

## Be Safe During Harvesting!

### Main points

1. Implement an Occupational Health and Safety plan
2. Observe your health and safety obligations to your employees
3. Remember, it could happen to you, your workers or family
4. Conduct a risk assessment this year before harvesting
5. Recognise your responsibilities for risk control

### Implementing an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Plan

What you need to develop and regularly monitor are:

- regular **employee induction** sessions
- health and safety hazard and **risk assessment** together with appropriate control measures
- a system of **reporting** OH&S related records
- **emergency procedures** for employees to know how to respond
  - training key staff in workplace First Aid
  - make employees aware of key contacts, ambulance, police
  - consider your emergency response if you are some distance from immediate help.

### Your OH&S Obligations

By law you must (according to the Victorian OH&S Act 1985):

- ◆ **maintain a safe work environment** for your workers, contractors and visitors and not expose other persons to risks to their health and safety from your activities
- ◆ **inform, train and supervise your workers and contractors** to ensure they can work safely and without health risks
- ◆ workers also have **entitlements** to compensations and rehabilitation

### It could happen to you!

#### Case Study One:

A 49-year old potato farmer was working with his brother loading potatoes into a hopper on a semi-trailer. In seeking to secure a tarpaulin over the load he climbed to the top of the hopper where he was caught by a strong and sudden gust of wind. He fell approximately 2.7 meters onto the roadway, sustaining fatal injuries.

#### Case Study Two:

It was at the end of the day. The harvester had to finish unloading and be cleaned for the next day. A worker on the harvester identified some plant trash in the star rollers. She began to remove the trash when a fellow worker called her to come and help with the unloading. Before she knew what had happened, the rollers grabbed the plant trash and her arm right up to her shoulder. She sustained severe lacerations and contusions to her arm and shoulder.

- ◆ **notify WorkSafe Victoria immediately** on 132 360 of any **workplace death or serious injury**, or any incident that could have caused death or serious injury.

## Be aware of your risks this year when harvesting!

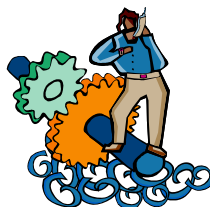
As the harvesting period commences it is important to be aware of the **physical hazards and risks** associated with harvesting around your farm. It is critical that you assess each risk and ensure that you have put in place plans to prevent any OH&S incident from occurring. Use a **Hierarchy of Controls** aimed at eliminating hazards. Start with **Eliminating (E)** the process, then **Substituting (S)** a safer process, **Engineering (En)** a safer machine, then **Administration (A)**. **Personal Protective Gear (P)** should only be considered after the other controls have been tried.

Item/ Process	Hazards	Who is at risk	Possible Likely Outcome	Possible Controls
Mechanical harvesters	Entanglement	Operator, Workers Pickers, Visitors	Crush injury, lacerations, amputation, death, contusions, entanglement injury	Guards(En), training (A)
	Noise	Operator, Workers	Work related deafness	Engineer noise out, buy quieter machine, (E) training (A), hearing protection (P)
	Ergonomic	Operator	Back injury	Ensure suitable seating, regular rest breaks (A)
	Clearing blockages	Operator, Workers	Crush injury of fingers, hands, arms, lacerations, contusions	Machine automatic switch off when guard is removed (En), training
Loading Unloading	Slips, trips, falls, working at heights	Workers, Pickers	Sprains, strains, fractures of ankles, feet, back, wrists, death	Maintain low risk area to unload/load(En), reduce fatigue (A), appropriate foot/clothing wear, fall protection fitted (P)
Picking Grading	Manual handling	Workers, Pickers	Sprains, strains, fractures, over use injuries	Ensure workers are 'job fit', provide lifting aids (En), conduct training, provide regular breaks to prevent over use (A)
	Flying particles/ dust	Operator, workers	Foreign body in eye, respiratory effects	Plan work sensibly – monitor environmental conditions (A), provide dust masks, respirators if necessary, safety glasses (P)
	UV/solar radiation	Operator, workers	Sunburn, skin cancer, dehydration	Plan work sensibly – monitor environmental conditions, provide sunscreen, hats, glasses, cool water, shady place during rest periods (A)

### Who's responsible for Risk Control?

The **employer** is ultimately responsible – however the risks are lessened through:

1. task training and induction
2. elimination of hazards at the source
3. regular safety chats between all workers
4. risk assessment



The **employee** also has a responsibility to care for their own actions and those of others.

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### What else can you do?

- Keep a **register** of OH&S related information ie. a record of injuries, hazard identification, risk assessments, with dates of any training or inductions.
- Get to know your **Workcover** insurer to ensure smooth facilitation of any Workcover claims
- If a worker is off injured for more than 5 days, have a **Rehabilitation Plan** prepared.
- Veg Cheque is in the process of putting together a grower-orientated **OH&S Course** designed to assist growers in developing their own farm OH&S plans. If you are interested in participating in this course contact your local Veg Cheque officer who can organise an OH&S course for your local area.
- Contact your local **WorkSafe Victoria** office

For more information please contact your local Veg Cheque facilitator.

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