a sag doesn't collapse on people or animals, that fire extinguishers are in place and ready for use where they may be needed, and that salt or ice melt is readily available for use on icy walkways.

Basic steps to follow when developing a preventative maintenance plan include:

Step 1: Making a list of all of the tools, equipment, building and work areas that require regular maintenance and inspection. You will learn more about different types of inspections in Module 4: Inspections.

Step 2: Locating and making the operators manuals and manufacturers recommendations relating to maintenance and care available.

Step 3: Working with the people who use the tools, equipment, buildings and work areas to ensure:

a. Nothing has been missed and everything is being looked at in a timely manner.
b. That routine cleaning, maintenance, or housekeeping is being performed.
c. That proper storage measures are in place and being followed.

Step 4: Review the effectiveness of the preventative maintenance program. Periodic reviews will tell you if it is effective, if something is missing, or if a part of it needs improvement. You will learn more about reviewing parts of your health and safety program in Module 9: Program Administration.

EXAMPLES OF OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY RELATED PROGRAMS

- Fall Protection Program
- Hearing Protection Program
- Eye Protection Program
- Psychological Health and Safety Program
- Personal Protective Equipment Program
- Respiratory Protective Equipment Program
- Hand Protection Program

Program: Policies, procedures, tools and resources that in combination, help achieve a health and safety objective.

A Closer Look at Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is commonly thought of as the easiest control to apply, however it is the least effective overall. PPE should only be used as a last resort and must always be used in combination with other hazard control methods. In some cases, the farm might supply workers with the required PPE (i.e., N95 respirators), or workers may provide it themselves (i.e., steel toe work boots). Regardless of who supplies the PPE, the farm will need to provide formal training in its selection, care, use, fit, maintenance, and limitations.

PPE is only selected after all other hazard control measures have been considered, and those measures found to be appropriate have been put into place.

Step 1: Match the PPE to the hazard(s). You will need to use your completed hazard assessment as a guide. Sometimes choosing the correct type of PPE is obvious, other times it can be difficult, especially when there are multiple hazards or factors to consider.

Step 2: Get advice. Selecting the right type of PPE can be challenging, such as when respiratory protection is required. Do plenty of research and find qualified people to ask questions and have them assist you. Your producer group, companies who sell PPE, and health and safety associations, such as AgSafe Alberta, can support you through this process.

Step 3: Review standards and guidelines. PPE is designed to minimize exposure to hazards, but it has limitations that need to be considered. Not all types of protective eyewear are suitable for all hazards, and sometimes, the hazards someone may be exposed to will be greater than the PPE's ability to protect the wearer. Review what is written in the Alberta OHS Code and refer to applicable standards (i.e., CSA Group standards, NFPA standards, ANSI standards, etc.) for guidance.

Step 4: Involve your workers. Once the correct type of PPE has been identified, involve the people who will be wearing it in selecting the right models. Comfort, fit and worker acceptance of it are important factors. If something is uncomfortable, doesn't fit properly, or makes it significantly more difficult to perform a task, it is highly likely that it won't get used.

Step 5: Consider the physical comfort of the PPE. Similar to Step 3, the PPE that is chosen should be reasonably comfortable. Again, consider the use of respiratory protective equipment. A reusable elastomeric respirator made with a soft rubber or silicone facepiece and has adjustable straps will be much more comfortable than a stiff N95 respirator with straps that cannot be adjusted.

Step 6: Consider availability and cost. A cost-effective form of PPE that is often unavailable will not be helpful and there will always be financial limitations. Shop around and look into setting up accounts with suppliers who offer discounts as opposed to purchasing it directly off of a store shelf.

Step 7: Check the fit. PPE must be worn properly and fit the person appropriately in order to provide adequate protection. People come in many shapes, sizes and have unique features and because of this, PPE needs to be fitted to each person individually. For example, someone who is five feet tall is going to require different sized coveralls from someone who is six feet five inches tall.

Step 8: Conduct education and training. Anyone using PPE will need to be educated and trained in how to use it effectively. Training should address the hazards it protects them from, when to use it, what its limitations are, how to fit and wear it in addition to how to inspect, care for and maintain it. This training should be provided to both the people who wear it and the people who supervise them.

S**tep 9: Perform regular inspections and maintenance.** To stay effective, PPE must be maintained. Proper maintenance includes inspection, care, cleaning, repair, and storage. Create procedures and train workers on them; these procedures should include what to inspect their PPE for (i.e., signs of damage or defect), how to get replacement PPE or parts for damaged PPE, how to clean their PPE, how to store it correctly, when it should get tested again (i.e., fall protection equipment), and when it should be replaced.

Step 10: Review what you have in place. In the previous section, you learned about different types of health and safety programs. These steps outline how to create a PPE program, and the final step is reviewing what you have put in place to ensure it is working. Things to check on can include if the PPE is being worn and if so, worn correctly, if there have been any near misses or incidents involving the PPE and worker opinions (i.e., do they feel they know enough to use it effectively?). Identify areas of improvement and take corrective actions as appropriate.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2017)

IDENTIFYING, SELECTING AND IMPLEMENTING HAZARD CONTROL MEASURES

Using the hierarchy of controls (refer to diagram on page 76) and your hazard assessment, work through each hazard starting with elimination at the top and working your way down. Your objective is to eliminate or minimize the hazard as far as possible and reduce the residual risk to an acceptable level.

The following sources can help you identify hazard control measures to use:

- Operator manuals.
- Alberta OHS Code.
- Industry or commodity group standards or guidelines (such as CSA Group standards).
- For multiple or more complex hazards (i.e., manure pit entry), consult with health and safety experts or subject matter experts (i.e., someone who specializes in confined space entry).

NOTE

When identifying and implementing hazard controls, it is important not to think of a legislated limit, exposure limit or other specification as a clear line between what is "safe" and what is "unsafe." Your goal should always be to eliminate the hazard where possible or keep exposures and the risk of a hazard as low as reasonably practicable.

Implement: To put something in place.

Reasonably practicable: 1. Meeting a legislated occupational health and safety obligation in a way that is sensible, realistic, and would be thought of as making sense for the facts and conditions by a reasonable person. 2. A recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)?

Residual risk: The level of risk that remains after the hazard control measures have been put in place.

Selecting Hazard Control Measures

When selecting hazard control measures, choose the ones that are the most effective, the most permanent, and the ones that make the most sense for your operation. When resources are limited, it can be hard to know where to start and which hazards to address first. It is important to involve your farm team in the hazard control process and engage them in discussions to identify the best methods of hazard control as their knowledge, experience and acceptance of the hazard control methods to be used are important.

It can be helpful to prioritize the hazards based on their level of risk, as you learned in the previous module. It is important to remember that OHS legislation requires that all existing or potential hazards be controlled, not just the ones that are high risk. You also don't want to be sending the people who work on your farm to the doctor's office frequently due to hazards that are ranked as moderate risk and have gone uncontrolled because all your efforts have been focused elsewhere.

Sometimes the best hazard control option cannot be put into place immediately. When this happens, the farm can use interim hazard control measures. These are short-term hazard control measures that are used until a longer-term or more effective hazard control measure can be put in place. For example, the farm may decide to train two individuals in the use, care, maintenance and limitations of fall protection equipment. The farm would purchase the necessary fall protection equipment, and then create a policy and procedures that reflect how only qualified individuals authorized by the farm (and using the approved fall protection equipment) may climb grain bins equipped with ladders until stairs and platforms can be installed on all the bins.

You will want to ensure that any hazard control measures selected do not directly or indirectly introduce new hazards and make sense for the work and work environment; discussion with the people who perform the work will be helpful. In addition, remember that in many circumstances, more than one type of hazard control will be required.

Interim hazard control: A hazard control measure that is used on a temporary or short-term basis, until a more effective hazard control measure or measures can be put in place.

Putting Hazard Control Measures In Place

Once you have decided on appropriate hazard control measures, you will need to implement them, or put them into place. This is going to require some form of plan to ensure that it gets done in a timely manner. When implementing hazard control measures, you will need to:

Step 1: Determine which hazard control measures to put in place first. Many factors can affect how you prioritize the hazard control measures, such as if the task high risk, when the task will be performed next (i.e., today or in six months), and tasks where near misses, incidents, injuries and illnesses occur frequently. Refer back to Module 2: Hazard Identification & Assessment to reflect on hazard prioritization.

Step 2: Assign responsibility for putting the hazard control measure in effect. Sometimes, it may require more than one person to get a hazard control put in place, such as when an engineering control needs to be purchased by one person, installed by a second, and a third person will need to ensure the people who do the work receive the necessary training.

Step 3: Determine a target completion date and method for tracking progress. A target date will help keep the person or people responsible for the hazard control measure on track. Tracking progress enables you to check if something was completed and helps prevent things from being forgotten. The method used to track progress is up to you. Progress can be handwritten onto a printed table, or it can be entered into a spreadsheet on a computer; you have many options. Whatever method you choose, ensure that it makes sense and is kept simple.

Step 4: Decide when and how you will review the effectiveness of the hazard control measure. Again, setting a target date is important and knowing how the hazard control measure will be reviewed makes it easier to do when the time comes. The method of review can be observing the work and talking with the workers and supervisor, or the farm may decide to involve the health and safety committee and make it a part of one of their inspections. It is always best to document the hazard control measure review in some form.

Step 5: Review the effectiveness of the hazard control measure. The objective of the hazard control measure review is to ensure that the hazard control measure put in place is effective and did not create any new hazards. If you find that there is a problem, you will want to investigate it further and identify additional corrective actions. Investigations and corrective actions are detailed in Module 5: Investigations.

NOTE

The people who perform the work on your farm need to be informed of both the hazards and the hazard control measures in place. Many hazard control measures will require members of your farm team to receive training on what these hazard controls do, how they work, how to use them and what their limitations are. Training is covered in greater detail in Module 6: Communication, Orientation & Training.

Competent: A person who is “adequately qualified, suitably trained and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimal degree of supervision (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2021, s.1(d))."

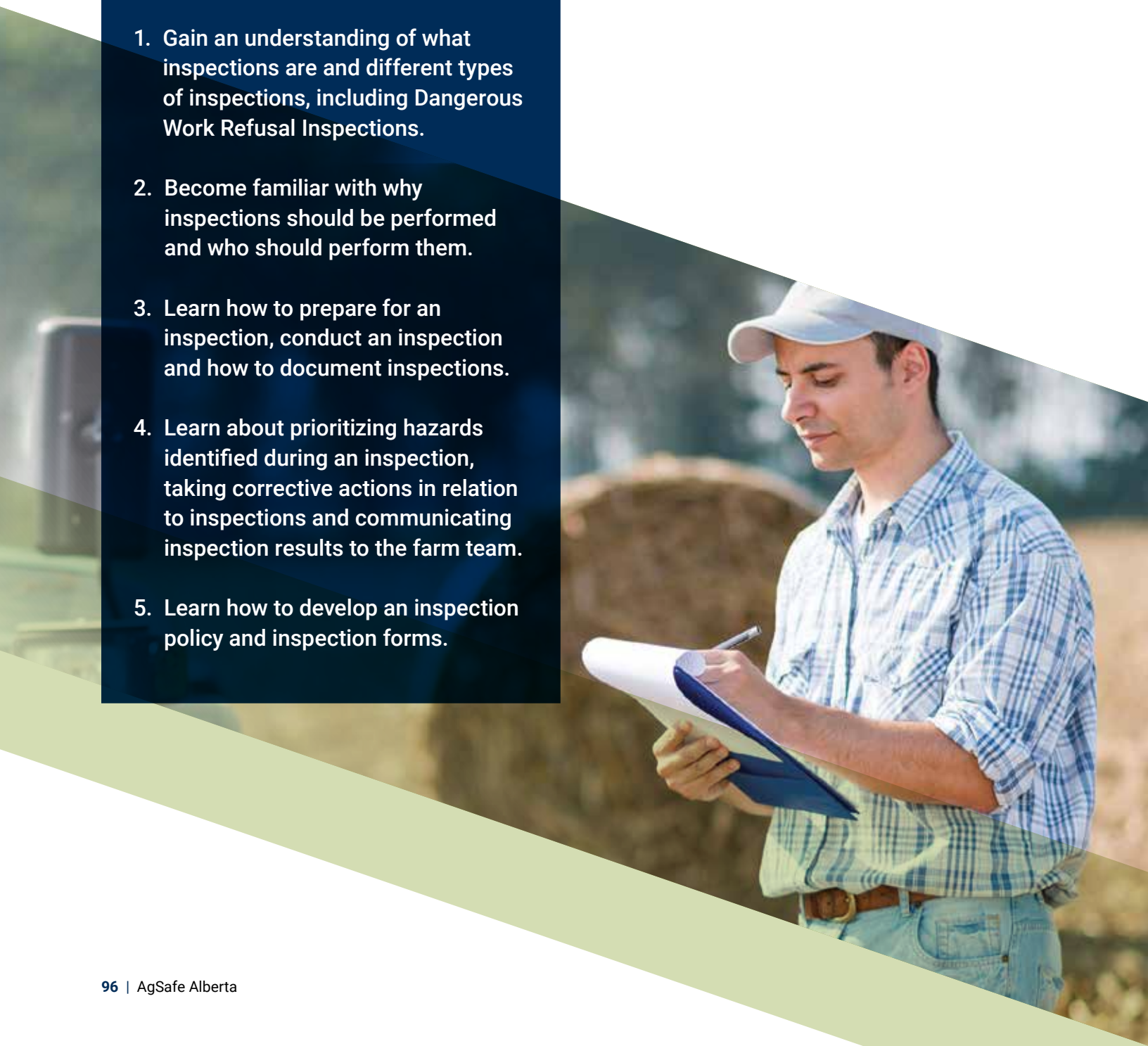
MODULE

4

Inspections

In this module, readers will:

1. Gain an understanding of what inspections are and different types of inspections, including Dangerous Work Refusal Inspections.
2. Become familiar with why inspections should be performed and who should perform them.
3. Learn how to prepare for an inspection, conduct an inspection and how to document inspections.
4. Learn about prioritizing hazards identified during an inspection, taking corrective actions in relation to inspections and communicating inspection results to the farm team.
5. Learn how to develop an inspection policy and inspection forms.



INTRODUCTION

Inspections are critical to the ongoing identification, assessment, and control of hazards on your farm. Regular inspections of tools, machines, equipment, work areas, farm buildings and how the work gets done allows you to identify, document and correct issues before anything goes wrong. Think about it, isn't it easier to perform a routine inspection on your sorting pens and fix any issues before you are pushing a few hundred cattle through than to have a gate or panel fail while you are working?

In this module, you will learn about inspections and how they are an important part of an effective health and safety program.

Why Perform Inspections?

Inspections are proactive, preventative health and safety measures that keep your farm safe and operations going smoothly. These inspections are similar to hazard assessments in that they are an examination of something (such as a tool or piece of equipment) or a work area for the purpose of identifying, recording, and correcting existing or potential hazards.

When performing inspections, the goals should be to:

- Listen to the concerns of the people working on your farm, this includes workers, supervisors, and family members.
- Gain a better understanding of the jobs and tasks being performed.
- Identify existing and potential hazards (i.e., hazards or potential hazards that were previously unidentified or that are new).
- Find out what the root cause or causes of the hazards are.
- Identify and recommend corrective actions (hazard control measures) to be taken.
- Keep an eye on the steps taken to eliminate or control the hazards (i.e., engineering controls, administrative controls, personal protective equipment).
- Meet legislative requirements (i.e., protect the health and safety of the people working on your farm or who may be affected by the work being done as far as reasonably practicable).
- Meet the requirements of your health and safety program and support its effectiveness.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2022)

TYPES OF INSPECTIONS

Inspections can be thought of as formal or informal, and there are many different types of inspections that can be performed. You will not have to perform every type of inspection on everything, but you will need to determine which ones will be required by your farm and at what times. Note that many of these inspections will support a preventative maintenance program and may be required for certain types of industry certifications.

Formal Inspection	Informal Inspection
Planned, scheduled.	Unplanned, random, or on-the-spot.
Tend to be more thorough and will catch hazards that may be more difficult to identify.	Tend to catch more obvious hazards.
Can take a bit more time to complete.	Are usually performed relatively quickly.
Documented, commonly in the form of a checklist and summary report.	May or may not be documented; documentation could be notes in a supervisor's logbook.

Examples of Inspection Types

Inspection Type	Explanation	Frequency	Documentation
Spot or focus inspections	• Focus on a specific hazard in a work area (i.e., noise level in a hog barn during feeding). • Some hazards may need to be assessed by a specialist (i.e., occupational hygienist).	• Can occur on an as needed basis or at planned intervals.	• Recommended. • If performed by (or involved) an occupational hygienist, a report will commonly be provided.
Routine work area inspections	• Looks for hazards and potential issues in specific work areas (i.e., livestock handling areas).	• Commonly calendar/time based.	• Recommended.
Building inspections	• Looks for hazards and potential issues in a particular farm building. • Can look at things like plumbing, electrical, roofing, etc. • Depending on the purpose of the inspection, a specialist may need to be involved (i.e., electrician, plumber, engineers, etc.).	• Commonly calendar/time based. • May be performed after some types of incidents or serious weather events.	• Recommended. • If performed by a specialist (i.e., building inspector), a report will commonly be provided.

Continued...

Inspection Type	Explanation	Frequency	Documentation
Equipment inspections	• Looks for hazards and potential issues relating to different types of equipment. • Can look at things like powered mobile equipment or emergency equipment (i.e., fire extinguishers).	• Commonly usage based or calendar/time based. • Recommended inspection intervals may be outlined in the manufacturer's recommendations.	• May or may not be documented, though it is recommended.
Critical part inspections	• This type of inspection is intended to prevent a failure or incident (i.e., checking for hotspots on a bailer periodically during operation).	• Before, during, and/or after use.	• May or may not be documented, though it is recommended.
Pre-use inspections	• This type of inspection should be performed before using a tool, machine, piece of equipment or wearing any form of PPE. • Part of a preventative maintenance program.	• Before each use.	• Performed on most tools, documentation would not be needed (i.e., hammer). • Documentation may be needed for some forms of PPE, such as fall protection equipment or respirators. • May be needed for more complex and hazardous machines or equipment.
New equipment inspections	• This type of inspection should be performed whenever new equipment or machines are brought onto the farm.	• Upon purchase/bringing it home to the farm.	• Recommended; should be performed as part of the initial hazard assessment.
Commercial vehicle inspection program (CVIP) inspections	• A type of inspection that is legally required to be performed on commercial vehicles but not on farm plated vehicles. • Some farms voluntarily get this inspection performed as part of their preventative maintenance program.	• Typically, once a year; vehicles that are used to transport passengers for business purposes require it to be done twice a year.	• This type of inspection needs to be performed by an authorized technician and they will provide documentation of the inspection.

Examples of Inspection Types: Continued...

Inspection Type	Explanation	Frequency	Documentation
Regulatory inspections	• These inspections are typically required by OHS legislation (i.e., fall protection).	• The frequency will be noted in legislation or in the standard that has been referenced in legislation (i.e., CSA Group standard).	• Required. • What inspections should include and guidelines on how to document these inspections can be found in the standard that has been referenced.
Dangerous work refusal inspections (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.17)	• A type of regulatory inspection required by OHS legislation. • Following a dangerous work refusal, if the matter cannot be immediately corrected, an employer must perform an inspection.	• Whenever a worker makes a dangerous work refusal on reasonable grounds.	• Inspections must be documented; documentation must include a written report of the dangerous work refusal, the inspection, the findings, and any actions taken.

Dangerous work refusal: When a worker refuses to perform work because they believe on reasonable grounds that there is an undue hazard present that poses a serious and immediate risk to the worker or another person; typically, the hazard present would not be considered 'normal' to the job.

Formal inspection: A planned, relatively thorough inspection of something or a work area which is documented.

Informal inspection: An unplanned, random inspection of something or a work area which may or may not be documented.

Preventative maintenance: The act of performing maintenance activities for the purpose of preventing something bad from happening, such as excessive wear or an unexpected failure.

Preventative maintenance program: A set of procedures and rules for performing regular planned maintenance activities for the purpose of preventing failures and downtime.

Standard: An agreed upon way of doing things to an acceptable level. These can be regulatory, industry, commodity or manufacturers standards. In legislation, these standards referenced are written by organizations or groups of individuals that are regarded as authorities on the subject (i.e., CSA Group, NFPA, ANSI, etc.).

Undue hazard: A hazard that is too great, inappropriate or is unusual for the work being performed; a serious and immediate threat.

Who Should Perform Inspections?

Who performs an inspection will vary from one farm to the next and will depend on the type of inspection being performed. The table presented earlier that outlined some different types of inspections will be a helpful resource. Everyone performing an inspection will need some amount of training. Creating and following an inspection schedule that lists the type of inspection, when it is to be done and who will be doing it will make this process much easier.

For routine work area inspections, farm leadership should be involved in performing these at minimum once each year. Having farm leadership visibly taking part in the health and safety program shows their commitment to safety and helps to grow a positive safety culture. The health and safety committee members or health and safety representative should be involved in this type of inspection (but should not be expected to complete all of these inspections all of the time). Workers should take part in this type of inspection regularly, and from time to time, they should be involved in the inspections of other work areas as well. This allows for a different perspective and a fresh pair of eyes that may identify hazards others have become blind to. Some farms may want to partner a new worker with an experienced inspector because it allows for both a fresh set of eyes in addition to helping orientate the new worker to the farm, the hazards, and an important part of its health and safety program.

Equipment inspections, critical part inspections, pre-use inspections and new equipment inspections will commonly be performed by the people who operate or use the equipment. The manufacturer's recommendations will be an important part of these inspections, as will any hazard assessments and procedures the farm has developed. These documents may need to be reviewed prior to the inspection and should always be easily accessed by the people working on the farm.

For complex or specialized inspections, subject matter experts may need to be brought in (i.e., fire chief, engineers, occupational hygienists, certified technicians, etc.). Some farmers may be hesitant to bring in someone like this onto the farm out of concern the person may see something and take it out of context if they are not familiar with agricultural operations. While this is understandable and should receive consideration, you might be surprised by how many of these people may already be familiar with agriculture or come from agricultural backgrounds themselves. Taking time to find the right person and asking them important questions before they come onto the farm can help put your mind at ease and ensure you are getting the qualified support that you need.

NOTE

A Supervisor's Role In Performing Inspections

Do you recall what a supervisor's obligations are under the Alberta OHS Act? It is not uncommon to hear a supervisor say they are "too busy" to perform a formal inspection and want to have someone else do it. While it is important to involve workers and other members of your farm team in different types of inspections, supervisors still need to perform regular inspections of their work areas and check on the people under their supervision to ensure unsafe conditions and unsafe acts are identified and corrected right away. As an employer, the farm will need to ensure that the supervisor's workload is reasonable and that they have the time and support necessary to meet their obligations.

When it comes to some types of inspections, it may or may not be appropriate to involve a supervisor. While supervisors possess significant knowledge about their work areas, they may have some biases as well. If a supervisor is involved in an inspection of their work area or something within it, they should not be leading or guiding the inspection. This will help ensure the inspection remains objective.

Inspection Training

For an inspection to be completed properly, the person or people performing the inspection will need to be trained. This training should cover:

- What hazards are.
- Where to look during an inspection and what to look for.
- How to assess the hazards identified.
- What effective hazard controls are.
- How to prepare for and conduct an inspection.
- How to make recommendations for corrective actions.
- What checklists and/or forms to use and how to document an inspection.

Training can be provided in many ways. Some may find general online training combined with farm-specific training to work best where others may decide to develop and deliver all of the training themselves and partner the person who is being trained with a mentor. Partnering a new worker with an experienced inspector is a great way to provide valuable, practical experience (as long as the mentor is competent, willing and a is a good instructor). Training is looked at in greater detail in Module 6: Communication, Orientation & Training.

Preparing for an Inspection

When preparing for an inspection, it is helpful to review past safety documents for the work area. These documents can include past inspection reports, recent near misses and incident reports (as long as don't contain any confidential information), hazards assessments and any other relevant safety matters. Taking a few minutes to review these records can assist you in knowing where to place a little more of your attention during the inspection.

Before performing the inspection, ensure the supervisor is aware that you will be there and what you are doing. This will also provide the supervisor with an opportunity to advise you of hazards, any special precautions that need to be taken and of any PPE that will need to be worn during the inspection. For an inspection to be truly effective, you will need to observe the workplace or the equipment as it is during day-to-day operations. For this reason, giving the supervisor too much notice may not be helpful, as all of the workers may be told to be on their best behaviour for the inspection, or things like equipment checks that have been missed for the past month may get completed the day before.

It is important to have a plan of how you will walk through the work area or look at a piece of equipment in a systematic way. This helps to ensure that you don't miss looking at something critical and that time does not get wasted wandering around or spent looking at trivial things. When performing an inspection of a work area, using a farm site map or farm building map will be helpful (you will learn more about these maps in Module 7: Emergency Preparedness & Management).

CONDUCTING AN INSPECTION OF THE WORKPLACE ELEMENTS

When conducting an inspection, you will want to look at all of the workplace elements: method, materials, environment, equipment and people.

1. Method

a. The method, or process, looks at how the workers are interacting with the other workplace elements.

   i. How is the work getting done?

   ii. What actions are people taking or not taking?

   iii. Are the materials being handled or used safety?

   iv. Is the right equipment being used (i.e., right tools, all necessary PPE, etc.)

   v. Is the equipment being used safely?

2. Materials

a. What are the "parts" present?

b. What chemicals or veterinary drugs are present?

c. Are the correct materials being used?

3. Environment

a. What is the condition of the environment?

   i. Is it hot, cold, icy, raining, dusty, noisy, etc.?

   ii. Is it organized or is chaotic and stressful?

4. Equipment

a. What is the condition of the equipment and machines?

   i. Are they maintained or in disrepair?

   ii. Are guards present where they are needed?

   iii Are there leaks or concerning noises coming from the equipment?

5. People

a. Are there enough workers and supervisors?

b. Are there different shifts?

c. What is the demographic of the workers?

   i. Are there young workers (under 25 years old)?

   ii. Are there older workers?

   iii. Are there nursing or pregnant females?

   iv. What languages are spoken?

What Inspections Should Be	What Inspections Should Not Be
Objective and based on facts.	A fault-finding exercise.
Have a broad focus (i.e., focused on unsafe conditions, unsafe behaviours, factors like fatigue or bullying).	Have a narrow focus (i.e., focused only on unsafe conditions).
Involves worker feedback.	Doesn't involve worker feedback.
Doesn't disrupt the work.	Disrupts the work.
An opportunity to recognize and reinforce positive behaviours.	A chance to shame or blame people.

Basic Inspection Principles

When conducting inspections, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety recommends the following:

- Be thorough when performing an inspection, don't waste the opportunity by rushing through it.
- When looking for hazards, start at the outside and work your way in; look up, down, under, behind and even inside (just ensure it is safe to do so first!).
- Bring attention to any immediate danger right away.
- Inform the supervisor of the need to shut down and lock out hazardous items that cannot be made safe to operate until they are repaired.
- If you want to see a machine or piece of equipment in use, ask the operator for a demonstration. Do not attempt to operate something yourself (even if you know how).
- Clearly describe each hazard you identify and its exact location in your rough notes. You will want to ensure you record your findings as you go, so that you do not forget.
- Ask questions and get worker feedback, but do not unnecessarily disrupt the work.
- When conducting an inspection on a piece of equipment, the equipment must be at a complete stop and the energy source should be isolated (or locked out).
- Consider the static (stop position) and dynamic (in motion) conditions of the machines and equipment you are looking at.
- Think about how the work is being done and the pace at which the work is performed.
- Discuss with the inspection team and workers what could go wrong and how bad the consequences would be, how the current hazard controls are working, and what corrective actions or hazard controls would be suitable if necessary.
- When you see work being done, discuss if any safety regulations might apply to the work and look them up in the legislation needed.
- We can't rely on our senses to detect some types of hazards, for this reason special equipment may need to be used or a subject matter expert may need to get involved (i.e., potentially toxic work environments).
- Taking photographs can help clarify what has been found during the inspection, just be sure to make it clear if this is permitted on your farm or not.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2022)

Assign a Priority Level

The hazards that have been identified during the inspection should be assigned a priority level to indicate how quickly corrective action is required. Below is a simple example of what priority levels can be classified as. These are just guidelines, and you will want to use priority levels that make sense for your farm, the jobs and tasks performed, the conditions in which the work is performed, and the hazards associated with the work.

