

Views from VanDeWalle

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National Farm Safety & Health Week

Did you know? Each year since 1944, the third week of September has been recognized as [National Farm Safety & Health Week](#). This recognition has been an annual promotion initiated by the National Safety Council and has been proclaimed as such by each sitting U.S. President since Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the first document. This year's theme is "No one can take your place."

Fall harvest is one of the busiest times of the year which can equate into one of the most dangerous seasons of the year for agriculture. Long hours are spent in the combine and grain cart which can mean less sleep. The 2019 data for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the agricultural sector is still the most dangerous in America with 573 fatalities, or an equivalent of 23.1 deaths per 100,000 workers. The most common causes of fatal accidents are highway transportation and contact with equipment.

The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center has five webinars during the highly anticipated National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 15-21, 2024. The webinar series will cover a diverse range of topics, each aimed at addressing specific safety and health challenges faced in the agricultural sector with a youth-focus. Led by industry experts and seasoned professionals, these webinars will provide invaluable insights and tips that can help make a difference in preventing incidents and ensuring the well-being of farmers, families, and youth in rural communities. To register for the webinars, go to:

<https://www.necasag.org/nationalfarmsafetyandhealthweek/>

The daily topics for the webinars include:

- Monday, September 16, 2024 - Equipment and Rural Roadway Safety
- Tuesday, September 17, 2024 - Health and Wellness
- Wednesday, September 18, 2024 – Generations of Farming
- Thursday, September 19, 2024 - Confined Spaces
- Friday, September 20, 2024 – Reporting Ag Injuries

Some things one can do now as we prepare for harvest are ensuring you have a fully charged and proper fire extinguisher in the combine. With the dry conditions we've had, conditions increase the chances of combine fires. One of the most common entanglement hazards is PTO (power take-off) units. Within three-fourths second (the average time it takes to react), more than one complete person will have been wrapped around the shaft before he or she could jump out of the way. Always keep all safety shields and guards in place and always stay clear of moving parts to avoid this hazard. One should also disengage equipment and shut off the engine before working near a PTO and do NOT wear loose-fitting clothes, dangly jewelry, long shoelaces, or scarves near them.