

MEDIA GUIDELINES

AGRICULTURAL SAFETY

Childhood Agricultural Safety Network Members

AgriSafe Network
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs
Canadian Agricultural Safety Association
Farm Safety 4 Just Kids
Manitoba Labour and Immigration
Migrant Clinicians Network
National Center for Farmworker Health
National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety
National Education Center for Agricultural Safety
New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health
Pacific Northwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center
Progressive Agriculture Foundation
Safe Kids Canada
Safe Kids USA
Washington Department of Labor and Industries
Workplace Safety & Prevention Services



Childhood Agricultural Safety Network

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Web: www.childagsafety.org
Phone: 1-800-662-6900
Email: nccrahs@mcrf.mfldclin.edu

This 2010 document draws from the Farm Safety Fact Sheet published by the US Department of Agriculture/Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (1996).

This work is partially supported through a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) grant #5U540H009568-02.

The agricultural stories we tell in the media can make life safer for farm and ranch families and workers. At the same time, while not intentional, what we write, say, and the images we show, can perpetuate and even increase unsafe farm practices.

To help minimize unsafe practices, the Childhood Agricultural Safety Network has compiled the do's and don'ts provided here as reminders for all of us. Following them can help each of us be confident that we are doing our part for farm safety.



PHOTOS and GRAPHICS

DO show tractors and other farm equipment being maintained and operated safely. That includes rollover protection structures (ROPS) on tractors and proper guards in place on PTOs and other moving parts.

DO show children doing supervised age-appropriate chores.

DO show working individuals wearing proper fitting personal protective equipment appropriate for the tasks they are performing. When depicting workers with machinery, make sure they are not wearing loose fitting clothing or anything (jewelry, drawstrings, bandana) that could become entangled.

DO be aware of the background. Is it free of clutter? Do buildings and equipment appear to be well-maintained? A clean, well-ordered background conveys an environment of safety and attention to detail.



DO NOT show individuals riding on wagons, in the backs of pickup trucks or as extra riders on tractors.

DO NOT show persons climbing to heights without fall protection, stair or platform guarding.

DO NOT show workers leaning over or feeding materials into machines with moving parts or blades.

DO NOT show children under 14 driving any motorized farm vehicle.

DO NOT show children riding on adults' laps on ATVs or lawn tractors/riding mowers.

DO NOT show children in proximity to large animals unless appropriate barriers are evident.

SPECIFIC TO CHILDREN/YOUTH

Curiosity, size, and lack of knowledge and training can put children and youth at greater injury risk than adults. **It's important to depict (visually/textually) children and youth in safe situations. If they're doing farm or ranch chores, make certain the tasks are developmentally appropriate.**

Photos of children are often used as “attention getters,” but sometimes “cute” is unsafe. Examples to avoid include a child playing in a grain bin, in close proximity to an adult animal, or riding an ATV without a helmet.



Emphasize the adult's role in prevention. This can include: 1) providing young children with a safe play area, instead of allowing them to play on the worksite; and 2) providing sufficient training and personal protective equipment for youth old enough to help. Adult supervision is important, although supervision alone is an insufficient means of preventing injury.

TEXT

DO use the word “incident” rather than “accident.” Evidence confirms that injuries are both predictable and preventable. “Accident” implies that the incident was an “act of God” or “bad luck.”

DO explain safety violations and/or prevention measures. Grisly details of an injury are only part of the story. Make the story a teachable moment. Sometimes an injury can be prevented with a simple, inexpensive step, such as ensuring a power takeoff unit (PTO) shield is in its proper place.

DO follow up on long-term implications of a serious injury. Emphasizing the “courage” of a trauma victim during immediate recovery, and the outpouring of goodwill following an event, can overshadow long-term implications such as economic hardships, post-traumatic stress, and/or multiple follow-up surgeries.

DO depict production agriculture for what it is: an intense, high risk industry made even more stressful by unpredictable factors such as weather.

DO include information on safety resources and programs that are available to readers.

DO NOT say that a child killed in a farm incident, “died doing what he loved,” or that he, “loved to help daddy.” This implies that it's OK to allow a child into an agricultural worksite.



DO NOT attribute mishaps on the unpredictable nature of animals, the failure of machinery or the existence of other inanimate objects such as a protruding rock or a ditch that gives way.

DO NOT use “freak accident” when describing a traumatic event. Although an adverse event may seem unique, injury data will likely reveal that many similar events have occurred.

DO NOT suggest that unsafe practices are acceptable just because they are family “tradition.”