Prioritizing hazards can be helpful, but it can be strongly influenced by individual perceptions and is not without some flaws. You never want to ignore serious hazards, but you also don't want to undervalue hazards that the people on your farm encounter daily. The OHS Act requires employers, as far as it is reasonably practicable, to protect employees and others from identifiable and controllable hazards at the worksite, which includes those hazards that may be considered minor.

Priority Level	Explanation
Major / High / A	• Action is needed immediately. • Potential for loss of life, permanent disability or loss of a limb. • Potential for large-scale loss of livestock, buildings, equipment, materials or other property.
Serious / Medium / B	• Action is needed soon. • Potential for serious injury, illness or non-permanent disabling injury. • Potential for loss or injury of livestock or loss of materials. • Potential for damage to buildings, equipment, materials or other property.
Minor / Low / C	• Action is needed soon but is not an emergency. • Potential for minor injury. • Potential to create minor problems relating to livestock. • Potential for minor damage to buildings, materials or other property.

Making Recommendations for Corrective Actions

Once the hazards have been assessed, the inspection team will need to recommend corrective actions. To do this, they should refer to the Hierarchy of Controls introduced in Module 3: Hazard Elimination & Control. When recommending corrective actions, you will want to recommend the most effective, longest lasting and most reasonable hazard control measures possible.

If the supervisor of the area was not part of the inspection team, it is beneficial to discuss the inspection before leaving. Take the opportunity to highlight the positive things that were noted, advise them of any deficiencies that require immediate attention and obtain their input regarding potential corrective actions. If a worker or supervisor is able to correct an issue immediately, make note of the correction, but do not remove it from the inspection!

Preparing an Inspection Report

Some farms may combine the inspection checklist and inspection report, where others may choose to make them separate. Regardless of how this is done, the following should be covered.

1. **The area inspected, the date and time of the inspection, and who performed the inspection.** You will want to ensure the information is completed properly, this includes:
   a. The day, month and year it was performed.
   b. The first and last names of the people who performed the inspection, as well as their titles or roles.
2. **The unsafe conditions or acts that were observed.** It is recommended to assign a unique number to each one for tracking purposes. Clearly state the unsafe condition or act and its location.
3. **For each item listed, assign a priority level.** You will also want to make notes indicating if the item is an unresolved or recurring safety issue that requires a closer look in order to identify a root cause.
4. **For each item listed, recommend a corrective action** (a hazard control measure) that should be taken.
5. **Include any other special notes, diagrams or supporting photos.**
6. **Have the person or people who performed the inspection sign it.**
7. **Provide the inspection report to the appropriate individuals for review and further action.**

Review of the Inspection Report and Taking Corrective Actions

Once the inspection report is complete, it will need to be reviewed and corrective actions taken. Whoever reviews it and makes decisions regarding corrective actions to take will vary from one farm to the next. On a large operation, the health and safety committee may be involved along with other key decision makers, such as the area supervisors, managers and the farm's health and safety practitioner. On a smaller operation, the health and safety representative, a supervisor and the farm owner may be involved. Regardless of who is involved, corrective actions should be decided on and taken in a timely manner.

Should the farm not accept a recommendation that was made in the inspection report, it is best practice to document and communicate the reasoning for that decision. For example, perhaps a recommendation is made that will introduce new, higher risk hazards to the work area or maybe the recommended action is very costly and will take time, so an interim hazard control measure will be used for now. The inspection team should receive feedback on the corrective actions in a timely manner as well.

Once a decision has been made regarding the corrective actions that need to be taken, a target completion date and responsible person will need to be assigned to each one. The farm will need to track the completion status of each corrective action. One way of doing this is to use a corrective action log as shown below. Corrective actions should be taken as soon as possible and there should be a plan in place to follow up on them, especially those that may take a while to complete.

CORRECTIVE ACTION LOG

MM

FARM NAME	Meadow Muffins Dairy	WORK AREA	Not Applicable	DATE STARTED	January 3, 2023

#	Hazard/Problem	Corrective Action	Person Responsible	Target Date	Date Completed
23-001	Barn step ladder is bent and wobbly	Dispose of ladder & buy a new ladder to replace it	Jane Smith	2023/01/05	2023/01/04

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- It is not uncommon for a hazard to require more than one corrective action.
- Hazard identification is an ongoing process, and it includes monitoring any corrective actions that have been taken.
- It is important to ensure that hazard control measures are working as intended and that no new hazards have been introduced.
- If the same hazard keeps coming up on inspections, a spot or focus inspection, hazard assessment and/or investigation to identify the root cause of the problem may need to be performed.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of the AgSafe Alberta Corrective Action Log is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Communicating the Inspection Findings and Corrective Actions

You will want to communicate the findings of the inspection and the corrective actions that have been or will be taken to your farm team. This can be done by posting the inspection report and corrective actions in a common area or by discussing them at safety meetings. Simple actions such as communicating the results of an inspection will strengthen the farm's safety culture by showing that the farm is actively trying to maintain a safe working environment rather than just talking about it.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Remember that any individuals whose work may be directly affected by one of the hazard controls measures will likely require additional details or some form of training relating to it.

DID YOU KNOW?

Documentation should not be thought of as a dirty word… it can actually be a good thing! When done correctly, the documentation used on your farm should be simple, factual, to the point and easy to complete (as opposed to complicated, wordy, and not getting done at all). Documenting inspections helps to:

- Ensure inspections are being performed as planned.
- Show that farm leadership is serious about the health and safety of the people living and working on the farm.
- Keep everyone on the farm informed about hazards and hazard control measures, including senior leadership.
- Support continuous improvement of the farm's health and safety program.
- Support the farm in being compliant with OHS legislation.
- Show the farm's due diligence if it ever comes into question (otherwise, how will you prove that you were doing everything you reasonably could?).

DANGEROUS WORK REFUSAL INSPECTIONS

You may recall from earlier in this manual that workers have the right to refuse dangerous work when they believe on reasonable grounds that there is an undue hazard present that poses a serious and immediate risk to the worker or another person. An undue hazard can be thought of as a hazard that is too great, inappropriate or is unusual for the work being performed; it can also be described as a serious and immediate threat to the health and safety of someone.

There are certain things that must be done when there is a dangerous work refusal, and these are outlined as follows:

1. When a worker refuses dangerous work, they must report it and the reasons why right away to their supervisor.
2. Once an employer receives this report, legislation requires the employer to inform the health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if there is one.
3. **If the employer does not correct the matter immediately,** the employer must discuss the matter with the worker who made the refusal and inspect the reported undue hazard.
    a. Sometimes the matter can be quickly resolved by replacing tools or equipment.
4. During the inspection, the employer must take any actions required to correct the hazard or ensure that action is taken. As a best practice, the health and safety committee or health and safety representative should participate in the inspection, if your farm has one.
5. When a dangerous work refusal occurs, the employer cannot assign another worker to perform that work until the employer has determined that an undue hazard does not exist. In some situations, and for complex hazards, it may be appropriate to perform a thorough investigation into why the hazardous condition exists, determine its causes and to ensure that appropriate hazard control measures are put in place. Investigations are covered in Module 5: Investigations.
6. Following an inspection, the farm will create a written report of the dangerous work refusal, the inspection, its findings, and any corrective actions taken.
7. A copy of the written report will be provided to the worker who made the dangerous work refusal and the health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if there is one.
8. When a worker who receives a copy of the report and believes there is still an undue hazard, that worker may notify Alberta OHS.
9. When an employer becomes aware that a notification to Alberta OHS was made, the employer must inform any worker that they assign to do that work in writing of:
    a. The first workers refusal,
    b. The reasons for that refusal, and
    c. The reason why (in the employer's opinion) the work is not an undue hazard to any person or that an undue hazard is not present

10. An OHS Officer who receives notification of an undue hazard in a workplace will investigate the matter and provide a written record of the investigation and its findings to the employer, the worker, and the health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if there is one.

(adapted from Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.17(1)-(15))

NOTE

Workers have the right to refuse dangerous work on reasonable grounds and they cannot be threatened with or have disciplinary actions taken against them for exercising this right and duty assigned under the OHS Act. When a worker refuses dangerous work, the farm can assign the worker who made the refusal to other jobs or tasks temporarily, so long as the worker is reasonably able to perform the work, there is no loss of pay and the work would not be considered disciplinary action.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.2(d)(i)-(iv) and s.17(6)-(7))

Steps For Creating an Inspection Policy

A written inspection policy will outline how you will ensure the farm is and remains a safe place to live, work and visit by performing regular inspections. Involve members of your farm team in the development process as this will help ensure it is effective and makes sense for the farm. When developing a policy, be sure to consider any applicable legislation or standards.

Step 1: Explain why inspections are important.

Describe how ongoing, regular inspections of the farm's work areas, equipment, tools and work site conditions are necessary to keep everyone safe. You can point out the many benefits of performing inspections, such as identifying and correcting issues before an injury, illness or incident occurs, repairing small issues to prevent larger more costly issues, and to prevent lost time related to breakdowns.

Step 2: Explain the goal or purpose of the inspection policy.

Clearly state the overall goal of the policy. Think about what the policy should do, for example:

- Help keep the workplace safe.
- Provide guidance on how inspections are to be conducted.
- Ensure the farm is checked regularly for existing, potential and new hazards.
- Ensure hazards are assessed and solutions are identified to eliminate or control them.
- Ensure hazard controls are working.

Step 3: Detail who this policy applies to.

Who does this policy apply to? Will it apply family members, employees, contractors, or service providers?

Step 4: List definitions

Consider what terms will be used in the policy that should be included to help someone reading the policy understand it better. What terms might someone not be familiar with?

Step 5: Explain the roles and responsibilities of the people working on the farm.

Some points to consider and explain include:

- Who will be performing the inspections?
- Who is responsible for ensuring inspections are completed?
- Who is responsible for making decisions about corrective actions to be taken?
- If your farm has a health and safety committee or representative, what is their role in this?
- Who will follow up on corrective actions to ensure they are working?

Step 6: Explain the training needed to perform an inspection effectively.

In order to perform an inspection well, someone will need to understand what hazards are, how to assess them and how to control them. You will have to identify what qualifications or training are needed in order to perform an inspection effectively.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Everyone will need to be trained and competent to perform their duties (including inspections) and all training should be documented. Training is looked at in greater detail in Module 6: Communication, Orientation & Training

Step 7: Explain the types of inspections to be completed, how often they will be completed and who will be completing them.

Points to consider and explain include:

- What will be inspected, such as buildings, equipment, tools, PPE, etc.
- What types of inspections will need to be done.
  - Use the table found earlier in this module titled Examples of Inspection Types to help you.
  - Depending on the size of your operation, you may want to divide the farm into sections.

- How often the items and areas will be inspected.
  - Work areas or equipment identified as being high risk should be inspected more frequently.
  - Identify any special circumstances that will warrant an inspection (i.e., near miss or other event such as a severe storm).
  - Create an inspection schedule that is practical and achievable.
- Who will be performing which inspections.
  - You will want to mix up who is performing inspections from time to time; a fresh set of eyes can spot things others have become blind to.
  - More than one person can perform an inspection, for example, a more experienced team member can involve a newer employee.
  - Both supervisors and workers should be performing inspections.
  - Health and safety committee members or health and safety representative should be involved, but not strictly relied on to perform all of the workplace inspections. If the farm has a health and safety advisor, coordinator, etc., they should not be relied on to perform every inspection.
  - Senior leadership should perform an inspection at least once each year, and ideally more.
- When and how inspections will be documented.
  - This includes inspection procedures or forms that will support the inspection in being carried out effectively.

Step 8: Explain how hazards will be prioritized, corrective actions recommended and decided upon.

Some points to consider and explain include:

- How issues and deficiencies that are found will be prioritized and how recommendations will be made.
- How corrective actions will be recommended, decided upon, implemented and followed up on.
- Who will be reviewing the completed inspections.
- How the results of inspections will be communicated to the farm team.
  - These could be reviewed at a safety meeting or posted on bulletin boards.

Step 9: Decide on and include any other important information that should be communicated.

Include any other important health and safety and farm specific statements you feel are important here.

Step 10: Decide how often this policy will be reviewed.

Think about how frequently the farm will review this policy. What is reasonable? If your farm has a certification that requires the policy to be reviewed at a specific frequency (i.e., annually), then you will want to state it here.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

A policy is a written general guideline that sets the direction for accomplishing an outcome and is used to guide decision making.

A procedure is a document with a narrow focus which describes step by step what actions are to be taken (especially when performing a job or task) in order to achieve the desired outcome.

If it makes sense for the farm, a policy and procedure can be combined into one document. If you find that combining these results in a very lengthy document, it may be better to create a separate policy and procedure.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of an AgSafe Alberta Inspection Policy and Procedure is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

ACTIVITY

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Inspection Policy and Procedure document to help you create a draft of your farm's inspection policy. You may want to create other types of inspection policies and procedures that are needed by your particular operation. For example, you could decide to create separate building inspection policies, equipment inspection policies and work area inspection policies if that works better on your farm.

Once you have your draft policy created, remember to get input from other members of your farm team before finalizing it.

Creating Forms for Your Inspections

Any checklists and forms you use should be tailored to your farm. The equipment, machines, products and farm layout will always be a little different and these differences will need to be considered. When developing your farm's inspection checklists, you will want to consider:

- Alberta OHS legislation.
- Fire and/or building codes.
- Industry and/or commodity group standards.
- Farm specific rules and procedures.
- The farm's hazard assessments and hazard control measures (i.e., ventilation, guards, personal protective equipment).
- Emergency preparedness (i.e., emergency action plans, emergency related equipment and supplies).
- Problem areas identified by reviewing near miss and incident investigations, first aid records, previous inspection reports, etc.

How often an inspection occurs will depend on many factors, such as how often something gets used, the level of risk involved, as well as any legislated requirements. A good guideline to follow when planning routine work area inspections is to perform one each month, in each work area, and on every work shift.

Some may make the mistake of thinking that because they are a family farm, they don't need to perform or document inspections. While this may be true in some instances, it may not always be the case. You don't want to find yourself facing a civil or criminal negligence charge for something that should have been corrected or for a defect that was not visible to the naked eye and now you can't prove that it was ever checked (i.e., load securement devices).

RESOURCE

Downloadable and customizable inspection forms and related documents can be found at **agsafeab.ca**.

MODULE

5

Investigations

In this module, readers will:

1. Learn about different types of incidents that should be investigated.
2. Be introduced to the process of incident investigation.
3. Become familiar with immediate causes, root causes and root cause analysis.
4. Learn about preliminary/internal incident investigation reports and final investigation reports.
5. Be introduced to incident reporting.
6. Learn how to develop an incident reporting and investigation policy.

INTRODUCTION

Even when you take the measures necessary to create a safe working environment on your farm, incidents can still occur. As you will learn in this module, when an incident occurs there are important steps that the farm will need to take, such as investigating the incident and even reporting the incident to Alberta OHS in some circumstances.

No one wants an incident to happen, but if one does, the farm will need to ensure that it is not repeated. Incident investigations help to keep your workplace safe by finding the root cause(s) of an incident and identifying corrective actions that can be taken to prevent it from happening again. Ensuring that your incident investigations are complete and documented will also support you should a copy of the incident investigation report be requested by Alberta OHS.

This module focuses primarily on incident investigations; however, it is important to recognize that there may be times that the farm will need to investigate other matters (for example, high rates of absenteeism in a particular work area or ways to accommodate an injured worker). When this happens, many of the same principles can be applied to those types of investigations as well.

Incident: An undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that results, or has the potential to result, in harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property.

Incident investigation: An objective examination of an undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that results, or has the potential to result, in physical harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property for the purpose of identify the causes of it and taking corrective actions.

Incident investigation report: A written description of the events leading up to an incident, the facts of the incident, what happened immediately after the incident, the causes of the incident, investigation findings and recommended corrective actions.

Investigation: The act of examining something closely in order to obtain facts and find something out.

Root cause: The basic cause of something; the thing that causes an incident.

INVESTIGATION BASICS

This module begins by introducing some basic yet very important information relating to incident investigations.

When participating in an incident investigation, your role is very much like a detective, searching for the facts and using them to find the causes of the incident, particularly the root cause(s). Once the causes of the incident are identified, you can take the necessary corrective actions to ensure that it does not occur again.

What is an Incident?

An incident is an undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that results, or has the potential to result in harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property. Common types of incidents that you will need to investigate are listed below. You will learn more about investigating these types of incidents later in this module.

1. **Near miss incidents.** These are undesired, unplanned, unexpected events that have the potential to result in harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property; it is an incident where there was no injury, illness, or damage. Also thought of as a no-loss incident.
2. **Injuries or illnesses.** Some incidents can result in injuries (harm or damage to the body that can range from minor to disabling to fatal) or illnesses (a disease or a period of sickness and ill health).
3. **Property damage incidents.** These result in physical harm to a thing (i.e., tool, equipment, machine, building, etc.) and a loss of value, usefulness or even function.
4. **Environmental damage incidents.** These result in injury or damage to the natural world, including plants, animals, soil condition, etc. and can include a loss of value or usefulness.
5. **Potential for Serious Incidents (PSIs).** These are a type of near miss incident that must be reported to Alberta OHS. These can be thought of as any incident where there was a likelihood of it causing a serious injury or illness to a person (i.e., worksite party, visitor or someone near the worksite), and there is reason to believe that corrective action may need to be taken to prevent it from happening again.
6. **Serious incidents.** These are defined as “injuries, illnesses and incidents to be reported (to Alberta OHS and include)... (a) an injury, illness or incident that results in the death of a worker, (b) an injury, illness or incident in which there is reason to believe the worker has been or will be admitted to a hospital beyond treatment in an emergency room or urgent care facility, (c) an unplanned or uncontrolled explosion, fire or flood that causes a serious injury or illness or that has the potential of causing a serious injury or illness, (d) the collapse or upset of a crane, derrick or hoist, and (e) the collapse or failure of any component of a building or structure necessary for the structural integrity of the building or structure (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.33)."

7. **Safety non-compliances (safety violations).** These are violations of the farm's safety related policies, procedures, rules, etc.

Why Investigate an Incident?

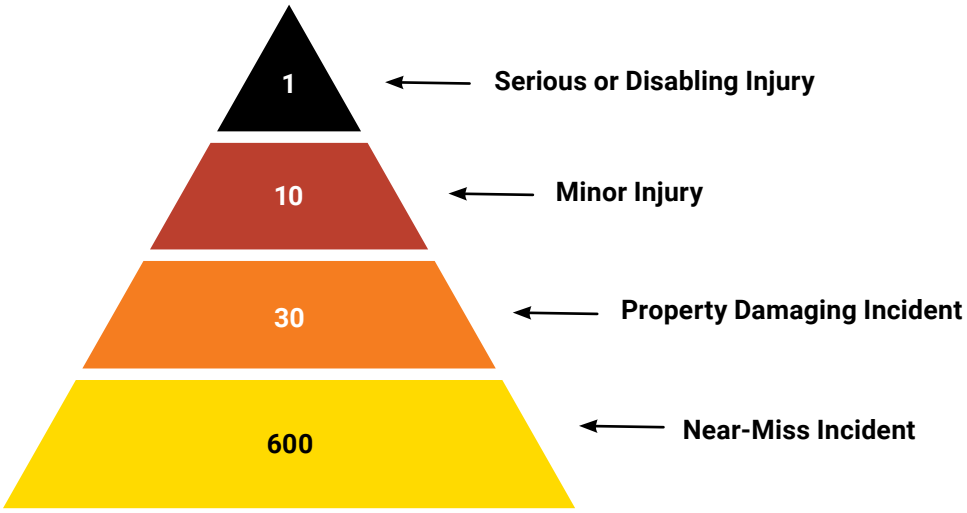
There are many reasons why an incident should be investigated, regardless of whether harm or loss occurred, these include:

- To find out what caused the incident and to prevent similar incidents in the future.
- To meet any legal requirements and requirements for some types of certifications (i.e., AgSafe Alberta Certified).
- To find out what the true cost of an incident is.
- To determine compliance with applicable regulations (i.e., Alberta OHS legislation).
- To process workers compensation or other insurance claims.

(adapted from CCOHS, 2019)

The Ratio Study

A study conducted in 1969 by Frank E. Bird Jr. analyzed 1,753,498 incidents that occurred at 297 companies. This study is commonly referred to as the Ratio Study, and it illustrates how many near misses occur for every single serious injury. For every serious or disabling injury, there were 10 reported minor injuries, 30 reported property damage incidents and 600 no-loss (near-miss) incidents. What we can take away from this is that by investigating and responding to near misses, we can prevent serious injuries and fatalities.



(Bird, F. E., Germain, G. L., and Clark, M. D., 2014)

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

From the Ratio Study, we can conclude that by investigating and responding to near misses, we can prevent serious and disabling injuries and fatalities.

Initial Reporting of Incidents

It is important that the people working on your farm report incidents right away so that an incident investigation can occur. If you remember back to Module 1, this is where you can really tell the state of your farm's safety culture. If the safety culture is good, people will feel safe reporting an incident. If the safety culture is poor, attempts could be made to hide that an incident occurred or someone may change some of the facts around it; for example, you may stumble across a large dent in an overhead door on a barn and no one knows anything about it or when it might have occurred. If you find that incidents are not being reported like they should be, you should investigate the reasons why.

In addition to having a good safety culture, you will want to have a system in place to support incident reporting. This system should be simple and understood by everyone on the farm. A written incident reporting policy and procedure will support this. How incidents get reported will depend on your farm. Larger operations may use a phone app, where smaller operations may simply report incidents verbally.

NOTE

The farm should have a system in place to support incident reporting that is simple and understood by everyone on the farm. Having a written incident reporting policy and procedure will support this.

Illness: An injury that results in disease or a period of sickness and ill health. A loss of health.

Injury: An incident that results in physical harm or damage to the body; an injury can range from minor to disabling to fatal. A loss of good physical condition.

Near miss: An undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that has the potential to result in harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property. An incident where there was no injury, illness, or damage. Also thought of as a no loss incident.

Property damage: Physical harm to a thing (i.e., tool, equipment, machine, building, etc.) that results in a loss of value, usefulness or even function.

Incident Investigation Kits

Do you recall the definition of an incident and how it is an unexpected and unplanned event? Because of this, you will want to be ready to conduct an incident investigation at any moment. Many farms will find it beneficial to create incident investigation kits. Think of these like first aid kits, packed and ready to go with all the essential items you will need. Consider having more than one on your farm and placing them in multiple locations.

While these kits should be customized for your farm, common items will include one or more of the following:

- Camera with a spare battery
- Chalk
- Eye protection
- Investigation forms
- Magnifying glass
- Flashlight(s) with spare batteries
- 100 ft Measuring tape
- N95 respirators
- Padlock and Lock out/Tag out items
- Graph paper
- Notepads
- Caution tape
- Hearing protection
- Sample bags and/or envelopes
- Masking tape
- Clipboards
- Medical gloves
- Pens and pencils
- Paint pen
- Duct tape

INVESTIGATION PROCESS

How incidents get investigated will depend on the type and severity (or potential severity) of the incident. After an incident occurs, an investigation should begin as soon as it is safe to do so. The level of effort that goes into an investigation should reflect the potential or actual risk rating of the incident (refer to Module 2: Hazard Identification & Assessment to help you determine the risk rating of an incident).

Two investigation processes are outlined below to support you further.

Simple Investigation Process

These basic steps would be appropriate for most near misses and non-urgent safety concerns.

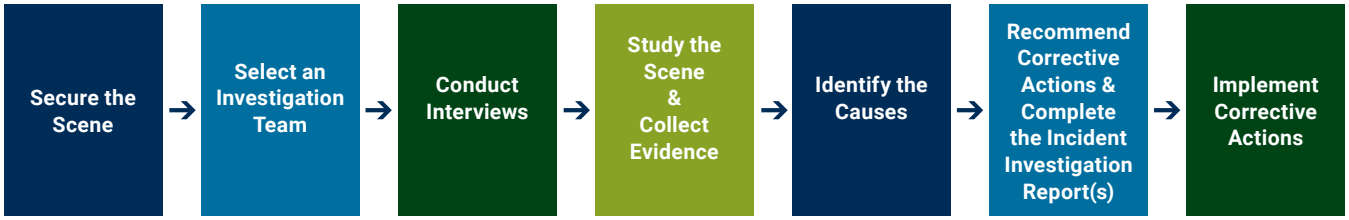
1. Near misses or safety concerns should be reported promptly to the persons direct supervisor.
2. The person making the report should write down what they are reporting (commonly done on a form).
3. The supervisor should take any necessary immediate or interim corrective actions and record it as required by the farm's policies and procedures.
4. The supervisor should escalate the matter or take additional steps as outlined by the farm's policies and procedures, if appropriate.

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Near Miss and Hazard Report Form. The downloadable version of this form is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

Standard Investigation Process

The steps that follow would be appropriate for most incidents and near misses where the outcome would be considered serious (i.e., PSIs).



1. Secure the scene

Securing the scene starts by making sure it is safe to enter; you only want to enter an area if it is safe to do so. While this should have occurred as part of the initial response to the incident, always give the area a second look as you don't want any other incidents occurring. Making the area safe may require removing an animal from a pen, shutting equipment down, switching the main breaker panel off, etc.

You will want to ensure that anyone requiring first aid or medical attention has received care; again, this should have been part of the initial response to the incident. Remove anyone who is not required from the area, as this will give the injured person privacy and prevent others from potentially being exposed to a hazard (i.e., biological hazards, traumatic event, etc.). It will also protect any and all evidence. It is important to ensure that any necessary initial notifications have been made (i.e., farm owner, barn manager, etc.) at this point.

Securing the scene will include preventing further access to the area, again this is done to preserve evidence. Use caution tape to mark off areas and/or lock doors as required. It is critical not to move items or change the scene in any way unless it is absolutely necessary (i.e., to prevent further injuries or damage).

Who releases or unfreezes the scene following an incident?

The simple answer is, it depends. For minor incidents, the person in charge of health and safety on your farm or another person designated with the authority to release the scene will advise when to do so, but this should only happen after the initial investigation requirements have been met.

If a worker has been injured and requires medical attention, you might have to wait for an update to find out if the injured person may be admitted to hospital or referred to a surgeon; Alberta OHS will need to be notified if this happens or if it is believed this will happen. Anything involving a serious injury or fatality needs to be recognized and treated as a serious incident right away. The farm is required to secure a scene following a serious incident unless it is told otherwise by Alberta OHS. This means that if a serious incident occurs in the middle of harvesting a crop, the scene still needs to be completely frozen until Alberta OHS gives other direction.

NOTE

An incident investigation should only begin if the scene is safe to enter and anyone requiring first aid or medical attention has received care.

2. Select an incident investigation team

An investigation team should be made up of people who are trained to perform incident investigations. The person with the most knowledge and experience should act as the lead investigator and guide the incident investigation. The investigation team (as a group or individually, if possible) should have knowledge and experience in:

- Investigation techniques.
- What causes incidents (i.e., incident causation models).
- Health and safety basics (i.e., what hazards are, how to identify them, what risk is, etc.).
- Farm and legal requirements.
- How the work is done (i.e., processes, methods, materials, etc.) and who does it.
- Knowledge of industry and commodity group standards.
- How to conduct an interview.
- Critically analyzing the data and facts gathered during an investigation.
- Applying the hierarchy of controls to recommend appropriate corrective actions.

