



COMMUNITY

4-H & YOUTH

ENVIRONMENT

AGRICULTURE

FOOD

CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

EXTENSION

CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Farm Worker Health

Farm Worker Health, Safety and First Aid

Farm Worker Health

Ill and injured workers can transfer pathogens (bacteria, viruses and parasites that can make people sick) to food via their hands or through direct contact with body fluids. Ill workers can also make other workers sick. Establish a policy so that workers with the following symptoms stay home or do jobs that do not require contact with food, food contact surfaces, or other people.

- Vomiting or diarrhea (no food contact until at least 24 hours have passed since vomiting and/or diarrhea ended)
- Jaundice (yellowing of the eyes and skin), a sign of hepatitis
- Sore throat with a fever or unexplained significant illness
- Infected cuts and burns with pus on hands or wrists that cannot be properly covered, (defined by FDA as a waterproof cover like a finger cot and a disposable glove, or a dry, durable, tight-fitting bandage). Because it can be difficult to secure bandages on hand wounds while working, consider reassignment to non-food handling jobs.



Farm Worker Safety

Agricultural workers may be at higher risk of injury and illness due to exposure to weather, machinery, chemicals and animals. Assure worker health and safety by taking the following precautions:

- Provide shade, rest periods and drinking water, particularly on hot days. Never underestimate the weather! For lightning precautions see: <http://farmsafevt.wordpress.com/page/2/> (scroll down to “Never Underestimate Lightning”).
- Train workers to properly use tools and equipment. Assure all tractors have Rollover Protective Structures (see sidebar).
- Train workers on the proper handling and management of animals.
- Seek prompt medical attention for accidental chemical exposures. Have emergency and poison center numbers posted in chemical storage areas. For an emergency dial 911. For the poison center dial 1-800-222-1222.

What is a Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS)?

A rollover protective structure is a roll bar **and** a seat belt.

ROPS are 99% effective in preventing deaths and serious injuries from rollovers.

The Vermont Rebates for Roll Bars Program offers farmers 70% of costs up to \$765.00 in rebates for roll bar kits. For more information call **1-877-767-7748** or go to www.ROPSR4U.com.

Farm Work First Aid

Keep first aid kits in farm vehicles, pack shed, barns, and other locations on the farm where chemicals, tools or equipment that could inflict injury are used. The contents of your first aid kits may vary somewhat by location. For example, in areas where chemicals are used, include sterile eye wash. Field or truck first aid kits should contain instant cold packs. Check kits regularly to restock used items and replace items that are out of date. Purchase a ready-made first aid kit or make your own. First aid kits should, at a minimum, include:

- Band-Aids
- Absorbent compress dressings
- Sterile gauze pads
- Adhesive cloth tape
- Gloves
- Roller bandages
- Antiseptic wipes
- Antibiotic ointment
- Scissors and tweezers
- First aid manual
- Sterile saline
- Hydrocortisone ointment

Wound Care

Consider the following when managing wounds:

- Clean the wound with potable water or sterile saline.
- Cover the wound with gauze or a bandage and apply gentle pressure to stop bleeding.
- Seek medical attention when:
 - *the wound edges are jagged or cannot be brought together
 - *bleeding cannot be controlled
 - *wounds are dirty or contain fragments of foreign materials
 - *the injury is a puncture wound or deep cut and the worker has not been vaccinated for tetanus in the last 5 years
- Discard any produce that may have been contaminated with blood. Disinfect tools or surfaces containing blood with 1:10 solution of household bleach (follow label instructions).
- Wear gloves over bandaged hand wounds when handling produce, assuming the wound is not severe, has been cleaned and bleeding has completely stopped. Because it can be difficult to secure bandages on hand wounds while working, consider reassignment to non-food handling jobs.

For more information on First Aid Kits visit:

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit/anatomy

Mayo Clinic www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-kits/FA00067

For Safety Posters visit:

OSHA

www.personnelconcepts.com/osha-safety-posters/

UVM Extension www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/production/farm_safety/Emergency%20Resource%20Sheet%20011813.pdf



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