It is best to have a mix of investigators, so that both farm management and workers are involved. If the incident involved more complicated factors, such as a confined space, you may want to include someone with a more thorough knowledge and understanding of that subject. When there is a solid mixed team of investigators, you may want to include the

direct supervisor in the investigation team, as their knowledge and experience will be an asset. However, it is not advisable to include a direct supervisor on an investigation team if they will be leading the investigation or able to influence the investigation team in some way. Remember, incident investigations need to be objective and focused on the facts!

3. Conduct interviews and take statements as soon as possible

Interviews can help the investigation team better understand what happened and why. Interviews should include not just the people who witnessed the incident or were directly involved in it, but anyone who may have heard or seen something, as well as anyone who may have been at the scene just before or immediately after the incident. Before interviewing someone, consider their emotional state and tailor your approach. In many situations, it may be appropriate to have two people perform the interview, but do not have more than two people present. Having multiple people present during an interview could be intimidating and uncomfortable for the person being interviewed.

Points to remember when conducting interviews include:

- Conduct interviews as soon as possible.
- Keep everyone from speaking to each other or anyone else until after they have been interviewed.
- Have the person being interviewed write a statement while their memory is fresh. The statement can include them drawing pictures and diagrams as needed.
- When interviewing someone, ask open ended questions (these are questions that cannot be answered using a “yes” or “no” response) and let the person explain things in their own words.
- Start by asking about what happened before the incident, then during the incident, and move onto what happened immediately after the incident occurred.

Interviewing Tips: DO	Interviewing Tips: DON'T
• Put the person at ease. • Try and get a sense of what the person is feeling. • Make sure the person understands that the purpose of an investigation is to find out what happened and why, and not to point fingers or assign blame. • Let the person talk. • Actively listen and ask questions. • Confirm that you have the statement correct. • Take accurate notes during the interview. • If you are going to record the interview, ask if it is okay first. • Close the interview on a positive note, where possible.	• Make the person uncomfortable, feel judged, blamed or intimidated. • Show your emotions. • Ask questions that encourage the person to give you the answer you want to hear. • Interrupt the person. • Jump to conclusions. • Be dismissive of their account or feelings.

DID YOU KNOW?

There have been many studies around memory, including how memories can be reconstructed, influenced, and affected by stress. We don't realize when this happens, so it is important to conduct interviews and obtain written statements as soon as possible.

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Near Miss and Hazard Report Form. The downloadable version of this form is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

4. Study the scene and collect evidence

Think of an incident like a puzzle that needs to be solved. You will want to look at all of the facts, study them and piece together what happened. Similar to a workplace inspection, when going into an area where an incident has occurred, it is best to start at the outside of the area and work your way in. You will want to identify and examine the **4 P's** as you go along:

People

This will include the witness statements in addition to thinking about other people-related factors. This type of evidence will be recorded in notes and in witness statements.

- Was anyone in some way unfit for work? What factors could have contributed to fatigue? Is this an overtime shift? Was the work physically demanding? What temperatures were people exposed to? Could someone be under the influence of alcohol or drugs?

- What type of injury or injuries occurred? Was someone hit by, cut, or caught in something?
- Was there too much work for the time and labour available?
- Could something have caused a distraction?
- What is the work group dynamic? Is it understaffed? Is there a lot of conflict? Is it all new workers? What is communication like between workers?

Positions

This looks at where everyone and everything was located. This type of evidence may include pictures of where things were at, drawn diagrams, and measurements that have been taken.

- Where were the people positioned?
- Where were the animals, equipment or other objects located?
- What could and could not be seen by the people involved?
- Were things where they belonged? Was anything out of place?

Parts

This looks at the tools, equipment, machines and other elements involved in the work. This type of evidence may include pictures and physically collecting items when it is appropriate to do so.

- Was something in good working condition or was it damaged?
- Does any part look suspect, like it may have failed and require further examination?
- Was the guard or other safety feature in place and used as intended?
- Was everything used that was needed for the job or task?
- Was something being used incorrectly or was it the wrong thing to use altogether?

Papers

The papers can help you identify the root cause(s) and any immediate causes. Paper evidence may be changed, so it should be collected right away. Types of paper evidence include:

- Training records
- Maintenance records
- Communication records
- Weather reports
- Policies and procedures
- Hazard assessments
- Audit records
- Toolbox talks
- Operator's manuals
- Inspections
- Corrective actions log

An investigator should consider the following questions while collecting evidence:

- **Who** was involved or injured?
- **What** happened?
- **Where** did it happen?
- **When** did it happen?
- **Why** was the unsafe act or condition allowed?
- **How** can a similar incident be prevented?

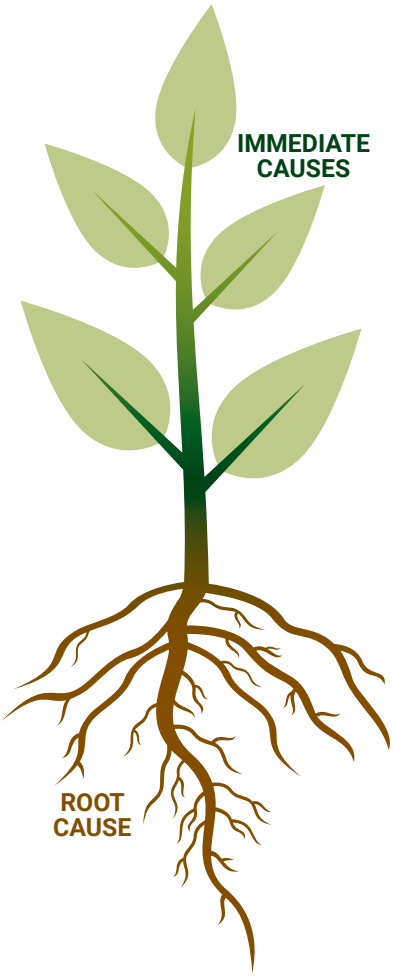
5. Identify the causes

Identifying the immediate causes will help you identify the root cause(s) of an incident. An immediate cause is an event, unsafe act or unsafe condition that results in an incident and is typically quite easy to identify. Root causes are the most basic causes of an incident and if corrected, will prevent or greatly decrease the likelihood of something happening again. Root causes allow the immediate causes to develop. Unfortunately, root causes are not so easy to identify and there may be more than one. Root causes are generally the result of management, design, planning, organization, and/or operational errors (OSHA, 2015, p.9).

Immediate Causes VS Root Causes
Note: These are just a few of many potential causes.

Immediate Causes	Root Causes
Unsafe Acts • Removing safety devices (i.e., guards). • Not using PPE. • Horseplay, fooling around. • Operating equipment while impaired. **Unsafe Conditions** • Damaged PTO guard. • Not repairing or replacing damaged tools. • Poor housekeeping. • Poor lighting in a work area.	• Lack of knowledge (i.e., lack of training and experience). • Poor leadership (i.e., lack of supervision). • Poor maintenance (i.e., not having a preventative maintenance program to catch defects or wear). • Mental stress (i.e., conflicting work demands or instructions). • Physical capabilities (i.e., someone was assigned to a task they don't have the physical ability to perform as required).

Think of immediate causes as the leaves on a weed, and the roots as representing the root cause. If you only pick off the leaves of a weed, you won't kill it or make it go away. It is more effective to dig down and address the root of the problem.



Root cause analysis: finding the root cause

Using all the facts and evidence uncovered during the investigation, you will start at the incident and begin "digging" backwards, going deeper into the incident looking for the root cause. This process of "digging" is called a root cause analysis. There are many ways to perform a root cause analysis, and here we will look at one method called the 5 Whys.

The 5 Whys method is easy. The process is simply asking "why" several times (but you can ask the question as many times as needed) to identify the root cause, and you may have to do this more than once as there may be more than one root cause.

Consider this example:

Question 1: Why won't the truck start?

Answer: The battery is dead.

Question 2: Why is the battery dead?

Answer: The alternator is not working properly.

Question 3: Why is the alternator not working properly?

Answer: The serpentine belt is broken.

Question 4: Why did the serpentine belt break?

Answer: It was not replaced when worn.

Question 5: Why was it not replaced?

Answer: The farm didn't follow the preventative maintenance schedule.

Question 6: Why didn't the farm follow the preventative maintenance schedule?

Answer: There farm doesn't have a preventative maintenance program.

Question 7: Why doesn't the farm have a preventative maintenance program?

Answer: The farm doesn't have a health and safety program yet... you get the idea!

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Root Cause Analysis Form. The downloadable version of this form is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

DID YOU KNOW?

If the root cause of an investigation is identified as "people need to do better" or "need to pay attention," more training in the investigation process, root causes and root cause analysis is likely needed. Remember, root causes are generally the result of management, design, planning, organization, and or operational errors (OSHA, 2015, p.9).

NOTE

Investigations should:

- Always be objective.
- Focus on finding out the facts.
- Never be about assigning blame or fault to a person or group; if a person's deliberate actions or inactions (i.e., an intentional decision to violate a safety rule and the person was aware of it) are found to have caused or contributed to an incident occurring, the matter should be acknowledged and dealt with using the farm's existing policies and procedures.

Immediate cause: An event, unsafe act or unsafe condition that results in an incident and is typically easy to identify.

Open ended question: A question that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no" response.

Root cause: The most basic cause or causes, that if corrected, will prevent or greatly decrease the likelihood of something happening.

Root cause analysis: A detailed and methodical examination of an incident for the purpose of identifying the root cause(s).

Unsafe acts: Actions taken by a person which are not safe or that do not align with policies, procedures, safe work practices, etc. and which can cause an incident.

Unsafe conditions: Conditions that are not safe and do not align with policies, procedures, safe work practices, etc. and which can cause an incident.

6. Recommend corrective actions and complete the investigation report(s)

After identifying the root cause(s), the investigation team will need to discuss and decide on effective yet practical corrective actions to recommend to the employer. Recommendations should be specific and prevent the incident or one like it from happening in the future. It is common to require more than one corrective action (especially if the incident was serious), and sometimes interim corrective actions will need to be taken before a more effective and permanent corrective action can be put in place. Interim corrective actions will commonly be taken following completion of the preliminary/internal investigation report and before the final incident investigation is completed.

It can be beneficial to include others in the discussion to help identify appropriate corrective actions, such as the supervisor of the work area. If the incident involved something more complex to address (i.e., work in confined spaces or a chemical exposure), bringing in someone with more specialized knowledge and qualifications is recommended.

Once the preliminary incident investigation report is complete, it will need to be reviewed by the farm and corrective actions will need to be taken in a timely manner. Who reviews the incident investigations and how decisions regarding what corrective actions to implement will vary. For example, the health and safety committee may be involved along with other key decision makers, such as the area supervisors, managers and the farm's health and safety coordinator. It is up to the employer to make the final decision about corrective actions and ensure that appropriate hazards control measures are taken.

Should the farm not accept a recommendation that was made in the investigation report, it is best practice to document and communicate the reasoning for that decision. For example, perhaps a recommendation has been made that will introduce new, higher risk hazards to the work area or maybe the recommended action will take time so an interim hazard control measure will need to be put in place for a while. The incident investigation team should receive feedback on the corrective actions in a timely manner.

Preliminary/internal incident investigation reports versus final incident investigation reports

It is good practice to complete both a preliminary/internal incident investigation report and a final investigation report. The purpose of any incident investigation should always be to identify what steps need to be taken in order to prevent an incident like it from happening again and of course, to improve safety on the farm.

- **A preliminary/internal incident investigation report** is completed earlier on following an incident. It should look at and record not only the root cause(s), but other factors that did or may have contributed to the incident. These other factors can provide valuable information that should be considered by the farm and could indicate other issues that need to be addressed. This report will help clarify what should be included in the final investigation report and what does not.
- **A final investigation report** is completed once the incident investigation has been finalized. It should be focused on the known facts, the known cause(s) or root cause(s), and what actions have been or are being taken to prevent an incident like it from happening again. This report is the type of report that the farm would need to provide to an OHS officer if requested, as it focuses on the known facts and does not make guesses as to what may have contributed to the incident.

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Preliminary/Internal Incident Investigation Report and the Final Incident Investigation Report. The downloadable version of these forms are available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

7. Review the investigation report and take corrective actions

Once a decision has been made regarding the corrective actions that need to be taken, a target completion date and responsible person will need to be assigned to each one. The farm will need to track the completion status of each corrective action. One way of doing this is to use a corrective action log just like the one you use for inspections (in fact, you can use the exact same one if you choose to). Corrective actions should be taken as soon as possible and there should be a plan in place to follow up on them, especially those that may take a while to complete.

RESOURCE

Corrective actions taken following incidents should be managed the same way as corrective actions for inspections. Refer to the Module 4: Inspections of this manual to review what a corrective action log can look like and visit **agsafeab.ca** to download the customizable AgSafe Alberta Corrective Action Log.

8. Communicate investigation findings and corrective actions taken

You will want to communicate the findings of the incident investigation and the corrective actions that have been (or will be) taken to your farm team. When communicating findings, you will want to share only what is appropriate so that everyone is able to understand how the incident occurred and what is needed to prevent it from happening again without compromising anyone's privacy. It is critical to ensure that no private or confidential information is shared in this process. Communicating the results of an incident investigation and what the farm is doing to protect people is essential and even more so when the incident is serious. You will want to show how seriously the farm takes safety and letting your farm team know what has been done and what will be done can reduce some of the stress that may arise following an incident. This type of communication will also support a positive safety culture by showing that the farm is actively trying to maintain a safe working environment rather than just talking about it.

9. Evaluate corrective actions

Once corrective actions are in place, the farm will still need to follow up on them. This is done to ensure that the corrective actions put in place are working as intended, and that no new hazards have been introduced. This can be done using the same method that the farm uses to evaluate corrective actions put in place following inspections.

TYPES OF INVESTIGATIONS

The purpose of an incident investigation is to identify the cause or causes of an incident and take corrective actions to prevent the incident from occurring again. Investigations should be carried out for different types of incidents, such as:

1. Near misses
2. Injuries or illnesses
3. Property damage
4. Environmental damage
5. Potentially Serious Incidents (PSIs)
6. Serious Incidents
7. Safety non-compliance (or safety violation)

Near Miss Investigations

A near miss is an undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that has the potential to result in harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property. It is a type of incident where there was no injury, illness, or damage, so it can also be thought of as a no loss incident. It is easy to ignore near misses, especially since no one was injured or killed. By reporting and investigating near misses, you will be able to put hazard controls in place to ensure that a similar incident does not occur again.

Some farms may choose to investigate and treat near misses like any other incident by performing a thorough investigation. Other farms may want to keep it simple and take a very basic approach. The farm will need to decide what makes the most sense for it and provide guidance to workers as to how near misses should be reported and addressed.

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Near Miss Incident Report and Investigation Form. This form can also be used to capture hazards, safety concerns and safety suggestions. The downloadable version of this form is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

DISCUSSION

Take a moment to consider ignoring a near miss on your farm and having the same type of incident occur again shortly after… except this time someone dies. From a psychosocial perspective, the effects would be devastating to the persons family, the farm team, your family and yourself. From a due diligence perspective, what would a judge think if you knew there was a problem, but did nothing to correct the matter and someone lost their life as a result?

Potentially Serious Incident (PSI) Investigations

A potentially serious incident (PSI) is an incident where there was a likelihood of it causing serious injury or illness, and there is reason to believe that corrective action may need to be taken in order to prevent it or something like it from happening again (OHS Act, 2022, s.33(5)(a)-(b)). A PSI is not limited to workers; it can apply to a visitor or contractor, but it must result from work activities at the work site or could have happened to a worker. Due to the potential seriousness of this type of incident, the standard investigation process should be used.

Potentially serious incident (PSI) reporting was introduced into Alberta legislation in 2018. Since then, changes and refinements have been made. In **most** cases, PSI reports will only be used for information and education reasons, however, some may result in an inspection by Alberta OHS.

Reports can be made using the OHS Online Incident Reporting service or the My Alberta Digital Identity for Business (MADI-B) accounts for employers. Employers can be identified as underreporting using other data sources (i.e., WCB data or OHS officer field observations). Employers identified as potentially under reporting are tracked by Alberta OHS.

(Government of Alberta, 2021, p.3-10)

Injury, Illness, Property and Environmental Damage Investigations

These types of incidents will typically be investigated using the standard investigation process outlined earlier. When an incident occurs, it means that a hazard was not identified or the hazard control measures in place were not enough. It is important to be thorough and thoughtful during the investigation process.

Serious Incident Investigations

Employers must contact the Alberta OHS Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 as soon as possible following an incident where:

- A worker has died at work or from an illness connected to the worksite.
- A worker has been or will likely be admitted to a hospital as a result of a work-related injury, illness or incident.*
- A person has been injured or becomes ill from:
  - An unplanned or uncontrolled explosion, fire or flood.
  - The collapse or upset of a crane, derrick or hoist.
  - The collapse or failure of any component of a building or structure.

* Treatment in an emergency room or urgent care center is not considered admission to hospital.

It is especially important not to disturb the scene following a serious incident, nor should anyone change, move or remove equipment, papers, or anything else that may be related to the incident. It is only appropriate to do so once an OHS officer or police officer gives permission, or if the actions are directly related to protecting people and property or preventing further injuries, illnesses or incidents.

(Government of Alberta, n.d.)

Serious incidents require a very thorough standard investigation process. It is recommended that you carry out both a preliminary investigation report that will only be used by the farm for internal purposes, followed by a final investigation report. As you learned earlier, it is the final investigation report that you will be required to provide to an OHS officer upon request and it is important that you only state the facts and known cause(s) or root cause(s) relating to the incident in the final investigation report.

NOTE

Following a serious incident:

- An OHS officer will perform an investigation of their own. You are required by legislation to cooperate with an OHS officer performing their duties and need to recognize that their investigation may result in charges.
- An OHS officer may be sent to site that same day, several days later or it is possible they may not come out at all.
- As with any legal matter, what you say and do will have consequence. It is for this reason that following a serious incident the farm should contact a lawyer in order to establish privilege. Because OHS law is different from other types of law, it is recommended to find a lawyer who has knowledge and experience in this area.
- The basis for contacting a lawyer is not because you are guilty of any wrongdoing, but because the legal process relating to a serious incident can be complicated and involves many challenging factors you will likely not be aware of.

RESOURCE

Learn important information about what to expect following a serious incident by visiting **https://www.agsafeabseed.ca/course/growing-farm-safety-webinar-series** and view *Weathering the Storm: What to Expect When a Serious Incident Occurs on Your Farm* presented by Christopher Spasoff, founder of F2 Legal Counsel, Occupational Health and Safety Lawyer and former OHS Prosecutor.

DISCUSSION

How prepared is your farm to handle a serious incident? Many farms do well at handling the immediate emergency but can be overwhelmed by their obligations as an employer following the incident. Questions to consider include:

- Do I know exactly who to contact, how to contact them and when I must contact them by following a serious incident (i.e., Alberta OHS, WCB, private insurance provider, etc.)?
- Am I really prepared to secure the scene, obtain witness statements, and gather evidence right away?
- Am I prepared to potentially deal with Alberta OHS being onsite right away or soon after?
- Do I have plans for how to deal with the emotional impact of a serious incident on my farm team and myself while ensuring ongoing business operation and seeing to my other obligations as an employer (i.e., do I have a plan to provide some form of critical incident stress management)?
- If I am not present on the farm or available when a serious incident occurs, who is prepared to take over these responsibilities and ensure everything gets done in the way that I want it completed?

Safety Non-Compliance (or Safety Violation) Investigation

Safety non-compliances, also called safety violations, are a form of misconduct. These are intentional decisions that are most often well-meaning choices rather than being malicious or spiteful. When a safety non-compliance occurs, it is important for the farm to respond quickly and appropriately. Some form of investigation should occur, as it is possible that the action or decision was actually an error (i.e., a lapse in judgement or a mistake where the person thought they were doing the right thing). The amount of effort put into the investigation should reflect the severity or potential severity of the outcome. Not addressing safety non-compliances can quickly destroy a safety culture and send the message that the farm's rules, policies and procedures do not have to be followed. Failing to investigate safety non-compliances can result in root causes going unidentified and unaddressed, such as poor work scheduling practices that result in people taking short-cuts to get the job done or poor hiring practices.

Environmental damage: Injury or damage to the natural world, including plants, animals, soil condition, etc.; results in a loss of value or usefulness.

Final investigation report: An incident investigation report that is completed once the incident investigation has been finalized; it is focused on the known facts, the known cause(s) or root cause(s), and what actions have been or are being taken to prevent an incident or near miss like it from happening again.

Misconduct: Unacceptable or improper behaviour.

Potential for serious incidents (PSIs): A type of incident (near miss, injury, illness, property damage, environmental damage) that must be reported to Alberta OHS, where there was a likelihood of it causing a serious injury or illness to a person (worksite party, visitor or someone near the worksite), and it is reasonable to believe that corrective action may need to be taken to prevent it from happening again.

Preliminary/internal incident investigation report: An incident investigation report that is completed earlier on following an incident that looks at and records not only the root cause(s), but other factors that may have contributed to the incident as well.

Safety non-compliance: Violation of the farm's safety related policies, procedures, rules, etc.

Serious incidents: "Injuries, illnesses and incidents to be reported (to Alberta OHS and include)... (a) an injury, illness or incident that results in the death of a worker, (b) an injury, illness or incident in which there is reason to believe the worker has been or will be admitted to a hospital beyond treatment in an emergency room or urgent care facility, (c) an unplanned or uncontrolled explosion, fire or flood thatcauses a serious injury or illness or that has the potential of causing a serious injury or illness, (d) the collapse or upset of a crane, derrick or hoist, and (e) the collapse or failure of any component of a building or structure necessary for the structural integrity of the building or structure (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.33)."

REPORTING AND INCIDENT SUPPORT

As stated earlier, the farm will need to report potentially serious incidents and serious incidents to Alberta OHS as soon as possible. If the farm has Workers Compensation Board—Alberta (WCB) coverage, it will need to report an injury or illness within 72 hours of being made aware of it. An injured worker will also need to submit a report to WCB, and the farm may need to assist the worker with this. The farm will need to be aware of any reporting requirements outlined by its insurance providers and act accordingly.

AgSafe Alberta Support Hotline

In the event that your farm experiences a serious incident or a complaint has been made to Alberta OHS, a response from an OHS Officer may follow. AgSafe Alberta is dedicated to providing assistance to farms as they work through this process through our tollfree help line:

1-833-9AGSAFE (1-833-924-7233)

Help Line Support Includes	When To Call the Help Line
• On-site or over-the-phone assistance. • Working through stop use orders or demands issued by Alberta OHS. • Information on applicable reporting requirements. • Information on return-to-work programs for injured workers.	• You had a serious incident or near miss occur on your farm. • OHS has arrived on your farm to perform an inspection, investigation or has advised they will be making a visit to your farm. • You are unsure of the reporting requirements for OHS in Alberta.

STEPS FOR CREATING AN INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION POLICY

A written incident reporting and investigation policy will outline what an incident is, expectations for reporting incidents when an incident investigation occurs and general information regarding how it is conducted. It is up to you as to whether or not to include an investigation procedure in this document as well; if you do, the end result will be a combined policy and procedure which may work better for your operation.

Step 1: Explain why incident reporting and investigation are important.

Explain how incident reporting and investigation allows for the causes of incidents to be identified and corrective actions taken so that the health and safety of everyone on the farm is protected. You may choose to highlight how investigation activities are directed towards finding the facts and circumstances relating to the incident and not about assigning blame.

Step 2: Explain the goal or purpose of the Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy.

Clearly state the overall goal of the policy. Think about what the policy should do, for example:

- Help keep the workplace safe.
- Provide guidance on how incidents are to be reported and investigated.
- Ensure that investigations are completed thoroughly and consistently.
- Ensure that root causes are identified, and appropriate corrective actions are put in place in a timely manner.

Step 3: Detail who this policy applies to.

Who does this policy apply to? Will it apply family members, employees, contractors, or service providers to the farm?

Step 4: List relevant definitions.

Consider what terms should be included to help someone reading the policy understand it better? What terms might someone not be familiar with?

Step 5: Explain the roles and responsibilities of the people working on the farm.

Some points to consider and explain include:

- How are incidents going to be reported?
- Who is receiving incident reports and who is starting the investigation process?
- Who will be on the investigation team? Who will lead an investigation?
- If your farm has a health and safety committee or representative, what is their role in this if any?
- Who will follow up on corrective actions to ensure they are working?

Step 6: Explain the training needed to perform an incident investigation effectively.

For someone to be an effective member of an incident investigation team, they will need to understand the farm's policy, procedures, as well as have a good understanding of health and safety fundamentals and relevant legislation. You will need to identify what qualifications or training are needed in order to perform an incident investigation effectively.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Remember, everyone will need to be trained and competent to perform their duties, including investigations. Training is looked at in greater detail in Module 6: Communication, Orientation & Training.

Step 7: Explain the type (or types) of incident investigation(s) to be completed and when it (or they) are to be performed.

Points to consider and explain include:

- How are incident reports going to be made? Do some types need to be written?
- Who needs to be informed following a report of an incident? Who will start the incident investigation?
- Will your farm use the standard investigation procedure outlined earlier in this module for all incident types, will it create its own procedure, or will it create different procedures for different types of incidents?
- What type of forms or documentation will need to be created and maintained?
- How will the farm communicate the results of an incident investigation to the other farm team members?
- How will corrective actions be decided upon, implemented and followed up on?

Step 8: Decide on and include any other important information that should be communicated.

Think about any other important health and safety or farm specific statements that you might want to include.

Step 9: Decide how often this policy will be reviewed.

Think about how frequently the farm will review this policy. What is reasonable? If your farm has a certification that requires the policy to be reviewed at a specific frequency (i.e., annually), then you will want to state it here.

RESOURCE

A downloadable version of an AgSafe Alberta Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy is available at **agsafeab.ca** and can be customized to meet your farm's specific needs.

ACTIVITY

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Incident Reporting and Investigation Policy document to help you create a draft of your farm's policy. You may want to create separate types of reporting and investigation policies or procedures that may be needed by your operation.

Once you have your draft policy and any supporting procedures created, remember to get input from other members of your farm team before finalizing it.

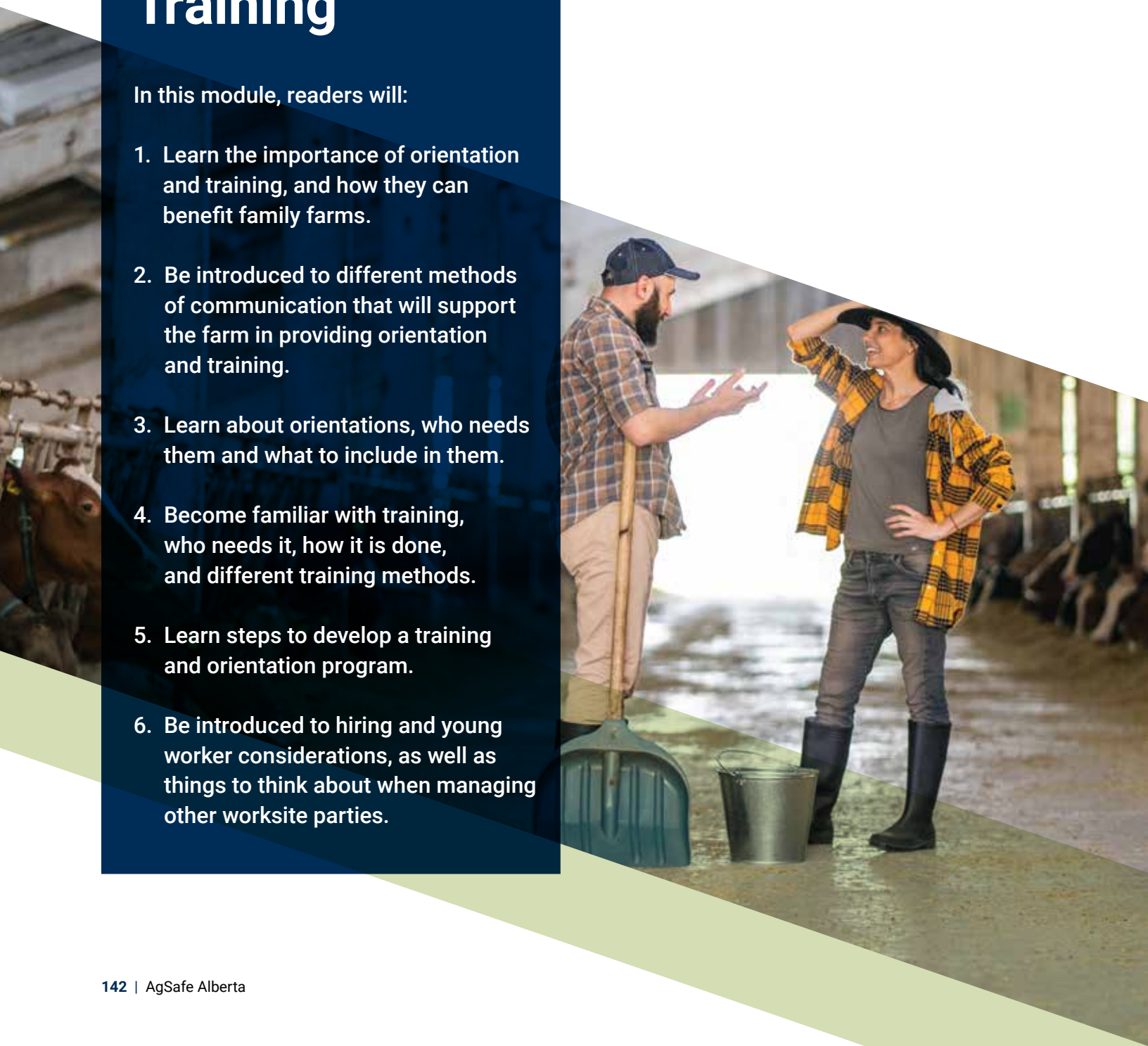
MODULE

6

Communication, Orientation & Training

In this module, readers will:

1. Learn the importance of orientation and training, and how they can benefit family farms.
2. Be introduced to different methods of communication that will support the farm in providing orientation and training.
3. Learn about orientations, who needs them and what to include in them.
4. Become familiar with training, who needs it, how it is done, and different training methods.
5. Learn steps to develop a training and orientation program.
6. Be introduced to hiring and young worker considerations, as well as things to think about when managing other worksite parties.



INTRODUCTION

Attention: Family farms should not skip this module! There are still many important considerations and tips relating to the orientation and training of family members, particularly youth and those who may be new to the farm family.

No one is born with all of the skills and abilities they will need to live a long, safe, healthy and successful life. Even if you were born and raised on a farm you had to be taught what was safe to do and what was dangerous, such as how to drive with a trailer, how to pull a calf safely and so on. We can also never forget that even if someone shows up to work on your farm and has previous experience, the person who taught them may have had lower safety standards than what you would consider acceptable, and the person may not be competent to perform all of the tasks required by the position they are filling.

Why is it important to train and orientate the people who come onto your farm and the people who work for you?

It's the law. The Alberta OHS Act requires not just employers, but owners to protect the health, safety, and welfare of those who come onto their farm. As a farm owner you will want to ensure that a visitor coming onto your farm during open farm days or the contractor who does custom harvesting is given all the necessary information they will need to stay safe while on your farm. Alberta OHS legislation requires employers to train their employees in "all matters necessary to perform their work in a healthy and safe manner."

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.3)

DID YOU KNOW?

Volunteers are considered to be workers and the entity or business they are performing the work for is considered to be an employer. This means that a farm with volunteers must meet the obligations specified in OHS legislation, as must those who have supervisor roles (Government of Alberta, 2022).

Risk can be found everywhere. This is especially true for a farm. Even a small hobby farm is not 100% safe, so it is important for us to manage risk by identifying and controlling the hazards, and ensuring that others are made aware of those hazards and how they are controlled.

It makes good business sense. Training and orientating the people who come onto the farm helps you manage your risks, supports the work in getting done more efficiently, and it can reduce costs in all areas of your operation.

It supports a positive safety culture. We want good relationships with our family members, workers, and contractors. We want them to know they are valued and safe on our farms. It is important that they are comfortable coming to us with health and safety concerns and know that their concerns will be handled appropriately.

It is the right thing to do. Morally and ethically, we want to see everyone live long, safe and healthy lives. This includes everyone who works on the farm going home each day healthy and uninjured.

What does all of this mean for family farms?

From a young age, the people on your farm are typically orientated gradually to the operation and its hazards. Unfortunately, as parents or other family members, we may not put enough thought or preparation into the work the people on our farms are expected to perform.

- We may assume someone has learned something that they have not.
- Someone may not remember an important step in a task that they were shown once two seasons ago.
- We may overlook the fact that someone does not have the physical or mental development to take on complicated and often high-risk activities.
- Someone may marry into the family and come onto the farm with no prior knowledge or experience.

Even when it comes to family members, unless we approach orientation and training in a thoughtful and purposeful manner, we could be setting that child, person, or the entire farm up for failure. In this module, you will want to identify the things that you can incorporate into your farm's practices and what can be modified to fit your farm better.

You can’t rely on common sense to keep people safe

Common sense is a myth... it doesn’t really exist. How can something possibly be common if no one can agree on what it is and it cannot be clearly and consistently defined? In fact, the only thing that most people can agree on about common sense is that no one seems to have it!

Common sense is defined as “Sound and prudent judgment based on a simple perception of the situation or facts (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).”

The problem with this definition is that both judgement and perception are based on the individual and the many personal factors that affect them, such as experience (something that happened 20 years before or what may have happened that very morning), age, gender, culture, social status, and the list goes on!

Alan Quilley, CRSP, referred to what we mistake for being common sense as "common knowledge," or the "communication of ideas and the development of knowledge and skills." He went on to say that this sharing of common knowledge is "a purposeful act that can be managed and get results (Quilley, 2015)."

QUOTE

"Anyone who believes that they have common sense has simply forgotten who taught them what they know."

Alan Quilley, CRSP

In this module, we will look at communication, orientation and training as it relates to both family farms and farms with employees.

COMMUNICATION

We are going to begin by looking at communication. Regardless of whether you have a family farm or a farm with employees, good communication is essential. For orientations, job specific training and general operations to be effective, everything must be well communicated.

Types of communication

Communication Type	What It Is	Examples
Verbal communication	Sending and receiving messages using spoken words.	• In person • Telephone • Video call • Voicemail
Non-verbal communication	Sending and receiving messages without using spoken or written words.	• Facial expressions • Body language • Hand gestures • Head nodding • Eye contact • Posture • Pitch or pace of speaking • Not speaking
Written communication	Sending and receiving messages using written words.	• Policies and procedures • Emails • Contracts • Text messages • Social media post
Visual communication	Sending and receiving messages using visual elements.	• Signs • Symbols • Drawings • Illustrations • Animation • Video
Active listening	Seeking to understand what is being communicated by paying attention and asking relevant questions.	• Participating in the communication • Asking questions • Nodding • Summarizing what is said

Active listening is just as important for a trainer, mentor, and supervisor as it is for a new worker. Active listening is another way of showing support and encouraging someone without pushing or intruding. It involves not only paying attention to someone's words, but also taking in all the other types of communication that may be occurring. What is not said can often say much more than what is said.

Actively listening is not just paying attention to words, it is watching the other person's body language, listening to their tone of voice, and being aware of all those other communication methods regardless how subtle they may be. This is helpful because someone may not recognize that they are hard of hearing, or a young worker who does not understand something may not ask for help because they don't want others to think they are not smart.

Active listening requires an intentional effort to:

- Remain attentive.
- Try and understand what is being communicated.
- Respond to what is being communicated.
- Reflect on what is being communicated for the purposes of retention and being able to apply that information when needed.

The importance of two-way communication and participation

Two-way communication is a lot of things, but we are going to focus on one key point: *two-way communication is an exchange of information that flows not just from the senior leadership down to the workers, but from the people doing work back up to the farm leaders as well.* For this to occur, the farm will need to have a positive safety culture. This may be a good point to go back to Module 1: Leadership, Commitment & Accountability and review the section on safety culture.

Opportunities to encourage two-way communication can include holding health and safety meetings, training sessions, having an active and supported health and safety committee or representative, involving farm team members in performing hazard assessments,and involving key farm team members in the development of policies and procedures that will impact their work. Additional points include:

- Making sure all staff members are involved in the health and safety program and are aware of their roles in it (i.e., identifying hazards, assessing hazards, reporting hazards, conducting inspections, recommending possible controls, etc.).
- Ensuring farm team members have an opportunity to ask questions and contribute; this may involve group meetings, orientation sessions, having an active health and safety committee, etc.
- Developing a process for the people working on your farm to provide feedback to management and/or senior leaders; feedback could be provided through a suggestion box, having a health and safety committee, holding regular team meetings, etc.
- Recording and responding to all ideas from workers; this could include some form of positive recognition of their involvement and co-operation.

Active listening: A form listening that involves not only paying attention to someone's words, but also taking in all of the other types of communication that may be occurring for the purpose of understanding.

Communication: Communication is an exchange of information between people.

Two-way communication: An exchange of information that flows both ways, such as from the senior leadership down to the workers, and from the workers back up to the senior leadership.

ORIENTATION

Everyone should receive an orientation on their first day, before starting work. Like everything else, your orientation needs to be specific to your farm; that is, it needs to make sense for your operation and your people. There is no one-size-fits all approach. Orientations may need to be altered slightly for employees, contractors, and other visitors (such as those coming onto your farm during Open Farm Days).

Who needs an orientation and why?

Who needs an orientation? (Worksite Party)	When is the orientation given? (Timing)	Why perform orientations? (Benefits)
New employees Young workers Employees returning from an extended break (i.e., seasonal worker or returning from maternity leave) Employees transferred from another location (i.e., a pork producer with multiple barns) Contractors Suppliers Visitors	Before going onto the farm (i.e., leaving the main office) Before starting work	Provides the person with information that will make them more comfortable and safer on the farm Helps the person adapt more quickly to the job Helps build employee confidence Helps to achieve more effective and productive operations Helps to keep people working on the farm longer Promotes communication between the supervisor and the new worker

Workplace Orientations and Workgroup Orientations

Depending on the size and structure of your farm, orientations can be broken down into Workplace Orientations and Workgroup Orientations.

A workplace orientation should provide a general introduction to health and safety on your farm. This may include things like:

- Overview of the farm
- Signing in and out
- Introducing biohazard protocols
- Addressing basic emergency response information such as the location of muster points
- General farm hazards, such as the location of lagoons, pits, livestock, etc.
- If the farm has a health and safety committee or representative
- The farm's health and safety policies and programs, such as the:
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Personal Protective Equipment Policy
  - Fit For Duty Policy
- A farm tour
- Who to ask for help and how to report health and safety concerns

A workgroup orientation is more worker focused and would provide the person with a clear understanding of the farm's standards and their role and responsibilities. For example, it would include:

- Occupational Health and Safety rights and responsibilities
- Basic rights of workers
- Responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers
- What hazards are, how to recognize them, how they can be controlled
- General information on how to work safely
- Emergency preparedness and response, such as their role in an emergency, where to locate air horns to alert others of an incident and how to use them safely, muster point locations, etc.
- The rest of the farm's health and safety policies, programs and procedures; in addition to those noted in the Workplace Orientation, these might relate to such things as:
  - Working alone
  - Incident reporting and investigation
  - Performance management and accountability
- Who their supervisor or contact person is
- How to report hazards and incidents

Orientation: A process used to familiarize employees or others to a business or company, such as a farm. This is where critical safety related information about the job and farm are communicated.

Workplace orientation: An orientation that provides a general introduction to health and safety on your farm.

Workgroup orientation: A worker focused orientation that provides the person with a clear understanding of the farm's standards and their role and responsibilities.

TRAINING

The Goal of Training

The goal of training is to ensure workers can do the work safely and to get the work done to the farm's standard. To do this, workers must be competent; that is, adequately qualified, suitably trained and with enough experience to perform the work safely.

Training should be designed based on the necessary competencies of the job. You can use the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet that you created in Module 1 along with your completed hazard assessments, job procedures, operator's manuals, etc. to help with this.

Once competency is achieved, efforts must be made to maintain it. Just because someone was told or shown something once or performed that type of work last season does not necessarily mean they are competent at this time.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Skills and abilities can only stay sharp when they are practiced regularly.
- Refresher training can be just as important as initial training.

Who Needs Training?

Who (Worksite Party)	Job Specific Training Topics (Examples)	When (Timing)
New employees Young workers Employees who have been promoted or transferred to a new work area Employees returning from an extended break (i.e., seasonal worker or returning from maternity leave) Employees transferred from another location (i.e., a pork producer with multiple barns)	Job hazards and how to perform the work safely Basic rights of workers Health and Safety Policies (i.e., health and safety policy, disciplinary policy, fit for duty, etc.) Procedures (i.e., progressive discipline procedure, incident investigation procedure, Lock Out Tag Out, etc.) Use and care of required PPE Generic and job specific WHMIS training First aid training Emergency preparedness and response actions	When hired When starting a new role When transferred to a new work area or location Before performing a new job or task Refresher training to maintain competence

Training is an act or process where skill, knowledge, experience, and feedback is provided to a worker with respect to a particular subject. It requires a practical demonstration by the worker to support that they have acquired the knowledge or skill they have been learning. The training that you provide should consider both hard and soft skills.

- **Hard skills** are gained through education and training, such as life experience, work experience, or education.
- **Soft skills** are an individual's habits and traits that shape how they work. These include things like time management, critical thinking, integrity and communication skills.

THREE BASIC PARTS OF TRAINING DELIVERY

1 Communicate the information.

This can be done in many ways, and it is important to remember that we all learn differently. Consider using more than one method, such as:

- Videos and presentations.
- Training sessions.
- Pictures, drawings or diagrams.
- Going over farms hazard assessments, safe job procedures and operator's manuals.
- ***Important:*** Don't overload someone with too much information at one time!

2 Show the learner how it is done.

While showing someone how to do a task, it is good practice to engage them in it as well. Tell the person being trained why something is done a certain way and ask them what they think you should do next.

- Encourage the person to ask questions.
- ***Important:*** This only works if you have created an environment where someone feels safe to ask a question.

3 When the learner is ready, watch them perform the task.

Learning truly happens when the learner has an opportunity to apply their knowledge. You will want to be encouraging and not rush the person.

- Be patient, allow the learner to troubleshoot and solve problems themselves.
- Remember, it is better to learn from a mistake made in a controlled or simulated situation than it is elsewhere.
- ***Important:*** This works if you have created an environment where someone feels safe asking a question and making a mistake in the controlled setting.

Basic Learning Styles

Here are some basic learning styles to consider when designing and delivering training. There are other learning styles as well, however we will only be focusing on visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

Learning Style	Do's	Caution/Avoid
Visual	• PowerPoint Presentations • Videos • Pictures • Demonstrations • Handouts	• Death by PowerPoint • PowerPoint slides with too many words • Long, boring videos
Auditory	• Group discussion • Stories	• Long, drawn-out stories
Kinesthetic	• Break tasks into smaller steps that they can practice • Physical engagement • Participate in demonstrations	• Don't put them into situations where they are doing more than they know or are prepared to do; set them up for success

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Hard skills: Skills that are gained through education and training, including life experience, work experience, or education.

Soft skills: Skills that relate to an individual's habits and traits that shape how they work, such as time management, critical thinking, integrity and communication skills.

Training: An act or process where skill, knowledge, experience, and feedback is provided to a worker with respect to a particular subject and which requires a practical demonstration by the worker to support that they have acquired the knowledge or skill they have been learning.

Training plan: The details of a training program, such as who will be trained and what training will be carried out.

What Makes A Good Trainer?

Just because someone is good at a job or has been in a position for a very long time, it does not mean that they are or can become a good trainer. Qualities and skills of a good trainer should include:

- Being competent themselves. They should have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject matter.
- Being adaptable. Once it is recognized that someone learns much better one way over another, the trainer should be able to incorporate this into their training.
- Having received the necessary training and other credentials that will support their qualification.
- Having strong communications skills. This means they will be good at listening, questioning, explaining, and giving feedback.
- Having strong organizational skills. Planning, delivering and documenting training, as well as keeping any necessary filing in order is important.
- Enjoying both learning and teaching. Can you remember a time when you had a teacher who did not enjoy their job? How well did they teach and how much did you learn? Just because someone has all the other skills and qualities, you do not want to lay the foundation of your new workers' future on someone who is going to do it poorly.

Third Party Trainers

Third party training is training provided by a person or company hired from outside of the farm. There are times where it may make sense for the people working on your farm to get training from a third party. An example of this would be Fall Protection Training or Confined Space Entry Training. It is critical to remember that while workers will learn the fundamentals in these courses, they will not receive the necessary farm specific training needed to be competent at work. Any outside training received by workers should be followed up with internal training to align it with the farm's specific conditions, procedures, and practices.

DID YOU KNOW?

Third party training providers can include health and safety associations, manufacturers, dealers, learning centers, etc. You may be surprised by how many training providers are located near you.

Competency: The ability to do something in a way that produces the desired result.

Competent person: A person who is adequately qualified, suitably trained, has the necessary attitude, and has enough experience to safely perform work without or with only a minimal degree of supervision (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.1(d)).

Third party training: Training provided by a person or company hired from outside of the farm.

Steps To Take When Developing a Training and Orientation Program

1. Perform a needs assessment.

a. What are the legal requirements for training?

b. You will want to look at the specific jobs, tasks, skills, knowledge and abilities required to be competent.

c. Use the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet that you created in Module 1 along with your completed hazard assessments, hazard control measures job procedures, safe work practices, operator's manuals, etc. to support you.

2. Identify learning objectives.

a. Using your needs assessment, clearly identify the outcomes that you want the learners to achieve.

b. Identify the skills, knowledge and mindset you want the learner to have.

3. Identify your audience.

a. Who is going to be receiving the training? Will it be people under 25 years of age, summer students, temporary foreign workers, or older and semi-retired people?

b. Remember, adults learn differently from children.

4. Decide on the content.

a. What needs to be taught so that the learners achieve the desired outcomes?

b. Use what you learned in your needs assessment for this part.

5. Establish timelines.

a. How long will it take to develop the training in-house?

b. How long will it take to fully train someone?

6. Decide on the delivery method and develop a training plan.

a. Will the training be web-based, on-the-job training, mentoring, instructor led training or a combination of different methods?

b. What positions will need what types of training, and in what order will it be provided?

c. Is mentorship possible? Mentorship is where you pair a new worker with a more experienced worker. When incorporating this method of training, you want to ensure the mentor is qualified to provide the training in order for the trainee to receive the benefits.

7. Decide on a budget.

a. How much money do you have to spend on training?

b. Investigate cost effective training methods, such as AgSafe Alberta's free and low cost online courses.

8. Plan what records will need to be kept and how.

a. How is the training going to be tracked? Maintaining good records and documentation can provide a useful history of your efforts to promote health and safety.

b. A training record and tracking method can help you create consistency in your training in addition to being a beneficial tool for follow up later. It is important to keep a record of qualifications and training received.

c. Tools like a training matrix will allow you to see the training and certifications the people working on your farm have and if there is any training outstanding as per your farm's policies. You should track any additional certifications or qualifications a worker may achieve.

d. Record the topics or skills covered, as well as trainer and participant names. Be sure to have both trainers and participants date and sign documentation which will support participation and understanding of the material.

NOTE

It is important to keep a record of qualifications and training. Record the topics or skills covered, as well as trainer and participant names. Be sure to have both trainers and participants date and sign the training documentation.

9. Decide how communication and delivery of the training will take place.

a. How will everyone know what training to expect, when to expect it and what is available to them?

b. How will you inform someone about the times and location of the training?

10. Evaluate the training.

a. How will you know if the training is effective or not? What will you measure?

b. Get learner feedback! Find out what they liked, what they learned and what they suggest.

c. Check on the employees work after the training. Are they applying the knowledge and skills they learned?

d. Follow up. Has the worker needed any additional training? Have they had any near misses or incidents that could have been avoided had something been covered or explained better in their training?

RESOURCE

By this point, you should be familiar with how to create a policy. It is recommended to create a training policy for your farm following the steps outlined in this manual. You can always go to **agsafeab.ca** to for tools and resources to support the development of a training program on your farm.

Things To Include In Your Farm's Training Program

As an employer, the farm is required by legislation to ensure that workers are "adequately trained in all matters necessary to perform their work in a healthy and safe manner (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.2)." This includes ensuring workers and volunteers are aware of their rights and duties under the OHS Act and Code (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.3(b)). The basic rights and supporting abilities in the workplace are:

- The right to be informed of work site hazards and how to eliminate or control those hazards.
- The right to meaningful participation in health and safety activities relating to their work and work site, including the ability to raise health and safety concerns.
- The right to refuse dangerous work.
- The ability to not be subjected to disciplinary action for exercising a right or fulfilling a duty imposed by this Act, the regulations or the OHS Code.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.2(d))

Other items to include in your training are:

- Hazard identification, assessment and control and how it applies to their job
- Inspection policy and procedure; how it applies to them and their work
- Emergency preparedness and action plans as well as their role in it
- Health and safety committee or representative role and responsibilities, if applicable
- Competency assessments
- WHMIS training
- Health and safety policy and team member expectations
- Incident investigations, the process, how to participate in one if required
- Location of muster point(s), fire extinguishers, first aid kits, etc.
- Who the health and safety committee members or representative are
- Fit for duty policy
- Hazard and incident reporting, how and when it is done
- Violence and harassment policy and procedure
- Progressive discipline policy and procedure
- Job specific training, including hazard assessments, job procedures, etc.
- Use, maintenance, care and limitations of any required personal protective equipment

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Competency assessments: A tool used to measure a workers skills, knowledge and performance against an established standard and job requirements.

In-house: Done by the farm.

Learning objectives: Statements about what someone is expected to learn by the end of something (i.e., training period, lesson, etc.).

Mentorship: Where you pair a less experienced worker with a more experienced worker; the experienced person provides guidance, support and learning opportunities to the new person.

Needs assessment: Part of planning processes, is used to identify and address 'gaps' between where something is and where it should it be.

Training matrix: Commonly used to show each employee's skill sets, completed training, and certifications that may be current, expiring or out of date.

DID YOU KNOW?

Competency assessments are used to measure a workers skills, knowledge and performance against an established standard and job requirements. They assist the farm in verifying worker competency or identifing gaps in skills, knowledge and/or performance so that corrective actions (such as additional training) can be taken.

RESOURCE

Visit **agsafeab.ca** for tools, resources and customizable forms to support you in developing an orientation and training program for your operation.

HIRING CONSIDERATIONS

You probably already know that finding the right workers with the proper amount of experience and the appropriate skill set is essential to the success of your farm. An important characteristic that can sometimes get missed in the hiring process is finding a worker who also understands the importance of working safely and will support your health and safety program.

When hiring, remember these points:

1. **Be clear on the role you are hiring for.** You can use the Position Based Job and Task List Worksheet that you created in Module 1 (and any other related documents) to create a position or job description.
2. **Identify what the person needs to come with versus what can be learned.** If the position is safety sensitive, you shouldn't be hiring a young worker (a person under 25 years of age) for it. Does the position you are hiring for require a valid driver's license? Someone may have a valid international driver's license but not have experience driving in Alberta's winter conditions and will require training if they are expected to operate vehicles or powered mobile equipment in such conditions.
3. **Verify the person's training.** This can include any industry- specific certifications, apprenticeship programs, certificates, licenses, etc.
4. **Check if the person is a fit for the farm's safety culture.** Ask a few questions to confirm that they value safety, such as:
   a. What previous safety related training they received and how it applied to their work.
   b. Have the person explain their understanding of hazards as well as hazard identification, assessment and control.
   c. Check the person's references to find out if they have a positive safety record.

Tools to Help Determine if Someone Is Suitable for a Job

Hiring Tool	Description
Application forms	• Used as part of the recruitment process (often online or in a paper format) to collect relevant information from the people applying for a position.
Interview	• A common recruitment tool that allows the employer to have a conversation or discussion with an applicant to understand their skills, personality, character traits, and knowledge. • Used to help determine if someone should be considered for a job.
General competency test	• The use of questions to measure an applicant's knowledge, reasoning and problem-solving abilities. • Also known as competency-based interviews.
Reference checks	• When an employer contacts an applicant's professional, educational or personal contacts to confirm skills, experience, education and work history.
Driver abstract	• Is a record of someone's driving, including driver information, driver appearance, current license status, conviction information, demerit points and suspensions. • There are two types, a Standard Driver Abstract and a Commercial Driver Abstract. • Can be requested for 3, 5 or 10 year periods. (Government of Alberta, n.d.)
Valid driver's license	• A government-issued document that confirms a person's identity and what level of motor vehicle they can legally operate.

YOUNG WORKER CONSIDERATIONS

According to the Government of Alberta, young workers make up 12% of the labour force yet have the highest disabling injury rates of all age groups. Other findings included:

- Most of the disabling injuries occurred in young males.
- 20% of injuries related to overexertion, 17% resulted from being struck by an object and 14% were caused by falls.
- Young workers are at higher risk for injury due to:
  - Inexperience.
  - Lack of adequate training.
  - Increased exposure to dangerous jobs.

(Alberta Government, 2022)

MANAGING OTHER WORKSITE PARTIES

From time to time, other parties may visit your farm. You might hire an electrician, have family visiting or a neighbor who wants to help. Although these parties are not waged workers who you have hired as employees, as the farm owner or manager, you will still be responsible to ensure their health and safety. Examples of these other parties include:

- Other employers (contracting employers or self-employed persons).
- Visitors (friends, extended family, other agencies, volunteers).
- Other persons not under the farm's direction.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Volunteers are people who perform or provide services without being paid, however, they are still considered to be workers (but not regularly employed workers) and have the same health and safety rights and responsibilities as any other workers under Alberta OHS legislation. (Government of Alberta, 2022, p.1)

You will want to develop a system for how you are going to manage these parties, this may include:

- An orientation that you provide to these other worksite parties.
- Assessing the qualifications of contracting employers (i.e., do they have a trade ticket or have a health and safety management program of their own?).
- Outlining what you expect for insurance requirements from contracting employers or self-employed persons (i.e., asking to see proof of their WCB coverage and liability insurance).
- Monitoring other parties where necessary to ensure that they are following the farm's health and safety rules.
- Knowing in advance how you plan to deal with any non-compliance issues.
- Coming up with a system for communication; for example, will you be with the other party at all times, or will you check in with them on a pre-determined frequency? Think about how the other party will contact you for assistance, and how you will share health and safety information (i.e., hazard assessments, worksite inspections, safety data sheets, or other relevant safety related information) with them.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some farms may want to develop a contractor management program to protect the health and safety of their farm team, contractors and their subcontractors.
This type of program addresses:

- Contractor qualifications.
- Guidelines for screening and selecting contractors with the necessary insurance, strong safety programs and positive safety records.
- Contractor orientation and training (i.e., related to hazards, risks, hazard controls, relevant farm policies and procedures).
- Expectations for the safe delivery of service.
- How performance will be monitored and evaluated.
- How safety non-conformances will be addressed.

RESOURCE

To learn important information about contractor management, visit **https://www.agsafeabseed.ca/course/growing-farm-safety-webinar-series** and view *Contracting Ag Services in the Age of Tractors, Contractors, and Tik-Tok* presented by Christopher Spasoff, founder of F2 Legal Counsel, Occupational Health and Safety Lawyer and former OHS Prosecutor.

Applicant: A person applying for something, such as a job on the farm.

Young worker: An employee under the age of 25 years old.

Safety sensitive position: A work related position where a physical or mental inability to do something due to impairment could result in significant risk of injury to person, others or the environment.

MODULE

7

Emergency Preparedness & Management

In this module, readers will:

1. Learn what emergency preparedness and management is, as well as key areas of it.

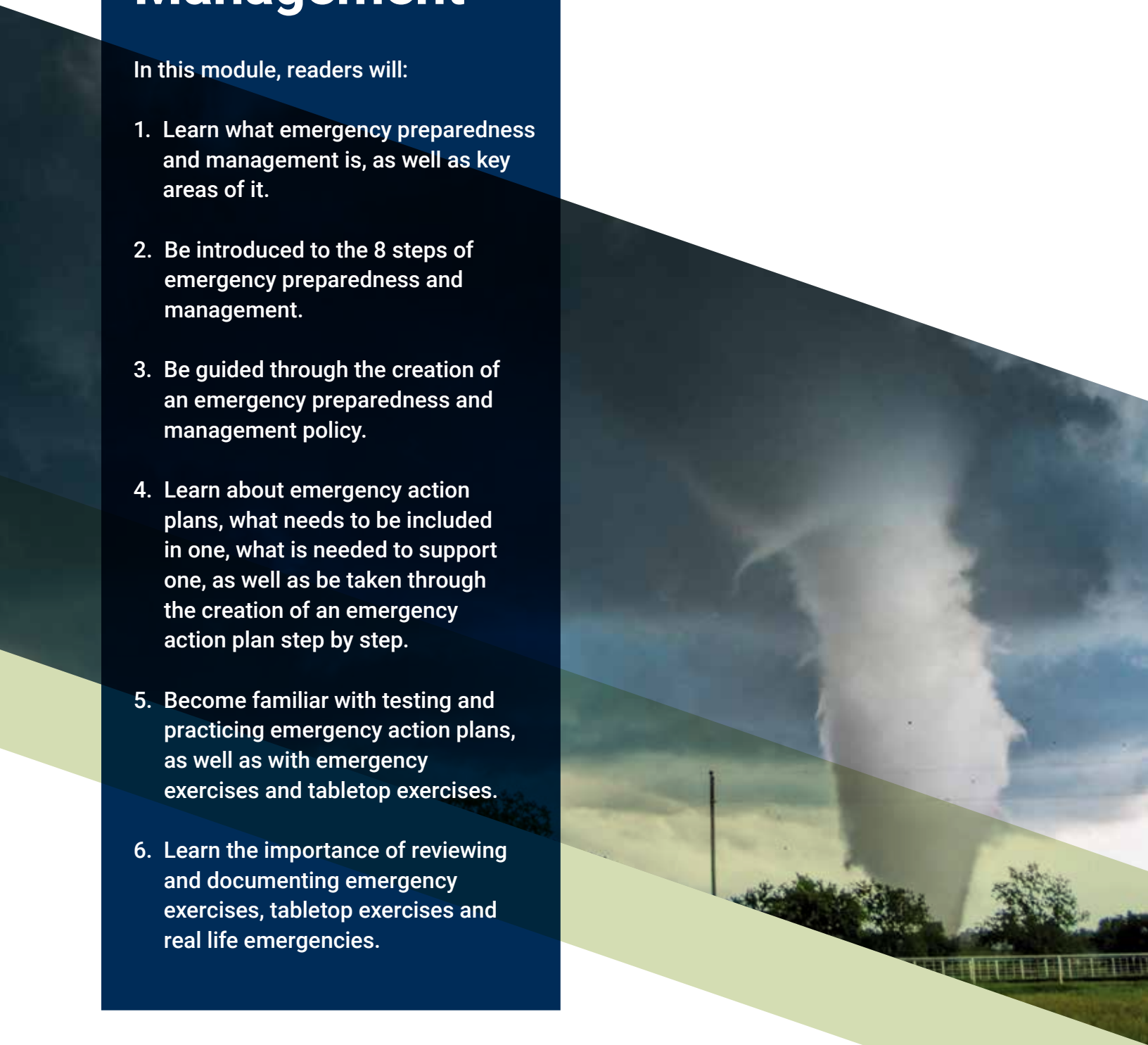
2. Be introduced to the 8 steps of emergency preparedness and management.

3. Be guided through the creation of an emergency preparedness and management policy.

4. Learn about emergency action plans, what needs to be included in one, what is needed to support one, as well as be taken through the creation of an emergency action plan step by step.

5. Become familiar with testing and practicing emergency action plans, as well as with emergency exercises and tabletop exercises.

6. Learn the importance of reviewing and documenting emergency exercises, tabletop exercises and real life emergencies.

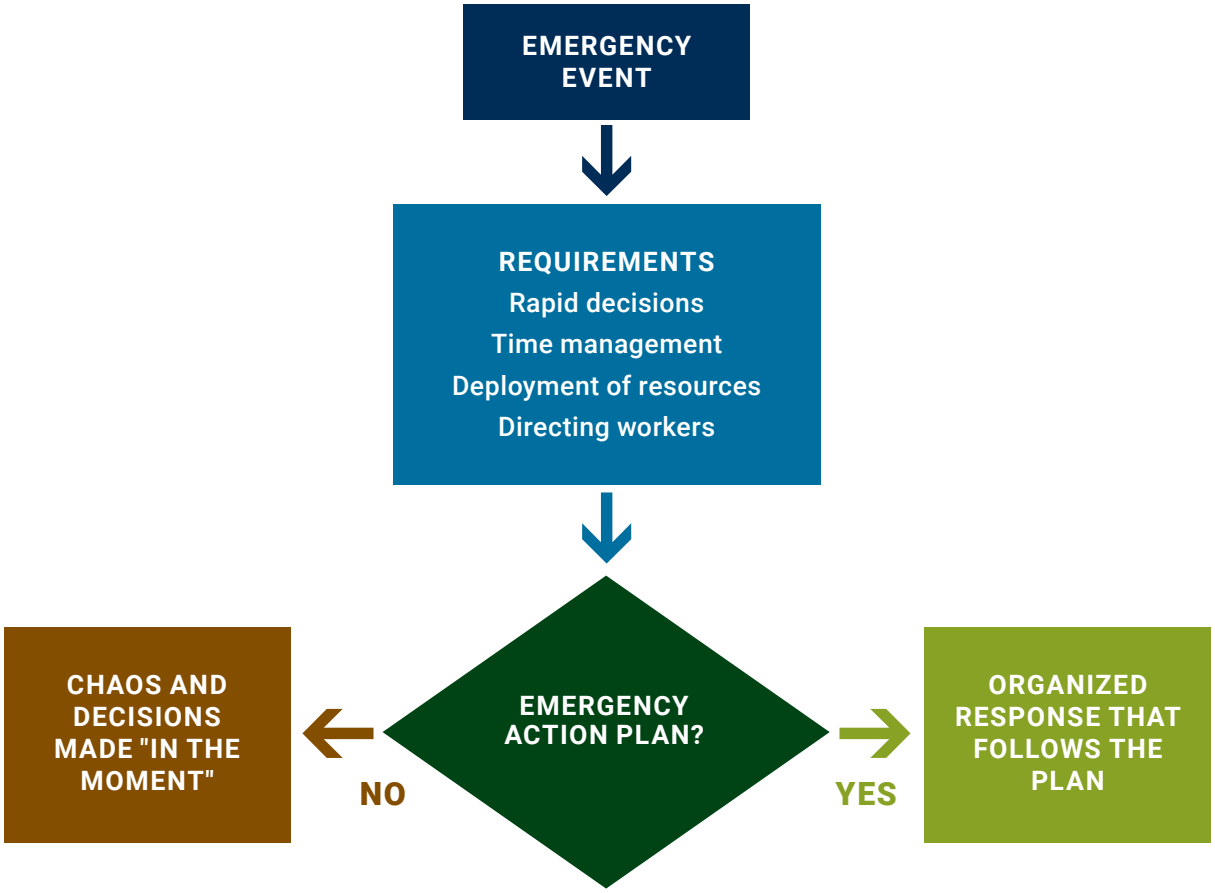


INTRODUCTION

Despite our best efforts, emergencies can still occur and have devastating results. You will want to ensure that you are prepared for possible emergencies and that your emergency action plans are tailored to your operation.

Reasons Why You Should Be Prepared For Emergencies

1. **It protects people.** When done well, it will not only protect the people who live and work on your farm, but those who respond to the incident as well.
2. **It minimizes loss**, such as lost livestock, damage to equipment or buildings and harm to the environment.
3. **It minimizes down time** and helps your farm resume operations sooner.



DISCUSSION

What types of emergencies have happened on your farm, or on the farm of someone you know? When you found out about it, what did you think? How did you feel? Did anything change for you?

NOTE

Being prepared for an emergency is important, but placing more effort and resources into emergency preparedness and management rather than hazard identification, assessment and control is a big mistake and indicates there is a problem with how health and safety is being thought about and managed on your farm.

NOTE

Important Information Relating to This Part of Your Health and Safety Program

Throughout this section, parts of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code are referenced. At the time of publication, only Part 13 Joint Health and Safety Committees and Health and Safety Representatives of the OHS Code directly applies to farming and ranching operations.

The OHS Code provides what can be thought of as minimum technical requirements for health and safety in Alberta's workplaces. However, the OHS Act requires farms and ranches to protect the health and safety of the people working on, visiting and even those who may be affected by the farm's operations as far as reasonably practicable. AgSafe Alberta recommends aligning this part of your health and safety program with what is outlined in the OHS Code.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT BASICS

An emergency can be thought of as an unexpected event that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment and results in an urgent need for assistance. Common examples of emergencies can include:

- Fires or explosions
- Tornados
- Major power outages
- Severe allergic reaction
- Fallen powerline
- Theft in progress/ suspicious activity
- Vehicle/equipment roll over
- Grain engulfment
- Poisoning
- Forest or wildfire
- Floods
- Hazardous material spills
- Pandemic
- Contact with powerline
- Violent person(s)/ intruder(s)
- Vehicle/equipment run over
- Extreme temperatures
- Hazardous product exposure
- Structure fire
- Severe Storms
- Vehicle/equipment collisions
- Medical emergencies
- Building collapse
- Train derailment or equipment stuck on railway tracks
- Entrapment (caught in something)
- Carbon monoxide alarms
- Gas leaks

DID YOU KNOW?

Confined spaces are common on farms. Entry into and performing work in a confined space requires special planning, training and important steps to be taken before and after someone has entered. Each confined space will have its own hazards to be eliminated or controlled and will require its own rescue procedure. Confined spaces you may encounter on your farm might include, but are not limited to, tanks, storage bins, maintenance holes, pits, silos, process or disposal vessels, root cellars, wells, and sea cans.

What is Emergency Preparedness and Management?

Emergency preparedness is the planned response to an emergency. Every farm should have an emergency preparedness and management plan to deal with potential emergencies before they happen, as not being prepared for an emergency can result in devastating losses and ruin.

There are other benefits to developing an emergency preparedness and management plan, such as:

- You may identify unrecognized hazardous conditions that could make an emergency worse and take actions to eliminate them.

- You may identify issues, such as the lack of resources (equipment, trained personnel, supplies), or items that can be corrected before an emergency occurs (such as a fire extinguisher that has lost its charge over time).
- It promotes safety awareness and shows your farm's commitment to the safety of everyone on it.

(Adapted from CCOHS, 2022)

Key Areas of Emergency Preparedness and Management

The four parts of emergency preparedness and management are:

1. **Prevention and mitigation.** These efforts will include identifying potential emergencies, identifying and selecting measures to eliminate or reduce the impact of emergencies, and creating written plans to support the prevention and mitigation of emergencies.
2. **Preparedness.** Preparation efforts will ensure your farm team is ready to respond to an emergency, such as communicating the policies and procedures as well as providing the necessary training and experience through emergency exercises or tabletop exercises.
3. **Response.** Response efforts are those actions taken immediately before, during and after an emergency occurs.
4. **Continuity and recovery.** These efforts help the farm to resume normal operations following an emergency.

(National Fire Prevention Agency (NFPA), 2010, p.5)

DID YOU KNOW?

If your farm has completed the Alberta Environmental Farm Plan program, you have likely developed parts of an emergency preparedness and management program already. Don't double up on work; pull out any emergency preparedness and response related items you have already developed and see where they fit here.

NOTE

If you are part of a very large farm or a colony, it may be beneficial for you to take Incident Command System (ICS) training and apply the information to your operations Emergency Preparedness and Management Policy and Emergency Action Plans. The Incident Command System, commonly known as ICS, is a standardized way to organize and manage an emergency. ICS allows for the response to be made larger or smaller depending on the type of emergency and makes it easier to work with emergency first responders and local authorities when needed. To learn more, visit https://www.alberta.ca/incident-command-system-courses.aspx.

Emergency: A serious, unexpected and unplanned event that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment that commonly results in an urgent need for assistance.

Emergency preparedness and management program: Policies, procedures, tools and resources that in combination, help achieve emergency preparedness and management objectives.

Preparedness: 1. The planned response to an emergency. 2. Ongoing activities, tasks, and systems to develop, put in place, and maintain the emergency preparedness programs capabilities.

Prevention: Tasks and activities performed to prevent an incident from occurring.

Mitigation: Tasks and actions taken to reduce the severity of something.

Response: Immediate and continuing activities and tasks to manage the effects of an incident that threatens life, property, operations, or the environment.

Continuity: Ongoing operations; activities and tasks that support the farm's resilience.

Recovery: Activities and tasks performed to return the conditions back to an acceptable level.

Why The Term "Emergency Action Plan" Is Used

An emergency action plan is a documented plan that outlines actions to take in an emergency. AgSafe Alberta uses the term emergency action plan rather than emergency response plan. This has been done for three reasons:

- Some people can find emergencies exciting and challenging, but they are still emergencies and the people working on the farm are likely not to be not fully trained, competent and equipped emergency first responders. Farm team members should be taking actions that protect (and do not place) themselves in dangerous situations. You do not want to be a victim, or be an additional victim, in an emergency.
- The actions taken during an emergency are intended to protect people, reduce damage and support the farm in returning to business operations sooner, as opposed to response actions that would normally be taken by trained and equipped emergency first responders.
- The word 'plan' is used rather than 'procedure' to help better communicate that the emergency action plan is intended to guide the farm in taking emergency action steps to manage an emergency and is not a detailed procedure like what you would find in a job procedure.

NOTE

Even if you are a volunteer firefighter in your area, while employed by the farm, you are not a first responder. Unless you have been dispatched, are in your bunker gear, are with your crew, have the tools and equipment necessary for an appropriate response and have received a command from your fire chief or designated incident commander, you are not a first responder.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Emergency action steps are actions that make it easier to respond quickly and efficiently to incidents. Checklists, action lists and other item are written that identify emergency related tasks, responsibilities, and duty locations. A plan of action should also exist for alerting, notifying, locating, and bringing key team members back to the farm. (adapted from NFPA, 2010, p.23)

Emergency action plan: A documented plan that outlines what to do in an emergency.

Emergency action steps: Acts or measures that make it easier to respond quickly and efficiently manage incidents.

Facing Difficult Questions

During an emergency, the safety of people is always your first priority. In the heat of the moment, someone may place saving livestock, a building or a piece of equipment before their own safety, thinking the farm cannot survive such a loss. While we can all recognize why someone might think this way in a stressful and unexpected situation, we must recognize the commonly ignored and important reasons why the person should place their health and safety first. Ask yourself and the people on your farm these questions:

1. If you died in an attempt to save livestock or a building, would the farm be able to continue without you?
2. After your death, would your family say the livestock or the building was worth your life, and that they are happy with your choice? That they would rather have those cows or that barn than you?
3. What if you died in an attempt to save a barn from burning down, but it burnt down anyhow? What if you died and as a direct result of this action and the farm ended up be sold after regardless?

4. Would you be okay with not being there for your spouse, children and grandchildren in the years to come, not being there when they might need you most?
5. What if someone came into a burning barn to save you (i.e., a family member, employee or first responder) and they were severely injured or died as a result?
6. If you were left severely injured by an attempt to save livestock or a building, would you still think it was worth it? Could your family afford the lifelong medical costs? Do you think you would be able to keep the farm under those circumstances?
7. If you were left confined to a bed and in chronic pain for the rest of your days because of one decision, would you be okay with it? Would you be okay with never being able to play with your children or grandchildren as a result?

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

There are three key takeaways here:

1. Unlike livestock, buildings and equipment, you and the people on your farm cannot be replaced.
2. Some risks are just not worth taking.
3. It is much easier and makes more sense to put your effort into preventing incidents than it is trying to manage and recover from one.

Emergency Preparedness and Management Planning Mistakes

Below is a short list of common emergency preparedness and management planning mistakes to avoid:

1. Creating long and very detailed plans that are not helpful nor flexible enough when emergencies occur, and as a result, don't get used.
2. Not taking everyone's needs into account during the planning process (i.e., aging workers or team members with mobility issues).
3. Not involving the people on your farm in the emergency preparedness and management planning process. How this involvement is achieved will vary from one farm to the next. Involvement may be in the form of creating an emergency preparedness and management planning team, engaging the health and safety committee members, including emergency preparedness and management discussions as a part of your regular safety meetings, etc. Regardless of how it looks, you will want to get input from others on your farm.
4. Copying another farm's emergency action plan word for word. One farm's emergency action plan should look different from another farms. The type of work performed,

the emergency-related equipment available, how long it takes to travel to an emergent care facility, etc. will be different for every operation.

5. Not basing your emergency action plans on your farm's specific threats, hazards, risks, resources and capabilities.
6. Not taking into account legislated or other requirements (i.e., not having a plan in place to transport ill or injured workers from the worksite to the nearest health care facility).

8 STEPS OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT

Step 1: Create an emergency preparedness and management policy.

A written policy will help guide you as you make decisions relating to how emergencies are prevented, prepared for, and managed. The steps to create an emergency preparedness and management policy are detailed in the next section, however, familiarity with the information in this section will help you with the development of it.

RESOURCE

You will learn how to create an emergency preparedness and management policy later in this module.

Step 2: Identify the potential emergencies that could occur.

Without identifying all possible emergencies, you may not be able to adequately plan for each possible scenario. Not every emergency will require the same response and one plan will not work for every type of emergency. To identify possible emergencies, start by reviewing your hazard assessments, inspections, hazard reports, incident investigations, and past emergencies. Reviewing these records will help you identify possible emergencies your farm could experience and provide valuable insight for developing your emergency action plans.

Step 3: Determine the emergency level for each emergency identified.

Use the following table to determine the level of emergency associated with each emergency identified.

While you should have an emergency action plan to address all possible emergencies, it can be hard to know where to begin. Review your farm's incident and near miss reports,

think about previous emergencies and how often they have occurred, consider the risk rating associated with each emergency and engage in discussions with the people working on your farm to help you determine an appropriate starting point. Create a list that prioritizes which ones to complete first over those that can be completed later.

Emergency Level	Explanation
High level emergency	• Risk to on-site worksite parties, livestock, off-site public, and/or the environment is high. • Outside assistance from emergency first responders, industrial service providers, or local authorities is necessary. • The hazard(s) are spreading beyond the immediate incident/emergency site. • Would result in a shutdown of normal operations for the duration of the emergency or longer. • Examples: A nearby train derailment involving hazardous materials or a large approaching wildfire.
Medium level emergency	• Risk to on-site worksite parties, livestock, and/or property exists. • Risk to off-site public and/or the environment is possible. • May require outside assistance from emergency first responders, industrial service providers, or local authorities. • The emergency and/or its effects may spread beyond the immediate vicinity of the incident/emergency. • Disruptive to normal operations.
Low level emergency	• Risk to on-site worksite parties, livestock, off-site public, and/or the environment is low. • The emergency can be resolved through the farm's operating procedures and/or contained within the immediate area of the incident/emergency. • Minor disruption to normal operations.
Alert	• A situation that is easily resolved using available personnel and equipment, minor modification to work or requires ongoing monitoring. • Normal operations are able to continue. • Advisory issued by an authority. • Example: A severe storm watch.
Caution	• Something could happen, but it would be unlikely, and the severity would be low.

Step 4: Identify ways to prevent, stop or reduce the severity of the emergency and resources for each emergency that you identified.

In this step, you are coming up with ways to prevent, stop or reduce the severity and potential losses resulting from a particular emergency. When preparing your hazard assessments, you should have already identified some of these emergencies and considered ways to eliminate or reduce the risk of the hazards which could result in an emergency occurring. Take a moment to give these hazards a second look to see if anything was missed or if anything could be improved upon, as prevention is always far better than dealing with an emergency.

Additional points to consider include:

- Tornados, floods and severe storms are beyond our ability to prevent or stop, but steps can be taken to reduce the losses that result from them. For example, you can reduce the risk of someone losing their life during a tornado by having a plan in place for your farm team to meet in the basement of your home.
- The sooner an individual can receive medical attention following a severe injury or medical event, the better their chances of survival. Someone trained in first aid can only do so much, and you will need to have a plan in place for how to get emergency services to a remote field or backroad and how to transport someone to the nearest hospital, if needed.
- Some emergencies may be stopped before they become devastating. Things like working alone procedures and alarm systems can alert you to emergencies sooner and give you an opportunity to intervene or obtain emergency services right away. Similarly, having a fire extinguisher in a location where it may be needed (i.e., on a piece of equipment during harvest) may be able to put out a small fire before it grows.
- If you have a rail line running alongside or near your property, you should develop plans for railway related emergencies, such as a plan outlining what to do in the event of a vehicle getting stuck on the track. Also put thought into what to do if there is a derailment involving hazardous materials; while emergency services will be involved in such an emergency, it may be necessary for them to evacuate people from a large area or even require residents and businesses within a large area to shelter in place.
- If you have an oil and gas lease or pipeline somewhere on the land you farm, the company with the lease or owner of the pipeline will be able to advise you on the hazards related to it and of any precautionary and emergency action measures to be aware of.

Examples of emergency resources:

- An emergency preparedness and management policy and supporting emergency action plans
- First aid trained employees
- Fire extinguishers
- AEDs, razers and shaving cream
- Eye wash bottles/stations
- Lists, locations and directions for emergency rooms in your area
- Developing a Farm Site Map and Farm Building Maps
- Fire blankets
- Spill kits/Spill tray
- Emergency showers
- Lists and locations of emergency related equipment on the farm
- Emergency preparedness and management training resources
- First aid kits
- Several blankets

AED: Automated external defibrillator. A machine used to help someone who is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest.

Farm building map: A map of a specific farm building that identifies key locations, such as the direction of the muster point, evacuation paths, emergency exits, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, emergency showers, emergency shut offs, alarm pulls, air horns, locations of hazardous materials, etc.

Eyewash bottle: A portable device filled with a saline solution used to help remove foreign materials and substances from an eye to prevent long term damage.

Eyewash station: Devices used to help remove foreign materials and substances from the eyes and face to prevent long term damage. May or may not be portable.

Farm site map: A map of the farm and farm buildings that identifies key locations, such as muster point(s), emergency equipment, locations of hazardous materials, etc.

Fire extinguisher: A portable device that discharges material for the purpose of extinguishing a small fire.

Spill kit: A portable kit containing equipment that can be used to contain and clean up certain types of fluids (i.e., oil, coolants, cleaners, etc.). Typically contains sorbent pads, pillows, socks, plugging materials and PPE.

Spill tray: A container placed under containers of hazardous materials or under leaking equipment for the purpose of capturing spills and leaks and protecting the surrounding area/environment from contamination.

Step 5: Identify things that could prevent or interfere with planned emergency actions and find ways to overcome them.

Take some time to critically think about what could interfere with your planned emergency actions. Too often things get missed and become obvious only after an incident has occurred. For example:

- When you call 9-1-1, it is not like what you see on television. Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) telephones may not have the correct physical location linked to them (i.e., not updated after a move), global positioning system GPS data may not be available for that call or the at best, has you located somewhere within 30 kilometer radius (which could take a while to search and locate someone in). Knowing your location and being able to get emergency services there without relying solely on technology is important!
- Emergency action measures involving cell phones can involve such challenges as not having a cell signal in some areas, occasional service outages, and dead batteries.
- Emergency action measures involving two-way radios will require thought into how to prevent or overcome challenges such as a dead battery or not having a radio signal in some areas.
- Having the local fire department get to your farm is one thing but getting a fully loaded pumper truck through deep snow on a soft, unplowed driveway is another. If the truck did

get stuck, and the driveway is narrow and treelined, getting it unstuck is going to be another problem. Similarly, if a roll over occurs in a soft field, a heavy rescue vehicle may not be able to get to the exact location and another means of getting rescue equipment to the scene may be needed (i.e., equipment may need to be manually carried to the scene unless the fire department or farm has a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) available).

- Other challenges may be factors, such as bio secure areas, chemically contaminated areas and pens containing fearful and/or aggressive animals.

Step 6: Develop an emergency action plan for each of the emergencies you identified.

You will be guided through the steps of how to create an emergency action plan later on in this module. For now, it is important to learn about how an effective emergency action plan will support appropriate and well executed measures being taken during an emergency.

Emergency actions plans are necessary as it is very difficult to make the best possible decisions during an emergency which is high stress, requires multitasking, and provides little time to actually think about what the next action needs to be. Your emergency action plan is a guide, so be mindful to avoid making it as detailed or specific as you would a work procedure; simply stated, keep it flexible. Including too many details in your plan can create confusion, make it hard to remember, and may even prevent an appropriate response as the real-life emergency may involve factors that were not considered.

You will want to involve members of your farm team in the development of your emergency action plan, as well as outside experts. Some county fire departments will send members to help you identify fire safety-related hazards and suggest ways to prevent an emergency. Your utility provider can also provide information on what they recommend you do in an emergency, such as when there is a flood or an approaching wildfire.

Take some time to think about what will be needed to support the emergency action plan. Create lists of who should be called in the emergency; include contact phone numbers, alternate contact methods, their role and responsibilities in the emergency, and the order they should be called in. Develop maps of the farm and farm buildings. Identify evacuation routes, emergency exits, muster points, where hazardous materials are stored, and where emergency-related equipment is located (i.e., first aid kits, fire extinguishers, backboards, etc.).

Step 7: Put everything in place so that your emergency action plans can be carried out accordingly.

This will mean obtaining the tools, equipment and resources necessary to put the emergency action plans into action. It will also require that the emergency action plans be communicated to the people working on your farm and that the people on your farm receive any training necessary.

- Communication of and training in the emergency action plans should not only occur when someone starts working on the farm, but periodically thereafter. You cannot expect someone to remember multiple parts of an emergency action plan they received training on during their first day of work.
- Make the emergency action plans available to everyone working on the farm by placing them in common areas, such as a lunchroom. You will also want to keep copies where they could be needed, such in a barn or a tractor cab. You don't want someone to waste valuable time running to the main office to get an emergency action plan that will help guide them through a complex and stressful emergency.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

Emergency action plan training highlights include:

- Training everyone in their specific roles and responsibilities and on how to use any tools, equipment or personal protective equipment required when carrying out these responsibilities.
- Practicing and testing the emergency action plan using emergency exercises or tabletop exercises.
- Any and all training will need to be documented!

RESOURCE

You will learn how to create an emergency action plan later in this module.

Step 8: Review and improve your emergency action plans.

After every real emergency, emergency exercise, and tabletop exercise, involve everyone who participated or had a part in it and perform a review. The purpose of the review is to identify what worked, what didn't, what was missed and what the farm can improve upon.

Communication: An exchange of information between people.

Utility terrain vehicle (UTV): A vehicle with automotive type seats that accommodate passengers and has such safety features as a protective roll cage and seat belts.

Global positioning system (GPS): A satellite-based navigation system that uses coordinates commonly expressed as a combination of latitude and longitude. The two formats of these coordinates may be written in an alpha numeric format or in a purely numeric (decimal degree) format.

Emergency exercise: A mock or simulated emergency where an emergency action plan is practiced and tested.

Tabletop exercise: A discussion based mock or simulated emergency where an emergency action plan is walked through and tested verbally.

Training: Teaching or developing skills and knowledge that relate to necessary competencies.

RESOURCE

Go to **agsafeab.ca** for a customizable Emergency Preparedness Policy template to get you started.

CREATING AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

If you have not created an emergency preparedness and management policy already, you will want to create one now. A written policy will help communicate your farm's commitment to health and safety during an emergency.

You will want to identify key people on the farm to be involved in the development and review of the emergency preparedness and management policy. Throughout this process, refer to the Alberta OHS Act and Code (particularly Part 7 Emergency Preparedness and Response, Part 11 First Aid, and Schedule 2 First Aid), as well as to any other applicable legislation or standards that may apply to your operation. As you create a new policy or review an existing policy, remember that it can and should change over time in response to changing business practices, changing legislation, and an always changing world.

Step 1: Explain why emergency preparedness and management is important.

Write a statement, or policy statement, which recognizes despite our best efforts, emergencies can still occur and that the farm is at risk of experiencing a number of natural and human-caused emergencies. Include points that explain the importance of effectively responding to and managing these emergencies, and how this policy will support emergency prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, continuity, and recovery.

Step 2: Explain the goal or purpose of the emergency preparedness and management policy.

Clearly state the overall goal of the policy; for example: "The purpose of this policy is to communicate the FARM's priorities during an emergency, which are: (1) to protect human life first and foremost, (2) to stabilize to situation as far as reasonably possible, (3) to protect livestock, (4) to protect property and the environment, (5) to begin resuming normal operations as soon as reasonable and to identify the standards in place for managing an emergency."

Step 3: Detail who this policy applies to and when it would apply.

For example, does it apply to family members, employees, contractors, service providers, or visitors to the farm? List the possible emergencies that may arise which this policy would apply to.

Step 4: Explain the roles and responsibilities of the people present on the farm.

The roles and responsibilities included in the emergency preparedness and management policy will reflect your farm teams and other individual's responsibilities in emergency preparedness. Roles may include the employer, family members, managers, supervisors, contractors, service providers, and visitors. Special roles may be identified as the Incident Manager, First Aider(s), those individuals assigned to turn the main power or water control off, etc. As it is important for everyone to understand their role and what is expected of them.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

Everyone will need to be trained, competent and willing to do what is expected of them in an emergency.

Step 5: Explain how the goal will be achieved.

Identify ways that the farm will achieve the goals it outlined earlier. Explain prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, continuity, and recovery actions. Include things like hazard identification, assessment, elimination and control to a reasonable level, training, first aid, etc.

Step 6: Other information to be communicated.

Think about any other important emergency preparedness and farm specific statements you would want to include here. This could be where you include the procedure if you choose to combine them.

Step 7: Decide how often this policy will be reviewed.

Think about how frequently the farm will review this policy. What is reasonable? If your farm has a certification that requires the policy to be reviewed at a specific frequency (i.e., annually), then you will want to state it here.

RESOURCE

Visit **agsafeab.ca** to view and download a copy of the AgSafe Alberta Emergency Preparedness and Management Policy.

ACTIVITY

Use the AgSafe Alberta Emergency Preparedness and Management Policy as a guide while you create your farm's policy. Remember to refer to the Alberta OHS Act and Code (particularly Part 7 Emergency Preparedness and Response, Part 11 First Aid, and Schedule 2 First Aid) to help you. Once you have your draft policy created, get input from other members of your farm before finalizing it.

DID YOU KNOW?

Part 11 First Aid of the Albert OHS Code requires an employer to have a plan created, communicated and fully in place to transport ill or injured workers from the worksite to the nearest health care facility before workers are sent to a worksite (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, S.180(1)). This part of the OHS Code does not apply directly to farms and ranches at the time of publication, however it can be considered a reasonable and practicable measure for a farm or ranch to take and therefore should be taken. For more information on this and other changes, visit https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/legislation-changes

NOTE

Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS) and Helicopter Emergency Response Organization (HERO) are contracted helicopter air ambulance services used by Alberta Health Services. While this service is valuable, it is important to understand that you cannot expect this service will always be available when it is needed. Limitations of this service include being unable to fly or land in certain types of poor weather conditions or because the service is simply unavailable at that time (i.e., attending to another emergency). Just like when a local ambulance is unavailable, you will need to have a plan in place for how to transport the ill or injured person to the nearest health care facility.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

When creating an emergency action plan, there will be a lot of points to consider. We begin by introducing you to some of these points. At the end of this section, you will be provided with step-by-step guidance for how to create an emergency action plan of your own.

Communication Methods

Questions:

- How will the people on your farm be alerted to a fire or another type of emergency? Do you have an alarm system, an airhorn or some other method?
- How often is your communication method tested?
- How would someone working alone get help in an emergency?
- How will ongoing communications between key members of the farm team be made during an emergency?

You will want to regularly test your chosen communication methods. Whether you rely on alarms, two-way radios, cell phones or landlines, you will want to ensure that the people working at every location on your operation can call for help or be reached and advised of an emergency.

Emergency Contact Lists

Questions:

- In an emergency, you cannot assume everyone will know to call 9-1-1 or will remember it when an emergency occurs; how can you make certain everyone will know this?
- In an emergency, which members of the farm team will need to be notified right away?
- Immediately after an emergency, who will need to be notified? For example, Alberta OHS, Alberta Environment, WCB, Insurance, and/or the farm's lawyer?
- Not all situations are an emergency, for example, one morning you may find that the shop has been broken into or that locks have been cut and fuel has been stolen. For these situations, does everyone know to call the non-emergency line (commonly referred to as the administrative line) of the local police station?

Develop lists that include all the names and telephone numbers of organizations and people who would need to be contacted in the event of an emergency. These emergency contact lists should be kept in areas where they are likely to be needed. Farm specific numbers to include would be the farm owner/operator, farm manager, barn manager, etc. All of the farm specific contacts listed should also provide an alternate contact number or method. Important numbers to include would be:

- 9-1-1
- Gas company
- Lawyer for the farm
- Alberta OHS Contact Center
- Insurance company
- AgSafe Alberta's Toll Free Number
- Power company
- Alberta Environment

RESOURCE

Refer to the AgSafe Alberta Emergency Contact List template. This and other customizable templates and forms can be found at **agsafeab.ca**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Questions:

- Who is responsible for what during an emergency?
- Who is going to manage the farm side of the emergency? That is, who will ensure that things are getting done, such as performing a roll call at the muster point, making appropriate notifications, talking to and working with emergency first responders?

Different emergencies will have different tasks and activities that need to be completed. For example, some emergencies might require gas, electricity or water main-shut off controls to be safely shut down before a flood or fire evacuation. Establishing who is going to do these types of activities in advance so that precious time and energy does not get wasted is important, as is ensuring these individuals are trained, competent and willing to perform their assigned roles and responsibilities.

Farm Site Map and Farm Building Maps

Questions:

- If someone is new and gets confused about how to get out of a building, or if an emergency exit is unsafe to use, how can they be reminded of another way to get out?
- How will people know where to find first aid kits or other emergency supplies?
- If visitors, contractors or emergency first responders come onto your farm, how will they know where significant hazards are, such as chemical storage sheds, manure pits, etc.?
- How would you get emergency first responders to a far field that has limited access points?

Earlier in this module you were introduced to farm site maps and farm building maps. These maps are incredibly helpful in the event an emergency occurs, not just for the people working on your farm but others, such as visitors, contractors and emergency first responders. These maps should be updated on a regular basis and posted throughout the farm. Main buildings are a good place to post maps, but you should also consider having maps in equipment, storage areas and at your personal residence. The more places you post the map, the better.

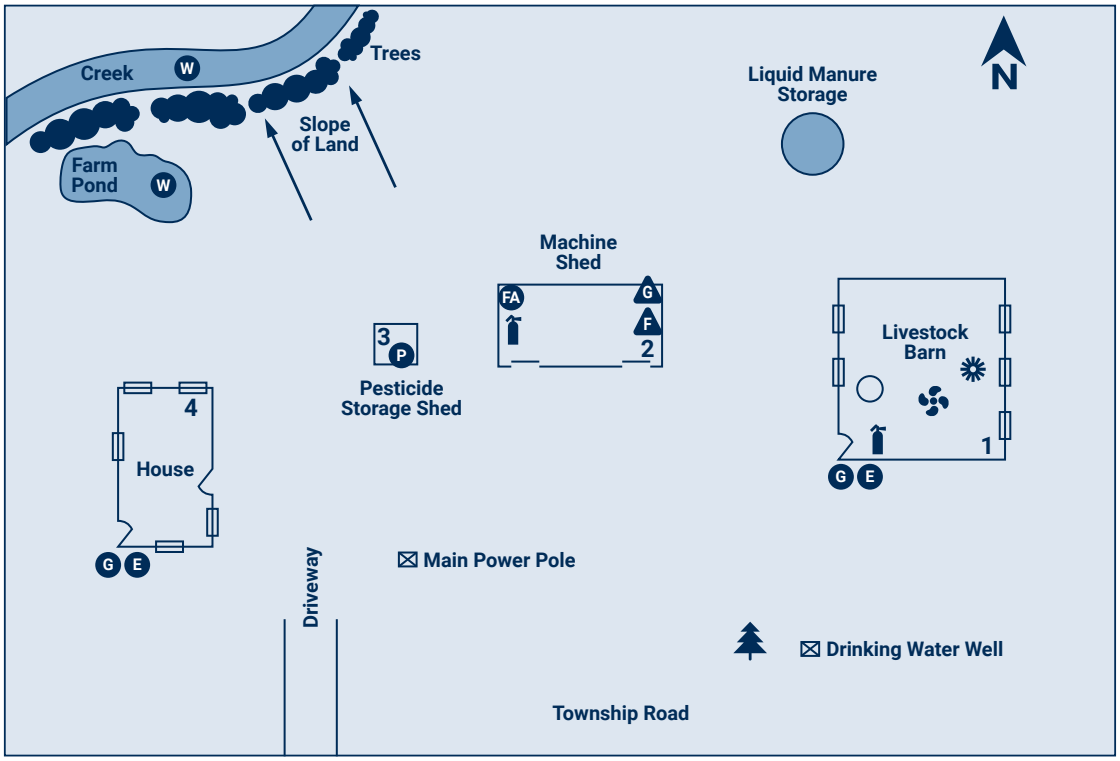
A **farm site map** will include the whole farm and any farm buildings. It will identify key locations, such as muster point(s), buildings with fire extinguishers, buildings with first aid kits, buildings with emergency showers, locations of hazardous materials, manure pits, etc.

A **farm building map** will identify key locations in a specific building, such as evacuation paths, emergency exits, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, emergency showers, emergency shut offs, alarm pulls, air horns, locations of hazardous materials, etc.

On some operations, it may make sense to combine both the farm site map and the farm building maps (as you will see in the example that follows). Both farm site maps and farm building maps should include information to help emergency first responders get to your location. It is important to remember that not all emergency services (police, fire rescue or emergency medical services) may use the same method to get to your location and sometimes technology does fail. For this reason, both map types will need to include the following:

- The farm's rural address (the blue sign at the end of your driveway by the road).
- Legal land description or legal sub-division (LSD).
- GPS coordinates.
- The nearest intersection (i.e., Range Road 132 and Township Road 456; many roads in Alberta are part of the survey road grid system which can make it possible to find your way to a location without relying solely on technology).
- Nearest town, village or hamlet.

Example: Combined Farm Site Map and Farm Building Maps



DATE PREPARED:		**NEAREST TOWN/ VILLAGE/HAMLET:**	
RURAL ADDRESS:		**GPS COORDINATES:**	
LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION:		**NEAREST INTERSECTION:**	
CONTACT NAME:		**CONTACT TELEPHONE:**	
LEGEND:			

North	Fences	Pesticides	First Aid
Pedestrian Door	Gates	Water Source	Fire Extinguisher
Sliding Door	Compressed Gas	Main Gas Shutoff	Meeting Place
Overhead Door	Flammable Liquids	Main Electrical Shutoff	Septic System (Label on map)
Windows	Oxidating Materials	Above Ground Fuel Tank	Manure System (Label on map)
Fans	Poisonous Materials	Below Ground Fuel Tank	Muster Point (Label on map)
Floor Drain	Corrosive Materials		
Sprinkler System	Fertilizer		

First Aid Trained Employee Lists

Questions:

- Who is trained in first aid?
- Do you have enough first aid trained people on your farm?
- Do you have the right first aid equipment?

You will want to create a list of who the first aid trained employees are. This list should include things like where first aid trained employees can be located on the farm and/or the best method(s) to use to get them to the scene of an emergency quickly. The first aid training received by the people on your farm must be provided by a government approved first aid trainer and meet CSA Standard Z1210-17 *First aid training for the workplace—Curriculum and quality management for training agencies* (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.177(1)-(2)). Because of this, two of the certification names have changed, for example:

- "Emergency first aid" is now called "basic first aid"
- "Standard first aid" is now called "intermediate first aid"
- "Advanced first aid" is still called "advanced first aid"

Due to the type of work performed, equipment used and, in most cases, distance from emergent care facilities, it is recommended that farms have their employees trained in "intermediate first aid" at a minimum. The table that follows reflects first aid requirements for "high hazard work," which many operations may be considered. These requirements are from the Alberta OHS Code.

Number of Workers at the Work Site per Shift	Close Work Site (Up to 20 minutes from a health care facility)	Distant Work Site (20 to 40 minutes from a health care facility)	Isolated Work Site (More than 40 minutes from a health care facility)
1	CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 1 Personal First Aid Kit	CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 1 Personal First Aid Kit	CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 1 Personal First Aid Kit
2 to 4	1 Basic First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit	1 Intermediate First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets	1 Intermediate First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets
5 to 9	1 Basic First Aider 1 Intermediate First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit	2 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets	2 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets
10 to 19	1 Basic First Aider 1 Intermediate First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets	2 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets, Stretcher, Splints	2 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Small First Aid Kit 3 Blankets, Stretcher, Splints
20 to 49	2 Basic First Aiders 1 Intermediate First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Medium First Aid Kit	3 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Medium First Aid Kit 3 Blankets, Stretcher, Splints	3 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Medium First Aid Kit 3 Blankets, Stretcher, Splints
50 to 99	2 Basic First Aiders 2 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Large First Aid Kit 3 Blankets	2 Basic First Aiders 3 Intermediate First Aiders CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Large First Aid Kit 3 Blankets, Stretcher, Splints	4 Intermediate First Aiders 1 Advanced First Aider CSA Standard Z1220-17 Type 3 Intermediate Large First Aid Kit 3 Blankets, Stretcher, Splints

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, *Schedule 2 Table 7 First aid requirements for high hazard work)*

RESOURCE

To view the complete Alberta OHS Code, this table in full, or any of the other tables relating to first aid requirements, go to **https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/OHS/OHSCode_March_2023.pdf**

The Government of Alberta posts a list of approved training providers which is updated quarterly at **https://www.alberta.ca/first-aid-training.aspx**

Emergency Supply Lists With Locations

Questions:

- If someone needs a first aid kit or an eyewash bottle, how can you be sure they know where to go (i.e., a service provider or contractor)?
- How do you ensure that emergency supplies are available and ready to go?

Even if you have already marked where emergency supplies are located on your farm site map or farm building maps, it is a good idea to create an emergency supply list with the locations provided as well. This type of list will provide more details about what types of supplies are located where, and can include other important information, such as:

- The type of first aid kits, their contents, when they were last checked and refilled.
- The fire extinguisher size, type, where the gauge is at, that the pin is in place, and when it needs to be recertified.
- The size and condition of eyewash bottles, including their expiry date.
- The last time the eyewash station or emergency shower was cleaned and tested.
- If airhorns are used, when their condition was last checked and when someone last verified that they were still where they belonged.

Other Resource Lists

Questions:

- What other resource lists might your farm need?
- Who might your farm need to get support from in order to maintain operations?

Create lists and locations of resources that would be needed during an emergency and after the emergency that would support the farm in its efforts to resume normal operations. An example might be if you had to load up all of your livestock and transport them to another

location (i.e., due to flood or wildfire), who would you call to transport them and where would you have them taken? If you had a fatality involving the tractor you use to feed livestock, and it was seized by Alberta OHS, who could you call to help ensure the cattle still get fed?

Steps to Create an Emergency Action Plan

This is a list of some basic parts of an emergency action plan. Use this as a guideline and modify it as required. Like when you created your policy, you will want to ensure the emergency action plan reflects any legislated requirements and other applicable standards that may apply to your operation.

Step 1: Introduce the emergency being addressed in the emergency action plan.

Write a statement that tells the reader what this emergency action plan is about; for example: *The FARM is at risk of experiencing a number of natural and human-caused emergencies, including barn fires. Barn fires can be caused by human error, electrical failures or nature, such as lighting strikes. To effectively respond to and manage the impacts of a barn fire, the FARM has developed this emergency action plan.*

Step 2: Explain the goal or purpose of the emergency action plan.

What is the purpose of this emergency action plan? Is it to communicate the farm's priorities during a barn fire? For example: *(1) to protect human life first and foremost, (2) to stabilize to situation as far as reasonably possible, (3) to protect livestock, (4) to protect property and the environment, (5) to begin resuming normal operations as soon as reasonable and ensure the consistent and effective management of emergencies.*

Step 3: Detail who the emergency action plan applies to and the situations it applies to.

Who does it apply to and when?Does the emergency action plan apply to family members, employees, contractors, service providers, and all visitors to the farm? Using the barn fire example, does it only apply to a fire in one barn or is it for all the barns?

Step 4: Include any definition which someone might not know.

What words might someone not be familiar with or may need clarification on?
Include those definitions here.

Step 5: Outline who is responsible for what during the emergency.

Describe who is responsible for what. Who will be the incident manager?
Who will be responsible for performing a roll call to ensure everyone is accounted for?
If the farm has someone with mobility issues, who is helping them leave the area quickly?

Step 6: Outline the emergency actions to be taken.

List the general steps that will need to be taken; remember, don't get too detailed and keep it flexible.

Step 7: State how often this emergency action plan will be reviewed.

Is there a review period required by any certifying or governing body? If so, you will want to reflect that. If not, the farm should review the emergency action plan after each emergency, emergency exercise, or tabletop exercise.

Step 8: Include any applicable legislation here.

Examples of legislation to review and possibly include are the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, Part 7 *Emergency Preparedness and Response* and Part 11 *First Aid*.

Step 9: List any farm-specific or industry-specific documents that support or relate to this emergency action plan.

Think about Industry Standards, or Farm Specific Policies, Procedures, Safe Work Practices, Farm Maps and Emergency Contact Lists that should be included.

RESOURCE

Go to **agsafeab.ca** for emergency action plan templates that you can customize to meet your farm's needs.

Rescue Plans

Some types of work will need a rescue plan, which would be included as a part of an emergency action plan. A rescue plan is basically a procedure to bring workers out of a dangerous place or situation when they are unable to leave it on their own. A rescue plan is required for certain types of work by the OHS Code, such as when working in confined space or when using fall protection equipment. Unless the farm has a fully trained and equipped fire rescue team, local fire rescue departments will need to perform things such as rescuing someone from a structure fire.

Rescue plans, particularly those involving confined spaces, have special considerations and can become quite complex. If either of these apply the work you do on your farm, you will want to find a trainer who specializes in confined space monitoring, entry and rescue or the use, care, maintenance and limitations of fall protection equipment. Even though OHS Code does not directly apply to farms and ranches at the time of publication, rescue plans should be in place.

RESOURCE

To learn more about what is needed when work is performed in confined spaces or when work requires fall protection, read through Part 5 *Confined Spaces* and Part 9 *Fall Protection* of the Alberta OHS Code. A downloadable copy of the OHS Code is available at **https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/OHS/OHSCode_March_2023.pdf**

To ensure your farm team is getting quality training, consider using Energy Safety Canada's list of authorized training providers. Visit **https://www.energysafetycanada.com/Training/Instructors-Providers/Providers** course to find someone in your area.

Testing and Practicing Your Emergency Action Plans

It is hard to know what problems you may encounter during an emergency without testing your plan. Emergency exercises and tabletop exercises should be conducted to practice your emergency actions plans regularly. If you remember back to Module 6: Communications, Orientation & Training, learning truly happens when the learner has an opportunity to apply their knowledge!

Emergency exercises are simulated emergencies where team members carry out actions, functions and responsibilities expected of them during a real emergency. These exercises are conducted on a full scale and are designed to replicate an actual emergency. Such exercises follow the emergency action plan and use (to varying degrees) the tools and equipment that would be required in a real situation.

Tabletop exercises are conducted in a theoretical or imagined manner to test a particular emergency action plan; it is a discussion based mock emergency where an emergency action plan is walked through and tested verbally.
For example, workers may sit around a table and be presented with scenarios or photographs of situations and asked what steps would be taken, based on their training and what is outlined in the applicable emergency action plan.

A thorough and immediate review should occur after each emergency exercise, tabletop exercise, and real-life emergency to identify any areas that require improvement. When needed, corrective actions should be taken, such as:

- Revising the emergency action plan (i.e., revising actions or clarifying roles and responsibilities further).
- Finding out that phone numbers and contacts have changed.
- Providing additional training where it is required.
- Identifying and securing a resource that was not included in the original plan (i.e., livestock hauling services).

It is recommended to have an emergency exercise at least once a year to ensure everyone retains the necessary degree of competency in a given emergency action plan and to ensure the emergency action plan is up to date. By conducting an emergency exercise, you will be able to confirm whether the people working on your operation know how to respond to an emergency situation.

Recordkeeping

Throughout this manual, you have been reminded about the importance of recordkeeping, and emergency response is no exception! You will want to be sure to document:

- Any training provided to workers regarding their responsibilities within the emergency action plans.
- The emergency exercises and tabletop exercises that have been conducted, the review, findings, as well as any corrective actions taken.
- Actual emergencies that have taken place, include the post-incident review, findings, and any corrective actions taken.
- Anytime a plan needs to be changed, for example, when the farm expands and more people are hired, when legislation changes, etc.

NOTE

Emergency exercises can be fun and great teambuilding opportunities. For this reason, some farms may want to create elaborate exercises that involve more than one type of emergency (i.e., a barn fire and a heart attack). It is recommended that you start small and ensure that everyone on the farm is skilled and experienced in the basics before moving on to more complex or involved emergency exercises.

Introducing too much too early can create confusion, frustration and even a feeling of failure. To ensure that you set your farm team up for success, start small and simple first, then slowly add more to the emergency exercise or tabletop exercise each time the objective is met.

Emergency exercise: Simulated or mock emergencies where farm team members carry out actions, functions and responsibilities expected of them during a real emergency.

Rescue plan: A procedure to bring workers out of a dangerous place or situation when they are unable to leave it on their own, and is required for certain types of work, such as when working in confined space or when using fall protection.

Tabletop exercise: Tabletop exercises are conducted in a theoretical or imagined manner; a discussion based mock emergency where an emergency action plan is walked through and tested verbally.

MODULE

8

Health and Safety Committees & Representatives

In this module, readers will:

1. Learn what health and safety committee members and representatives do.
2. Determine whether their farm requires a health and safety committee or a representative.
3. Become familiar with what an employer's responsibilities are in relation to supporting a health and safety committee or representative.
4. Learn about selecting and establishing a heath and safety committee or representative.
5. Be introduced to a Terms of Reference, what it is and what it does.
6. Become familiar with meetings, quorum, training and other requirements.

INTRODUCTION

Health and safety committees and representatives are important on any farm or ranch. These roles bring employers or farm owners and their workers together to talk about and find solutions to health and safety concerns that will not only improve farm safety, but help ensure that everyone gets to go home at the end of their workday.

The requirement for a health and safety committee or health and safety representative can be found in the Alberta OHS Act and Part 13 of the OHS Code. Depending on the size and makeup of your farming operation, you may need to designate a health and safety representative or develop a health and safety committee. A health and safety committee or health and safety representative can be useful during the creation, implementation and maintenance of your health and safety program.

NOTE

Health and safety representatives and health and safety committees are an important part of the internal responsibility system because they allow for the meaningful participation of workers in the health and safety program.

Health and safety representative: A worker who represents other workers on matters related to health and safety and works with the farm to address health and safety concerns at the worksite.

Health and safety committee: A group of worker and employer representatives who work with the farm to address health and safety concerns at the worksite.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES, REPRESENTATIVES AND EMPLOYERS

Duties of a Health and Safety Committee Member and Representative

Health and safety committees and representatives are an important part of any health and safety programs success. Although they seem different, they share the same duties. For example, they both:

- Receive, carefully think about and take health and safety related concerns to the employer.
- Have an active role in the farm's hazard assessment process.
- Make recommendations to the employer regarding the health and safety of workers.
- Review the farm's work site inspection documents.
- Accompany an OHS officer as they inspect the worksite, if requested.

(adapted from Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.14 (6)-(7))

These duties listed above have been outlined in legislation, however, it is a best practice to involve the health and safety committee or representative wherever possible, for example they can:

- Make recommendations regarding the development and review of health and safety related training and education.
- Make recommendations regarding the development and review of farm policies, procedures, and codes of practice.
- Participate in the investigation of incidents and make recommendations to help prevent them from happening again.
- Actively participate in the dangerous work refusal process.
- Help keep workers informed of health and safety matters on the farm.

Additional duties will include participating in the required safety training, maintaining records in connection with the receipt and disposition of concerns or complaints, and leading by example on the farm.

NOTE

Health and safety committees and representatives support health and safety in the workplace but should not be taking on the health and safety responsibilities of supervisors, managers, nor taking the place of the farm's health and safety practitioner, if there is one.

Guideline To Determine If You Need a Health and Safety Committee or Representative

In order to find out if you need a health and safety committee or representative, you will first need to determine how many regularly employed workers are on the farm.

What is a regularly employed worker?

- Unfortunately, Alberta OHS legislation does not tell us what a regularly employed worker is.
- In Prince Edward Island, the definition of a "regularly employed" worker includes seasonal employment with a recurring period of employment that exceeds 12 weeks (Prince Edward Island Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.1(s)). However, most parts of Canada do not define this term.
- The term regularly employed can indicate a pattern in a worker's employment or the filling of a position; for example, if it is on a regular or seasonal basis. It is hard to say exactly what an OHS officer might consider "regular" to be, but try not to over think it.

Use your best judgement when deciding who is and is not a regularly employed worker, as it is up to the employer to determine this. The farm should be able to defend its decision if asked by an OHS officer. If you are still unclear on this or on the border of requiring a health and safety representative or committee, it may be wise to simply put one in place. Remember, these roles offer many benefits relating to health and safety on the farm well beyond legislative compliance.

Number of Regularly Employed Workers	Requirement
20+ Regularly employed workers	Health and Safety Committee
5-19 Regularly employed workers	Health and Safety Representative
1-4 Regularly employed workers	Health and Safety Committee or Representative is not required. However, some employers will voluntarily designate a representative or implement a committee in order to improve workplace safety.

DID YOU KNOW?

Volunteers do not count as regularly employed workers (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, 2021, 1(3)), however they can still be a health and safety representative or a health and safety committee member.

Multiple Employer Worksites

If there are two or more employers at a work site (i.e., farm employees and a contractor's workers) or there is a prime contractor present (who may or may not be a member of the farm), the following will apply:

Without a Prime Contractor	With a Prime Contractor
• 19 workers will require a health and safety representative. • 20+ workers will require a health and safety committee. • Employers may be required to work together to create a health and safety committee or designate a health and safety representative. • Workers from any of the employers can be chosen to fulfill the roles of health and safety committee members or the health and safety representative	• A special health and safety representative or committee is not needed as workers will still have access to their employer's health and safety representative or committee. • The prime contractor must put a system in place to ensure that all worksite parties comply with OHS legislation and that employers and workers cooperate with each other to ensure health and safety at the worksite.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act ,2022, s.13(2)-(4))

NOTE

If a farm employs union members, it must meet with the union before establishing a health and safety committee or putting a health and safety representative in place.

Prime contractor: The person in control of the work site.

Volunteer: Volunteers can be thought of as unpaid workers who have the same rights and protections under Alberta OHS legislation (Government of Alberta, 2023, p.1).

Employer Responsibilities

As an employer, the farm has responsibilities relating to the health and safety committee or representative. The responsibilities include:

- Establishing a health and safety committee or representative when and as required by Alberta OHS legislation.
- Appointing an employer co-chair to a health and safety committee.
- Meeting with the health and safety representative on a regular basis.
- Advising the health and safety committee or representative when there is a dangerous work refusal.
- Providing a copy of completed dangerous work refusal reports to the health and safety committee or representative.
- Allowing the health and safety committee or representative reasonable access to health and safety records and documentation.
- Responding to recommendations made by a health and safety committee or representative within a reasonable amount of time.
- Ensuring the health and safety committee or representative comply with the requirements under the OHS Act and Code.
- Ensuring that health and safety concerns raised by workers, supervisors, and the health and safety committee or representative are resolved in a timely manner.
- Ensuring information related to work site hazards, controls, work practices and procedures are easily and readily accessible, and provide this information to the health and safety committee or representative.
- Posting contact information for the health and safety committee or representative in a highly visible place.
- When requested by an OHS officer, ensuring that health and safety committee worker members or the health and safety representative accompany on the officer on an inspection.
- Providing a copy of completed serious incident investigation reports to the health and safety committee or representative.
- Provide resources and training opportunities to the health and safety committee members or health and safety representative to support them in performing their duties.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.3(1)(e)-(f),s.3(2),s.3(4), s.13(1)-(15), s.17(5), s.17(12), and s.33(6)(d))
(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.196-201)

SELECTING HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS OR A REPRESENTATIVE

Ideally, the individuals who will act as health and safety committee members, or as the health and safety representative, are people who:

- Make efforts to understand other people's point of view.
- Will give each health and safety concern brought to them appropriate consideration and not be dismissive of it.
- Are good at active listening; they let the other person speak, listen carefully and then ask questions when needed to get a better understanding.
- Have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities as a committee member or representative.
- Value safety and care about everyone making it home at the end of each day.
- Lead by example and understand how important it is to do this.
- Are approachable and good with people.

Selecting a Health and Safety Representative

Where a health and safety representative is required, the farm will be responsible for designating one. If the farm has unionized workers, it must consult the union before designating a health and safety representative. It is written in OHS legislation that the health and safety representative who is chosen cannot be associated with the management of the farm (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.14(1)). For this and other reasons, it best to choose someone who would strictly be considered a worker on the farm (that is, not have supervisory or managerial duties assigned to them).

Selecting a Health and Safety Committee

As the employer, the farm must determine how many worker members will be needed to ensure fair representation of the people, shifts and work areas. Thought should also be given to how many people will be needed to discuss and properly address health and safety concerns present on the farm. It is important to note that the farm cannot have more employer members than worker members on the health and safety committee.

Worker members of a health and safety committee who represent unionized workers (if there is one) must be chosen by the union and workers members who represent non-union workers must be chosen by the non-union workers. The farm can set a reasonable date by which the union and/or workers must provide the names of the worker representatives to it. If the union does not select worker for the committee, then the employer is responsible for selecting those members.

Once the members of the health and safety committee have been chosen, the next step will be the selection of co-chairs. To do this, the employer members will select the employer co-chair and the worker members will select the worker co-chair.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.196.1-196.2)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

A terms of reference is a written document that outlines the scope, structure, considerations and limitations of a group working toward a shared goal, in this case that group is a health and safety committee. The OHS Code requires the farm to ensure that each health and safety committee develops a written terms of reference. While this is not legislated for a health and safety representative, developing a modified terms of reference to address key points and ensure the role is as effective as possible would be considered a best practice.

Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference	Health and Safety Representative Terms of Reference*
Required by legislation.	Not required by legislation.
Must outline the process used to select co-chairs that aligns with OHS legislation.	Outline the farm's process for selecting a health and safety representative that aligns with OHS legislation. *
Outline the process for selecting worker members to be on the committee in a way that ensures the workers, work areas and shifts are adequately represented.	Set the term of office for a health and safety representative. *
Set a term of office for committee members.	Set the frequency of regular meetings with the farm and how meeting records will be kept. *
Set the frequency of regular committee meetings and outlines how meeting records will be kept.	Describe the process for bringing health and safety concerns to the farm's attention. *
Outline how meetings will be conducted and how health and safety concerns will be brought to the farm's attention.	Outline what to do in the event the health and safety representative has an extended absence. *
Outline the process for replacing a member during their term of office (i.e., should they no longer be able to serve on the committee for some reason such as a worker member being promoted to management or retiring).	Outline the process for replacing the representative during their term of office (i.e., should they no longer be able to serve on the committee for some reason such as promoted to management or retiring). *
Outline a dispute resolution process for the times when the committee members do not agree on a recommendation to the employer.	Detail how special meetings relating to workplace health and safety concerns with the farm will be called and conducted. *
Outline processes to address times where a committee member is not fulfilling their duties.	Outline processes to address times where a health and safety representative is not fulfilling their duties. *
Outline how the farm will communicate decisions relating to health and safety concerns and recommendations made by the committee in a timely manner. *	Outline how the farm will communicate decisions relating to health and safety concerns and recommendations made by the health and safety representative in a timely manner. *

* Indicates that the point is not required by Alberta OHS legislation, but is a recommended practice.

KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

When setting the term of office for a position, make sure it is neither too short nor too long. If it is too short, the person will hardly have time to learn and get comfortable in the roll before their term comes to an end. If the term is too long, the committee or health and safety representative role may become less effective without new ideas or fresh perspectives.

Health and Safety Committee Meeting Quorum

Anytime a health and safety committee meeting is held, quorum must be met. A quorum is often used to ensure that there are enough committee members voting on decisions to fairly represent everyone's interests. In the case of a health and safety committee, for quorum to be achieved:

- Half of the members are present.
- Of the members present, both worker members and employer members are present.
- At least half of the members present are worker members.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2021, s.199)

Quorums help to ensure that decisions and recommendations are made fairly. If quorum is not met, a meeting is not considered valid, and any decisions or recommendations made at that meeting are not binding.

Terms of reference: A description of the scope, structure, considerations and limitations of a group working toward a shared goal.

Quorum: Having a minimum number of members and/or types of members present at a meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

Health and Safety Committee and Representative Regular Meetings

Holding regularly scheduled committee or representative meetings is important. These meetings support co-operation and collaboration in creating and implementing health and safety measures. The farm is required to give health and safety committee members or representatives the necessary time during normal working hours to participate in these meetings. OHS legislation has become less prescriptive in recent years, so some of the information contained in this section can be thought of as recommended best practices.

Meeting frequency

On small farms with a health and safety representative, most health and safety issues may be easily resolved without the need for formal meetings; when this happens, it is a best practice to keep notes on what was discussed and what the outcome of the discussion was. Regular meetings can be very beneficial if scheduled according to the farm's specific needs. For example, it may make sense to schedule regular meetings between the employer or farm owner and health and safety representative once a month or even once every quarter.

On larger operations with a health and safety committee, meeting quarterly may not be very effective and the farm may choose to have regular meetings once a month. When deciding how frequently to hold regular meetings, consider what the duties of the health and safety committee are, what hazards are being identified and what incidents are occurring. It would not be effective or reasonable to wait three months for the next regular meeting to review workplace inspections or to discuss an incident and make recommendations after so much time has passed.

Conducting Effective Meetings

A well planned and executed meeting will save time and be more effective. Some best practices are outlined below:

Best Practice	Explanation
Meeting schedule	• Meetings should follow what has been outlined in the farm's terms of reference and should be scheduled during regular working hours. • Avoid rescheduling or trying to fit the meeting in as it can be frustrating for those involved and less effective.
Meeting attendance	• Individuals who can provide insight and/or assist in finding solutions to health and safety issues should be invited to attend as guests for the full meeting or at least, in part.
Meeting format	• Meetings can be held in person, by phone, or virtually online. • The date, time, and location will need to make sense and be reasonable for those who are required to be in attendance. • The use of any technology required for the meeting should be comfortable for everyone involved.
Meeting agenda	• Should be prepared and distributed to everyone who will be attending the meeting several days before the meeting is scheduled to occur. This can be done by the health and safety representative or a member of the health and safety committee who has been assigned to do it. • Should indicate date, time and location of the meeting. • Should ensure all serious items receive attention and will help keep the meeting from being sidetracked • Should include new business and old business. Meetings can include reviews of incident reports, dangerous work refusals, inspections, review of previous corrective actions taken, etc. • Will help ensure everyone who is attending will be prepared.
Meeting conduct	• All items noted as previous business should be addressed before continuing on to new business. • Ensure the matter being discussed is a true health and safety issue, sometimes matters may turn out to be human resource concerns. • During discussions, allow people to speak and thoughtfully consider what they are saying. Everyone brings value, just because they may not speak as well as someone else does not mean their input should be valued any less.
Making recommendations	• When making recommendations, ensure the corrective actions are specific, focused and achievable actions that can be performed by the farm, a worker, or a contractor. • Assign a target date to each corrective action and recommend who should be responsible for completing the corrective action.

Health and Safety Committee and Representative Special Meetings

There may be times when a health and safety committee must meet for reasons other than a regular meeting, such as when a meeting is requested by an OHS officer or an urgent health and safety matter has come up. When this happens, it is considered a special meeting. The OHS Code requires that:

- There be meeting minutes for special meetings.
- These minutes are kept for a minimum of 2 years.
- Special meeting minutes are made readily available to health and safety committee members or an OHS officer.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.198(1)-(2))

Alberta OHS legislation allows for a health and safety representative to call a special meeting with an employer to deal with health and safety concerns at the farm (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.199.2). When this occurs, it is recommended that the farm and health and safety representative special meeting be handled the same way as one held by a health and safety committee, where meeting minutes are recorded, maintained and made available for a minimum of 2 years.

Posting the Names of Health and Safety Committee Members and Representatives

The farm is required to keep a record of the names and contact information of the health and safety committee members or representative. The name(s) and contact information will also need to be posted at every worksite (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.199.1(a)-(b)).

Legislation Requires	Best Practice
• The workplace contact information for each committee member or the representative be posted in an obvious area at each worksite or by another means agreed upon by the committee or representative.	• Include a picture of committee members or representative as this will help new workers, contractors and visitors identify who they can go to. • Post this information at more than one location (i.e., in each work area). • Identify where each person works on the farm site map or farm building map.

NOTE

Do not post confidential information, such as home addresses or personal telephone numbers. Not only is this a privacy issue, but the person should also not be getting contacted outside of work and during their personal time.

Time Away From Regular Duties

Health and safety committee members and health and safety representatives are to be considered at work while performing their duties as a committee member or representative. This includes any time spent in training that relates to and supports them in their duties. For this reason, any duties, meetings and training must take place during normal working hours.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.199.3)

Health and Safety Committee or Representative Training

The farm is required to ensure that the health and safety representative or committee members are trained in all matters necessary to perform their work in a healthy and safe manner. In addition to this, they must be trained in:

- Their roles and responsibilities as co-chairs, committee members, or as the health and safety representative.
- The obligations of worksite parties.
- The rights of workers.

(Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.201(a)-(c))

As with any form of training provided, you will want to ensure it is documented and that these records are maintained.

RESOURCE

AgSafe Alberta has developed two farm specific online courses to support you providing this training: *Effective Health and Safety Representative Awareness Training* and *Effective Health and Safety Committee Awareness Training*.

Everyone who successfully completes either course will receive a personalized certificate of completion. Go to **agsafeab.ca** to register for these or any of the other training AgSafe Alberta offers.

MODULE

9

Program Administration

In this module, readers will:

1. Learn about recordkeeping, common types of records, and retention periods.
2. Become familiar with what program administration is, its continuous improvement, and how to measure its performance.
3. Be introduced to auditing and its benefits.

INTRODUCTION

Program administration is much more than just creating paperwork and filing it away. Program administration also involves:

- Implementing the various parts of your health and safety program.
- Observing and checking on your program's effectiveness.
- Determining if the health and safety program and its parts are working as planned.
- Identifying if there are things that need to be improved and making these improvements.

DISCUSSION

If you don't know what health and safety information needs to be provided to farm team members, and you don't check on it from time to time to ensure the information is actually being provided and applied by the people working on your farm, how will you ever be able to find out what parts of your health and safety program are working and what needs to be improved? As a group, discuss what are you currently doing to monitor your health and safety program and/or parts of it.

Program administration: Documenting, tracking, managing, maintaining and evaluating all parts of the farm's health and safety program.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RECORDKEEPING

While program administration is about much more than just recordkeeping, recordkeeping is still an important part of it. Before looking at program administration in more detail, we are going to cover some recordkeeping basics.

Records are kept for many reasons, they can support the farm's due diligence and they can be used to measure the effectiveness of the farm's health and safety activities. A record is a form of evidence that provides information about the farm's activities, what it has done and even what it plans to do. Records can include paper documents, digital records, emails, photographs, etc. Some types of records can be more important that others, and these important records will need to be kept for a longer period of time. Confidential records are records that contain private information, such as medical information, birthdates, home addresses, etc. Confidential records need to be stored in a way that is secure and can only be accessed by authorized individuals for work related reasons.

Recordkeeping is the management of records, such as what documents are created, where they are stored, how they are used, who can access them, and finally when and how they are disposed of. When it comes to recordkeeping, you don't want to store more information than you need to, nor keep it any longer than you must (this is especially true when it comes to confidential information). Some decisions to make regarding recordkeeping include:

1. Who is assigned to ensure these records are being maintained?
2. How and where will they be stored?
3. Who will have access to them, especially if they contain medical or other private information?
4. Are electronic copies backed up?
5. Are electronic back-ups stored securely off site should something ever happen?

RESOURCE

Ensuring that the farm is collecting, using and protecting personal information appropriately is important. The Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) is a valuable resource that will support you in doing this. Visit **http://www.alberta.ca/personal-information-protection-act.aspx** to learn more about PIPA and what your farm should be doing.

The farm will need to create a system to keep track of important records. People will need to be assigned the responsibility of keeping records and tracking key performance indicators. For example, the person in charge of human resource related work should be responsible for maintaining training related records and tracking who has been trained and who still requires training. Another example might be the person in charge of health and safety on the farm being responsible for maintaining incident investigation reports and tracking how many incidents have occurred in which work areas.

Some examples of the types of records a farm should keep are listed in the table that follows. Please note that this is not a complete or extensive list of the types of records a farm should keep.

Record Type	Details
Competency evaluations	• Will list the role, the core competencies of the role that are being evaluated and the level of knowledge, skill and ability demonstrated by the worker. • Will include the names and signatures of the participant(s) and trainer(s). • Will include the date.
Disciplinary action records	• Includes written records of verbal actions, dismissals, suspensions, and progressive disciplinary actions. • These records commonly relate to policy or procedure violations, excessive lateness or absenteeism, issues with work quality or performance, safety violations, inappropriate conduct, etc. • May include statements, investigations, interview records and other related records. • Will include the full name of the employee, the date of the incident, a summary of the issue, a summary of past events relating to the current issue, corrective actions and dates and the full name of the persons direct supervisor. • Will include the signatures of the person who is receiving disciplinary action and the person who is completing the disciplinary action record (i.e., farm owner or human resource personnel) and the date signed.
Dangerous work refusal records	• Must include a report of the dangerous work refusal, the inspection, its findings, and any corrective actions taken. • Should include the full names and signatures of the involved parties (i.e., the person who refused the work, the inspection team members, and other members of the farm who reviewed it such as the farm owner). • Will require the date of the refusal and the date signed.

Continued...

Record Type	Details
First aid records	• Must include the full name of the worker and the name and qualifications of the person giving first aid. • Must include a description of the illness or injury and the first aid given to the worker. • Must include the date and time of the illness or injury. • Must include the date and time the illness or injury was reported. • Must include the location at the work site where the incident occurred and the work-related cause of the incident, if any. • Will include the signatures of the person who received the first aid treatment and the person who provided the first aid treatment. (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.183(2))
Hazard assessments	• Ideally, will include a risk assessment as well. • Will identify the job or task, existing and potential hazards and hazard control measures in place. • Will include the creation date and date of review, if applicable. • Will include the full names and signatures of the people who participated in the hazard assessment. • Copies should be kept readily accessible to workers and health and safety committee members or representatives.
Incident investigation reports (injury, illness, equipment or property damage, near miss, potential for serious incident) and corrective actions	• Will include completed preliminary and final investigation reports that have been dated and signed by the investigation team members and other members of the farm team who have reviewed it . • Will include supporting documentation, such as witness statements, photographs, sketches, etc. • Will include some form of corrective action records that lists what actions have or will be taken, who is responsible for the actions, the target completion date, the date of completion. Should also include a target review date to ensure the corrective actions have been completed and the date when it occurred.
Inspection records and corrective actions	• Will include the completed inspection reports that have been dated and signed by the inspection team members and any other members of the farm team who have reviewed it. • Will include supporting documentation, such as photographs, sketches, etc. • Will include some form of corrective action records that lists what actions have or will be taken, who is responsible for the actions, the target completion date, and the date of completion. Should also include a target review date to ensure the corrective actions have been completed, that they are effective, and the date when it occurred.

Record Type	Details
Maintenance and repair records	• Will include the name, model, and serial number of the equipment. • Will include the date and a description of what was done. • Will include the full name and signature of the person who performed the work.
Orientation and training records	• Will include the names and signatures of the participant(s) and trainer(s). • Will include the date. • Will outline the topics covered.
Performance review records	• Will include the persons strengths, weaknesses, a rating system to gauge skill levels and goals relating to health and safety as well as other applicable work-related elements. • Will include the review period and the date of the review. • Will include the signatures of the person who is being reviewed and the person who is performing the review.
Safety meeting minutes	• Will include brief notes outlining what was discussed. • Will include the time, date and location of the meeting. • Will include the names of the people who attended the meeting and their signatures.
Toolbox talks	• Will include brief notes outlining what was discussed. • Will include the time, date and location of the meeting. • Will include the names of the people who attended the meeting and their signatures.

NOTE

All dates will need to be complete, which means the date includes the year, day and month.

The names of individuals will need to include their first and last name. It is best practice to have the person's full name printed and their signature on the document.

Acceptable	Unacceptable
May 1, 2023	May 1
2023-08-16	08-23 or 8/23
08/16/23	Missing the date or the date is illegible.

How Long Should Records Be Kept?

Generally speaking, health and safety records should be kept a minimum of three years (i.e., first aid records) (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.183(3)). As a jurisdiction, Alberta does not specify many minimum retention periods for records.

Keep in mind that the CSA Standard Z94.4-18 *Selection, use and care of respirators*, which is referenced in the OHS Code, recommends that training records be retained for at least the duration of the persons employment or for a minimum of 10 years (CSA Group, 2018, p.64). This aligns with the 10 year retention period that physicians are required to maintain patient records for (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, 2016).

Record Type	Retention Period
First aid records	A minimum of three years (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.183(3))
Health and safety committee or representative special meeting minutes	A minimum of 2 years (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code, 2023, s.198(2))
Records relating to respiratory protective equipment programs (Use, care, selection and maintenance)	The duration of the persons employment or for a minimum of 10 years (CSA Group, 2018, p.64)
Record of minor injuries, hazardous occurrences and written reports	At least 10 years (Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2010, p.4)

Types of Records That Should Be Made Readily Available

- Health and safety related policies and procedures
- Emergency action plans
- Outcomes and corrective actions resulting from incident investigations
- Hazard assessments
- Work area and other inspections
- Operators manuals
- Safe work practices
- Health and safety committee (or representative) meeting minutes

Confidential record: A record that contains private information, such as medical information, a birthdate, home address, etc.

Record: A form of evidence that provides information about the farm's activities, what it has done and even what it plans to do. Records can include paper documents, digital records, emails, photographs, etc.

Recordkeeping: The management of records, such as what documents are created, where they are stored, how they are used, who can access them, and finally when and how they are disposed of.

Safety meeting minutes: A written record of health and safety information discussed at a safety meeting.

Developing a Health and Safety Manual

Creating a health and safety manual is not required, but it can be another helpful tool for you and the people on your farm to use. A health and safety manual is a record that acts as a resource and reference point for the people working on your farm. On its own, the manual is not the farm's health and safety program; it is only a binder of paper, and the program is what actually happens on the farm. If you create a health and safety manual, you will want to keep copies of it at multiple locations on the farm. You will also need to make sure that your farm's health and safety manual is kept current, and that the copies are as well. A good time to go over it with workers is when they are hired, and then regularly thereafter (a review can be as simple as reviewing parts of it during safety meetings throughout the year).

Below are just a few examples of topics to include in your health and safety manual:

Health and safety related policies and procedures:

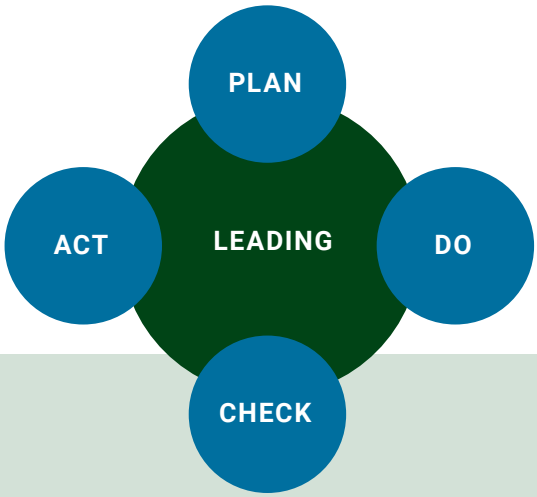
- Health and safety policy
- Fit for duty policy
- Violence and harassment policy
- Hazard reporting policy and procedure
- Incident reporting and investigation policy and procedure
- Dangerous work refusal policy and procedure

- Roles and responsibilities
- First aid
- Manual handling
- Veterinary drugs
- Ladder use
- Power and hand tools
- Lockout Tagout
- Pesticides
- Fall protection
- Animal behaviour
- Basic rights of workers
- Heat and cold stress
- Mounting and dismounting equipment
- Respiratory hazards
- Confined spaces
- Welding and cutting
- Fatigue
- Personal protective equipment
- Housekeeping
- WHMIS

WHAT IS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION?

Program administration includes the documenting, tracking, managing, maintenance and evaluation of all parts of the farm's health and safety program. Good program administration ensures important activities are happening and it allows for the measurement and analysis of the health and safety program as a whole and its individual parts, both of which are necessary for the programs ongoing improvement.

Lead, Plan, Do, Check, Act Approach To Program Administration



Leadership and commitment must be present at all times; that is, not just when your health and safety program is being developed and initially put in place, but also over the many years that follow during its ongoing administration. Too often commitment to a health and safety program is high during the early stages but eventually starts to die out... only to be renewed yet again after something bad happens.

The lead, plan, do, check, act approach is a continuous improvement model that will support you in keeping your health and safety program effective. Up to this point, you have learned about the leading, planning, doing things that need done, and now we are going to look at the checking and action steps.

Step	Simple Explanation	Description
Lead	Leadership and commitment	• Obtain farm leadership's commitment and support (this was discussed in detail in Module 1). • Farm owners, family members, managers, supervisors and workers will need to support the goal(s).
Plan	Organize	• Think about where things are now and where they need to be. • What do you want to achieve, how will you achieve it, who is responsible for what and how will it be measured? • Identify legal and other requirements (i.e., Verified Beef Production Plus Certification or AgSafe Alberta Certification) that apply to the farm. • Plan how you are going to implement your health and safety program and its parts.
Do	Implement	• Involve your farm team; communicate what is needed and discuss issues. • Provide the required resources (i.e., time, tools, equipment, external supports such as AgSafe Alberta, etc.). • Provide training and instruction so that everyone is competent. • Supervise the process to ensure what is being put in place is being followed.
Check	Measure and evaluate	• Measure the performance of the health and safety program. • Verify that all parts of the plan have been implemented. • Determine how well risks are being managed. • Assess if your goals are being achieved. • Perform an audit of the health and safety program and focused audits on key areas, if needed.
Act	Improve	• Review the information and act on the lessons learned (i.e., incidents, inspections, etc.). • Review policies, procedures, hazard and risk assessments, etc. to see if they are in need of updating. • Using the lessons learned, identify and take corrective actions.

(Adapted from CCOHS, 2022)

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

The farm will need to measure the performance of its health and safety program in order to understand, manage and improve its overall function. We measure performance so that we can answer questions and develop a complete picture of how the health and safety program is performing, which in turn guides us in making informed decisions about corrective actions.

Questions To Ask	Decisions To Be Made
• Where are we compared to our health and safety goals? • Are we getting better or worse? • How do we compare with others in our industry (i.e., audit)? • Are we doing the right things and being effective? • Are we doing the right things consistently, not just when it is easy or convenient?	• What actions are necessary and reasonable. • What the priorities are. • Where resources are needed most and best used.

What To Measure

There are three types of indicators that will be looked at here, these are leading indicators, lagging indicators, and key performance indicators. The farm will need to decide which indicators it is going to measure.

Leading indicators are pro-active and preventative safety activities. These are activities that are carried out as a part of your health and safety program. Examples include:

- Hazard and risk assessments that are completed, reviewed and updated
- Completion of new employee orientations, worker training and refresher training
- Completion of incident investigations in a timely manner
- Coaching, correction, and disciplinary actions taken
- Safety-related training provided
- Inspections that are performed
- Toolbox talks and safety conversations that occur
- Employee/farm team member performance reviews
- Corrective action reviews to ensure the corrective actions have been implemented and are working as intended
- Preventative maintenance activities
- Near misses and hazard reports
- Health and safety committee or representative activities
- Health and safety program audits

Lagging indicators are reactive safety activities taken to prevent an incident from happening again. These can also be thought of as "outcome" indicators. Examples include:

- Total recordable incident frequency (TRIF)
- Injury frequency and severity
- Injury, illness and equipment damage incident numbers or rates
- Repair costs and property damage costs
- Hazardous product spills or releases
- Safety culture changes
- Survey responses regarding safety-related matters
- Number of lost time, medical aid and first aid incidents
- Comparison of current years statistics to those of the previous year(s)
- Workers compensation board and/or insurance costs

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are primary indicators of progress towards a desired outcome or goal. These can be both leading and lagging indicators depending on the indicator that the farm chooses to track, and which ones directly contribute to the farm's health and safety objectives. Use the leading and lagging indicators listed to help you determine which KPIs you should be tracking.

What is Total Recordable Incident Frequency (TRIF)?

In occupational health and safety, you are likely to come across the term Total Recordable Incident Frequency (TRIF). TRIF is a standardized, simple calculation used to provide the farm with a quantifiable number that it can use to measure the effectiveness of its health and safety program with.

TRIF = (number of injuries x 200,000) / (number of hours worked)

Pros	Cons
• Provides the farm with a quantifiable number to measure against. • It is easy to calculate. • It is standardized.	• The rate can look very high for small operations with just a few workers and a low number of incidents. • It does not take into account the level of risk associated with certain jobs. • Combining low risk work hours with high risk work hours can downplay the dangers associated with certain types of work (i.e., combining office hours with the hours spent working cattle). • It does not take into account injury severity (i.e., a sprain versus fatality).

DID YOU KNOW?

To help explain TRIF better, consider this example. Keep in mind that a low TRIF is the objective and looks better on paper.

	Farm A	Farm B
Operation type	Small sheep operation	Large feedlot and crop operation
Number of waged employees	4 part time workers	25 full time workers
Incident type	Achilles tendon rupture that occurred while the worker was running to chase a neighbour's dog out of a pen	Fatality resulting from a grain truck run over
TRIFF calculation	TRIF = (1 injury x200,000) / (52 weeks x 20 hours per week x 4 workers) TRIF = (200,000) / 4160 hours worked	TRIF = (1 injury x200,000) / (52 weeks x 40 hours per week x 25 workers) TRIF = (200,000) / 52000 hours worked
TRIFF score	48	3.8

Leading indicators: Proactive and preventative safety activities. These are activities that are carried out as a part of your health and safety program.

Lagging indicators: Reactive safety activities taken to prevent an incident from happening again. These can also be thought of as "outcome" indicators.

Key performance indicators: Primary indicators of progress towards a desired outcome or goal. These can be both leading and lagging indicators that directly contribute to the farm's health and safety objectives.

Total Recordable Incident Frequency (TRIF): A standardized, simple calculation used to provide the farm with a quantifiable number that it can use to measure the effectiveness of its health and safety program with.

Quantifiable: A numerical value used to express or measure something.

AUDITING YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM

An audit is an evaluation of an operations health and safety program against an approved standard. It is done to determine the effectiveness and reliability of the program and may even be used to compare the farm's health and safety performance against the performance of others like it. Audits commonly include a review of health and safety related records and observations of the work environment, equipment and work processes.

Audits are a great way to ensure your current health and safety practices are working and that your program is continuously improving. Audits can be performed:

- Internally by someone who is a member of the farm team or externally by someone who is contracted to do it.
- On a specific area of your health and safety program or on the entire health and safety program.
- As a baseline audit to find where the operations existing health and safety program (or a part of it) is at in comparison to a desired standard.
- To obtain some form of recognition, such as certification (i.e., AgSafe Alberta Certified or Certificate of Recognition (COR) certification).

Regardless of the audit type or its purpose, once complete the audit results should be carefully reviewed. This is done to identify both what is working and where improvements need to be made. Just like after an inspection or incident investigation, an action plan will need to be developed that lists the:

- Actions to be taken in a reasonable time frame (commonly 6-12 months).
- Target dates when the actions will be completed by.
- Names of individuals responsible for each of the corrective actions.
- Dates when the farm will verify that the actions have been taken.
- Target dates when the farm will verify that the actions taken are working.

You should be following up on your action plan regularly to ensure that action items (also known as corrective actions) are being completed. Since most operations are constantly changing to some degree and legislation changes regularly, it is important that the health and safety program adapt through continuous improvement of work processes and activities (i.e., using the lead, plan, do, check, act method presented earlier in this module). The farm should ensure that the results of health and safety program audits are communicated to everyone working on the farm. Keeping everyone informed of your farm's health and safety programs status and any initiatives will help you build a positive safety culture and support your workers in being informed.

NOTE

Passing an audit means that the farm has met an approved standard; it does not mean that the farm is in compliance with legislation or that it is doing everything reasonably practicable to protect the health and safety of the people working on it or affected by its work. The farm must make efforts to meet its responsibilities under Alberta OHS legislation.

Audit: An audit is an evaluation of an operations health and safety program against an approved standard.

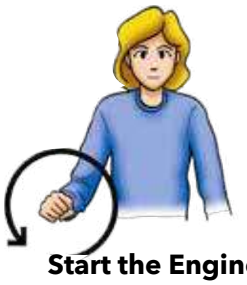
Baseline audit: An audit of all or part of a health and safety program and the results of which will be used as a point of comparison (a baseline) for a future audit and determine if efforts made to improve health and safety have been effective.

Initiative: Actions taken to improve something.

Hand Signals on the Farm

The Universal Language

AgSafe ALBERTA



Start the Engine

Move Out / Take Off

Raise Equipment

Stop the Engine

Lower Equipment

Move to Me / Follow Me

This far to Go

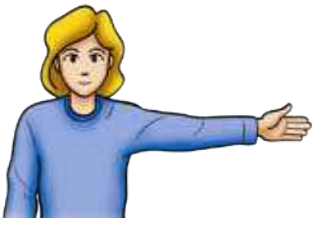
Stop from Behind

Speed it Up

Slow it Down

Stop

Right Turn



Left Turn

Come to Me

For more resources like this, visit **agsafeab.ca**

Glossary

ABBREVIATIONS LIST

OHS	Alberta Occupational Health and Safety
OHS Act	Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act
OHS Code	Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code
ROI	Return on investment
IRS	Internal responsibility system
CCOHS	Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration

FOREWORD & INTRODUCTION

Act: A form of law that allows a government to regulate an area, such as Occupational Health and Safety (Government of Canada, 2011).

Action plan: A course of action; a strategy.

Codes: Codes are pieces of legislation that can be enforced.

Due diligence: "The level of judgement, care, prudence, determination, and activity that a person would reasonably be expected to do under particular circumstances (CCOHS, 2019)."

Guidelines: Documents that provide instruction on how to do something; sometimes guidelines are created by a jurisdiction, such as the Government of Alberta, on how to comply with legislation but they typically cannot be enforced by law (CCOHS, 2022).

Health and safety program: "A coordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures that is designed to be implemented by organizations in order to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety (Occupational Health and Safety Act, s.1(s))."

Internal responsibility system (IRS): The foundational belief of occupational health and safety legislation across Canada that makes all workplace parties responsible for their health and safety and the health and safety of others.

Jurisdiction: An authority or power to make decisions and apply law; for example, there is federal jurisdiction and provincial jurisdiction.

Justifiable: Shown to be valid, sensible, supportable, defensible.

Liability: Being legally responsible for something.

No fault insurance: Also called No Fault Benefits. For the purposes of this manual, this is where the Workers Compensation Board takes on the responsibility for a work-related injury regardless of who is at fault (i.e., an employer or a worker).

Organizational chart: A visual representation of the relationships between people and roles; it outlines how a farm functions, who the most senior people or positions are and who takes direction from who.

Prosecution: When legal courses of action are initiated against a worksite party.

Rational: Based on logic or reason.

Reasonable person: "A fictional person with an ordinary degree of reason, prudence, care, foresight, or intelligence whose conduct, conclusion, or expectation in relation to a particular circumstance or fact is used as an objective standard by which to measure or determine something (as the existence of negligence) (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)."

Reasonable precaution: Also called reasonable care. The care, caution, measures or actions a reasonable person would be expected to take under the same or similar circumstances.

Reasonably practicable: 1. Meeting a legislated occupational health and safety obligation in a way that is sensible, realistic and would be thought of as making sense for the facts and conditions by a reasonable person. 2. A recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)?

Regulations: Regulations commonly lists the requirements for specific workplace conditions and work practices in more detail than the Act. Regulations can be sector specific (as we have seen with farming and ranching) or hazard specific.

Return on investment (ROI): A performance measure that is used to assess the efficiency or profitability of something in business; a financial ratio used to calculate gain or benefit.

Standards: A voluntary way of doing something that has been agreed upon by a company itself, by an industry, or by a recognized organization such as the CSA Group.

Worksite party: Worksite parties regulated by the OHS Act include employers, supervisors, workers, suppliers, service providers, owners, contracting employers, prime contractors, and temporary staffing agencies (Alberta Government, n.d.).

MODULE 1: LEADERSHIP, COMMITMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability: An obligation or willingness to accept responsibility for one's actions (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Assumption: Something that is accepted as being true or certain without any proof.

Business risk management: The process of identifying, assessing, and controlling threats to a business's capital, earnings, operations, or general security.

Buy-in: "Acceptance of and willingness to actively support and participate in something (such as a proposed new plan or policy)(Merriam-Webster, n.d.)."

Coaching: An informal corrective action (you will learn more about corrective actions later in this manual) that focuses on improving a behaviour rather than punishing it.

Compliance: The act or state of following or meeting rules, regulations or expectations.

Corrective action: An action taken to eliminate the cause or reduce the risk of something; an action taken to prevent something from happening again.

Corrective action plan: A step by step plan of action that is developed and followed in order to achieve an desired outcome.

Culture: The learned and shared behavior of a group.

Goal: A desired result of a person's effort.

Health and safety policy: A statement written by an employer that outlines a commitment to health and safety and the protection of employees and others involved in or affected by the work being done.

High risk: More likely to result in harm and/or the harm that results will be greater, such as a disabling or fatal injury.

Implement: To put something in place.

Incompetence: A person does not have the skills or ability to perform the job as required.

Likelihood: The chance or likelihood of a potential risk occurring based on informal measurements such as low, medium, or high.

Misconduct: Unacceptable behavior; when person breaks rule or ignores their responsibilities.

Non-compliance: Failing or refusing to follow or meet rules, regulations or expectations.

Policy: Written general guidelines that set the direction for accomplishing an outcome and are used to guide decision making.

Policy statement: A written statement about the plans or intentions of an organization, such as a farm business.

Probability: The possibility of something happening based on measurable methods.

Procedure: A document with a narrow focus which describes step by step what actions are to be taken (especially when performing a job or task) in order to achieve the desired outcome.

Progressive discipline: A process where a series of increasingly more severe measures are taken in an effort to correct an employee's behaviour or performance.

Responsibilities: The tasks or duties that people in the various positions are expected to complete as function of their job.

Risk: The chance or likelihood of injury, damage or loss.

Risk blindness: Being unaware of a risk.

Risk-taking behavior: How inclined someone is to do something that has the potential to be harmful or dangerous.

Role: The positions or purposes that someone has in a situation or organization; the positions held by various people on the farm.

Safety culture: "The characteristics of the work environment, such as the values, rules, and common understandings that influence workers' perceptions and attitudes about the importance that the organization places on safety (CNSC, 2018, p. 1)."

Safety leadership: The act of influencing others to make health and safety their work goal as well.

MODULE 2: HAZARD IDENTIFICATION & ASSESSMENT

Acronym: A shortened form of a longer name or phrase formed by the first letter of each word.

Acute condition: Of sudden onset, lasting a short time or requiring short-term medical care.

Airborne: Something that is suspended in or carried by the air.

Biological contaminant: Bacteria, molds, mold spores, pollens, viruses, and other biological materials that are polluting or poisonous in some way.

Chemical: Refers to a substance or mixture of substances.

Chemical energy: This type of energy is stored in the bonds of chemical compounds and is released when a substance undergoes a chemical reaction.

Chronic condition: A problematic condition or illness that lasts for a long time or happens repeatedly.

Dust: Small solid fragments or tiny pieces of something that may or may not be visible to the naked eye.

Electrical energy: This type of energy relates to the movement of electrically charged particles.

Exposure: Being exposed to and unprotected from a hazard.

Fatigue: A form of impairment. A feeling of having to push yourself through every day despite feeling constantly weak or exhausted.

Fiber: A small solid fragment or tiny piece of something with a threadlike or elongated shape that may or may not be visible to the naked eye.

Field level hazard assessment: Many people think of these as a site-specific hazard assessment that is performed before work begins, at a site where conditions can change and/or when non-routine work is introduced and when there is no formal hazard assessment already in place for that task or job.

Formal hazard assessment: Many people think of these as a close look at the jobs and tasks of performed to identify the hazards, assess risk, and then develop, implement and monitor hazard controls. Jobs or tasks are broken down into smaller parts and everything is written down and signed be the people who completed it.

Fumes: Very fine, solid particles that are suspended in air, such as in smoke, vapor or gas.

Gas: A gas is a substance that does not exist as a solid or liquid at room temperature.

Gravitational energy: This energy is stored in an object and relates to the object's mass and distance from the ground; this type of energy increases as the object gets further from the ground and/or goes up in weight.

Harassment: An unwelcome behavior that demeans, embarrasses, humiliates, annoys, scares, or verbally abuses someone and is often included as a form of violence.

Hazard: Something that could cause damage or harm to someone or something on your farm.

Hazard assessment: 1. The process of evaluating the hazards identified for a particular job or task. 2. The written or unwritten process of evaluating the hazards and risks of a particular job or task and determining appropriate methods to eliminate or control these hazards.

Hazardous energy: Any electrical, mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, nuclear, thermal, gravitational, or other energy that could cause damage or harm to someone or something.

Health hazard: Anything that has the potential to cause an acute or chronic condition, illness or disease from exposure.

Hydraulic energy: This type of energy involves the movement of a fluid and is stored in a pressurized liquid.

Impairment: A decrease in or loss of function or ability.

Kinetic energy: Energy that is in motion.

Likelihood: The chance or likelihood of a potential risk occurring based on informal measurements such as low, medium, or high.

Mechanical energy: This type of energy results from an object's motion or its position.

Mechanism of injury: The transfer of energy from an external force to an individual's body which results in an injury.

Mist: Tiny droplets suspended in air that are produced by scattering or distributing a liquid over an area or by condensation (when a vapor or gas changes into a liquid form).

Musculoskeletal: Involving both the musculature and skeleton of the body.

Oxygen deficient air: Air with a low oxygen content; Air that contains less than 19.5% oxygen.

Pneumatic energy: This type of energy involves the power and energy in a pressurized liquid.

Potential energy: Energy that is stored.

Radiation energy: Radiation is energy that travels from a source in the form of waves or particles though space or a material at the speed of light.

Risk: The chance or likelihood of injury, damage or loss.

Risk area: An area where there is a risk of injury, illness or damage.

Risk matrix: A tool that provides a visual representation of the risk level by taking into consideration the severity and likelihood of the risk(s).

Risk rating: A number that represents the risk associated with a job or task.

Safety hazard: Anything that has the potential to cause immediate injury.

Severity: The seriousness of something bad or undesired; may be based on informal measurements such as low, medium, or high.

Stress: Any type of change that causes physical, emotional or psychological strain and is the body's response to anything that requires attention or action (WHO, 2021).

Substance misuse: A non-judgmental term that refers to the use of a substance in a way that it is not meant to be used.

Substance use: Any use of alcohol or illicit drugs, the misuse of prescription or over-the-counter drugs or any accepted use of prescription or over-the-counter drugs which results in adverse side-effects or reactions (Government of Canada, 2012).

Thermal energy: This energy is in the form of heat and is sometimes called heat energy; it is the energy in an object or system as a result of its temperature.

Vapor: The gaseous form of a substance that is normally a liquid or a solid at room temperature.

Violence: Any act where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated, or assaulted.

MODULE 3: HAZARD ELIMINATION & CONTROL

Administrative control: These controls change the way people work and involve developing a method or standard way of doing things that minimizes the hazard.

Breakthrough time: The time from when a harmful chemical touches the outsides of a glove (or other type of personal protective equipment) to the time when it breaks through the surface of the glove to reach the skin.

Competent: A person who is "adequately qualified, suitably trained and with sufficient experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a minimal degree of supervision (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2021, s.1(d))."

Degradation: The process of a substance degrading or breaking down a material.

Dexterity: The ability to perform skilled or fine and controlled movements using one's hands.

Elimination: Where the hazard is removed from the job, task or work environment.

Engineering control: Methods to isolate or separate workers from the hazard or to remove the hazard at the source before a worker can come into contact with it.

Hazards: Something that could cause damage or harm to someone or something on your farm.

Hazard control: An action or actions taken to eliminate or minimize the risk of injury, illness or damage.

Hazard elimination: Removing a hazard from the workplace. The most effective and reliable means of addressing a hazard; should be used whenever possible.

Implement: To put something in place.

Interim hazard control: A hazard control measure that is used on a temporary or short-term basis, until a more effective hazard control measure or measures can be put in place.

Permeation: The process of a substance penetrating or passing through a material.

Personal protective equipment (PPE): Anything worn by someone to reduce their exposure to a hazard.

Policy: Written general guidelines that set the direction for accomplishing an outcome and are used to guide decision making.

Procedure: A document with a narrow focus which describes step by step what actions are to be taken (especially when performing a job or task) in order to achieve the desired outcome.

Program: Policies, procedures, tools and resources that in combination, help achieve a health and safety objective.

Reasonably practicable: 1. Meeting a legislated occupational health and safety obligation in a way that is sensible, realistic, and would be thought of as making sense for the facts and conditions by a reasonable person. 2. A recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)?

Residual risk: The level of risk that remains after the hazard control measures have been put in place.

Safe work practice: Written, generalized statements about how to do things; simpler than procedures, they highlight what to do and what not to do so that a job or task can be completed more safely.

Substitution: Where a hazard or the source of the hazard is replaced with something less harmful.

Ventilation: A means of moving fresh air into an area or removing contaminated or stale air from an area.

MODULE 4: INSPECTIONS

Dangerous work refusal: When a worker refuses to perform work because they believe on reasonable grounds that there is an undue hazard present that poses a serious and immediate risk to the worker or another person; typically, the hazard present would not be considered ‘normal’ to the job.

Formal inspection: A planned, relatively thorough inspection of something or a work area which is documented.

Informal inspection: An unplanned, random inspection of something or a work area which may or may not be documented.

Preventative maintenance: The act of performing maintenance activities for the purpose of preventing something bad from happening, such as excessive wear or an unexpected failure.

Preventative maintenance program: A set of procedures and rules for performing regular planned maintenance activities for the purpose of preventing failures and downtime.

Standard: An agreed upon way of doing things to an acceptable level. These can be regulatory, industry, commodity or manufacturers standards. In legislation, these standards referenced are written by organizations or groups of individuals that are regarded as authorities on the subject (i.e., CSA Group, NFPA, ANSI, etc.).

Undue hazard: A hazard that is too great, inappropriate or is unusual for the work being performed; a serious and immediate threat.

MODULE 5: INVESTIGATIONS

Environmental damage: Injury or damage to the natural world, including plants, animals, soil condition, etc.; results in a loss of value or usefulness.

Final investigation report: An incident investigation report that is completed once the incident investigation has been finalized; it is focused on the known facts, the known cause(s) or root cause(s), and what actions have been or are being taken to prevent an incident or near miss like it from happening again.

Illness: An injury that results in disease or a period of sickness and ill health. A loss of health.

Immediate cause: An event, unsafe act or unsafe condition that results in an incident and is typically easy to identify.

Incident: An undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that results, or has the potential to result, in physical to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property.

Incident investigation: An objective examination of an undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that results, or has the potential to result, in physical harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property for the purpose of identify the causes of it and taking corrective actions.

Incident investigation report: A written description of the events leading up to an incident, the facts of the incident, what happened immediately after the incident, the causes of the incident, investigation findings and recommended corrective actions.

Injury: In relation to an incident, it is an incident that results in harm or damage to the body; an injury can range from minor to disabling to fatal. A loss of good physical condition.

Investigation: The act of examining something closely in order to obtain facts and find something out.

Misconduct: Unacceptable or improper behaviour.

Near miss: An undesired, unplanned, unexpected event that has the potential to result in harm to a person, livestock, the environment or damage to property. An incident where there was no injury, illness, or damage. Also thought of as a no loss incident.

Open ended question: A question that cannot be answered with a “yes” or “no” response.

Potential for serious incidents (PSIs): A type of incident (near miss, injury, illness, property damage, environmental damage) that must be reported to Alberta OHS, where there was a likelihood of it causing a serious injury or illness to a person (worksite party, visitor or someone near the worksite), and it is reasonable to believe that corrective action may need to be taken to prevent it from happening again.

Preliminary/internal incident investigation report: An incident investigation report that is completed earlier on following an incident that looks at and records not only the root cause(s), but other factors that may have contributed to the incident as well.

Property damage: Physical harm to a thing (i.e., tool, equipment, machine, building, etc.) that results in a loss of value, usefulness or even function.

Root cause: The most basic cause or causes of something and that if corrected, will prevent or greatly decrease the likelihood of something happening.

Root cause analysis: A detailed and methodical examination of an incident for the purpose of identifying the root cause(s).

Safety non-compliance: Violation of the farm's safety related policies, procedures, rules, etc.

Serious incidents: “Injuries, illnesses and incidents to be reported (to Alberta OHS and include)... (a) an injury, illness or incident that results in the death of a worker, (b) an injury, illness or incident in which there is reason to believe the worker has been or will be admitted to a hospital beyond treatment in an emergency room or urgent care facility, (c) an unplanned or uncontrolled explosion, fire or flood thatcauses a serious injury or illness or that has the potential of causing a serious injury or illness, (d) the collapse or upset of a crane, derrick or hoist, and (e) the collapse or failure of any component of a building or structure necessary for the structural integrity of the building or structure (Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.33)."

Unsafe acts: Actions taken by a person which are not safe or that do not align with policies, procedures, safe work practices, etc. and which can cause an incident.

Unsafe conditions: Conditions that are not safe and do not align with policies, procedures, safe work practices, etc. and which can cause an incident.

MODULE 6: COMMUNICATION, ORIENTATION & TRAINING

Active listening: A form of listening that involves not only paying attention to someone’s words, but also taking in all of the other types of communication that may be occurring for the purpose of understanding.

Applicant: A person applying for something, such as a job on the farm.

Competency: The ability to do something in a way that produces the desired result.

Competency assessments: A tool used to measure a workers skills, knowledge and performance against an established standard and job requirements.

Competent person: A person who is adequately qualified, suitably trained, has the necessary attitude, and has enough experience to safely perform work without or with only a minimal degree of supervision (Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2022, s.1(d)).

Hard skills: Skills that are gained through education and training, including life experience, work experience, or education.

In-house: Done by the farm.

Learning objectives: Statements about what someone is expected to learn by the end of something (i.e., training period, lesson, etc.).

Mentorship: Where you pair a less experienced worker with a more experienced worker; the experienced person provides guidance, support and learning opportunities to the new person.

Needs assessment: Part of planning processes, is used to identify and address 'gaps' between where something is and where it should it be.

Orientation: A process used to familiarize employees or others to a business or company, such as a farm. This is where critical safety related information about the job and farm are communicated.

Safety sensitive position: A work related position where a physical or mental inability to do something due to impairment could result in significant risk of injury to person, others or the environment.

Soft skills: Skills that relate to an individual's habits and traits that shape how they work, such as time management, critical thinking, integrity and communication skills.

Third party training: Training provided by a person or company hired from outside of the farm.

Training: An act or process where skill, knowledge, experience, and feedback is provided to a worker with respect to a particular subject and which requires a practical demonstration by the worker to support that they have acquired the knowledge or skill they have been learning.

Training matrix: Commonly used to show each employee's skill sets, completed training, and certifications that may be current, expiring or out of date.

Training plan: The details of a training program, such as who will be trained and what training will be carried out.

Two-way communication: An exchange of information that flows both ways, such as from the senior leadership down to the workers, and from the workers back up to the senior leadership.

Workgroup orientation: A worker focused orientation that provides the person with a clear understanding of the farm's standards and their role and responsibilities.

Workplace orientation: An orientation that provides a general introduction to health and safety on your farm.

Young worker: An employee under the age of 25 years old.

MODULE 7: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & MANAGEMENT

AED: Automated external defibrillator. A machine used to help someone who is experiencing sudden cardiac arrest.

Communication: An exchange of information between people.

Continuity: Ongoing operations; activities and tasks that support the farm's resilience.

Emergency: A serious, unexpected and unplanned event that poses an immediate risk to health, life, property, or the environment that commonly results in an urgent need for assistance.

Emergency action plan: A documented plan that outlines what to do in an emergency.

Emergency action steps: Acts or measures that make it easier to respond quickly and efficiently manage incidents.

Emergency exercise: A simulated or mock emergencies where farm team members carry out actions, functions and responsibilities expected of them during a real emergency.

Emergency preparedness and management program: Policies, procedures, tools and resources that in combination, help achieve emergency preparedness and management objectives.

Eyewash bottle: A portable device filled with a saline solution used to help remove foreign materials and substances from an eye to prevent long term damage.

Eyewash station: Devices used to help remove foreign materials and substances from the eyes and face to prevent long term damage. May or may not be portable.

Farm building map: A map of a specific farm building that identifies key locations, such as the direction of the muster point, evacuation paths, emergency exits, emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, emergency showers, emergency shut offs, alarm pulls, air horns, locations of hazardous materials, etc..

Farm site map: A map of the farm and farm buildings that identifies key locations, such as muster point(s), emergency equipment, locations of hazardous materials, etc.

Fire extinguisher: A portable device that discharges material for the purpose of extinguishing a small fire.

Global positioning system (GPS): A satellite-based navigation system that uses coordinates commonly expressed as a combination of latitude and longitude. The two formats of these coordinates may be written in an alpha numeric format or in a purely numeric (decimal degree) format.

Mitigation: Tasks and actions taken to reduce the severity of something.

Preparedness: 1. The planned response to an emergency. 2. Ongoing activities, tasks, and systems to develop, put in place, and maintain the emergency preparedness programs capabilities.

Prevention: Tasks and activities performed to prevent an incident from occurring.

Recovery: Activities and tasks performed to return the conditions back to an acceptable level.

Response: Immediate and continuing activities and tasks to manage the effects of an incident that threatens life, property, operations, or the environment.

Rescue plan: A procedure to bring workers out of a dangerous place or situation when they are unable to leave it on their own, and is required for certain types of work, such as when working in confined space or when using fall protection.

Spill kit: A portable kit containing equipment that can be used to contain and clean up certain types of fluids (i.e., oil, coolants, cleaners, etc.). Typically contains sorbent pads, pillows, socks, plugging materials and PPE.

Spill tray: A container placed under containers of hazardous materials or under leaking equipment for the purpose of capturing spills and leaks and protecting the surrounding area/environment from contamination.

Tabletop exercise: Tabletop exercises are conducted in a theoretical or imagined manner; a discussion based mock emergency where an emergency action plan is walked through and tested verbally.

Training: Teaching or developing skills and knowledge that relate to necessary competencies.

Utility terrain vehicle (UTV): A vehicle with automotive type seats that accommodate passengers and has such safety features as a protective roll cage and seat belts.

MODULE 8: HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES & REPRESENTATIVES

Health and safety committee: A group of worker and employer representatives who work with the farm to address health and safety concerns at the worksite.

Health and safety representative: A worker who represents other workers on matters related to health and safety and works with the farm to address health and safety concerns at the worksite.

Terms of reference: A description of the scope, structure, considerations and limitations of a group working toward a shared goal.

Quorum: Having a minimum number of members and/or types of members present at a meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

MODULE 9: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Audit: An audit is an evaluation of an operations health and safety program against an approved standard.

Baseline audit: An audit of all or part of a health and safety program and the results of which will be used as a point of comparison (a baseline) for a future audit and determine if efforts made to improve health and safety have been effective.

Confidential record: A record that contains private information, such as medical information, a birthdate, home address, etc.

Initiative: Actions taken to improve something.

Key performance indicator: Primary indicators of progress towards a desired outcome or goal. These can be both leading and lagging indicators that directly contribute to the farm's health and safety objectives.

Lagging indicators: Reactive safety activities taken to prevent an incident from happening again. These can also be thought of as "outcome" indicators.

Leading indicators: Pro-active and preventative safety activities. These are activities that are carried out as a part of your health and safety program.

Program administration: Documenting, tracking, managing, maintaining and evaluating all parts of the farm's health and safety program.

Quantifiable: A numerical value used to express or measure something.

Record: A form of evidence that provides information about the farm's activities, what it has done and even what it plans to do. Records can include paper documents, digital records, emails, photographs, etc.

Recordkeeping: The management of records, such as what documents are created, where they are stored, how they are used, who can access them, and finally when and how they are disposed of.

Safety meeting minutes: A written record of health and safety information discussed at a safety meeting.

Total Recordable Incident Frequency (TRIF): A standardized, simple calculation used to provide the farm with a quantifiable number that it can use to measure the effectiveness of its health and safety program with.

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