



The Cultivator

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Gold Star Grower

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Creating and Promoting a Culture of Safety

The N.C. Department of Labor's Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau is finishing work on a DVD to help North Carolina growers create a safety program for their individual farms. Farm size in North Carolina ranges from small farms that solely employ family members to large farms that employ hundreds of workers. North Carolina had 50,400 farms in 2011, with an average farm size of 169 acres. An appropriations rider to the Occupational Safety and Health Act exempts farms that employ fewer than 11 workers and that do not provide migrant housing from OSHA enforcement activities.



Regardless of the size and scope of your operation, all employees deserve a safe place to work. For those employers with 11 or more employees, or those who choose to provide temporary housing for their agricultural workers, the following safety standards do apply. Preoccupancy housing inspections conducted by the Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau provide initial consultation, which may include training ideas and safety materials.

Our belief is that all agriculture-related illnesses, injuries and fatalities are preventable. As farm owner and operator, it is your responsibility to prevent employee injuries and illnesses. It is essential that you first assess your farming operation to identify all potential hazards and take steps to eliminate or protect against these hazards.

- Once you've identified hazards, you must set up a control system to eliminate them.
- You must also train your employees, encouraging discussion and rewarding excellence.
- You should also document your safety program, including maintaining equipment records, worksite inspections and training records.

The video being developed begins by conducting worksite hazard analysis, covering agricultural hazards that have proven to be fatal or injurious on North Carolina farms.

Many farm accidents and fatalities involve machinery. Tractors, tobacco harvesters and forklifts are useful labor-saving machines, but if they are not maintained or are not properly operated, serious accidents can happen. Previous videos have discussed safe use of tobacco balers, harvesters and forklifts.

In 2011, two of the eight agricultural fatalities in North Carolina were tractor-related. Tractor accidents remain the leading source of death and injury on farms. These deaths, as well as injuries that occur in nonfatal tractor incidents, inflict an incalculable toll on individuals and families who suffer the loss or witness the pain of a loved one. Every tractor incident also entails quantifiable costs in terms of emergency medical services, direct and indirect health care costs, lost productivity and earnings, and insurance claims.

At minimum, agricultural employers, using a written checklist should ensure that:

- Tractors have regular safety inspections.
- Employees receive annual training in the operation of the tractor.
- Employees are prohibited from operating unsafe vehicles.
- Clean and reflective slow-moving vehicle signs are used where required.

Most tractors manufactured after 1976 are equipped with rollover protection structures (ROPS), an important component of tractor safety. Exceptions to this include low-profile tractors used inside agricultural buildings and tractors used with mounted equipment incompatible with this structure. Even with ROPS, operators must use seat belts.

Other safety topics addressed in the new video include Machine Guarding; Electrical Hazards; Lockout/Tagout; Slips, Trips and Falls; and Farm Equipment on Public Roads.

Machine Guarding

- Ensure that all machines are properly maintained and properly guarded.
 - ♦ Common machine hazards around moving parts include pinch points where two parts move together and at least one of them moves in a circle.
 - ♦ Wrap points where any exposed component rotates.

When guards cannot be provided, operators must avoid contact with hands or clothing in pinch point areas. For example, crop cutting devices cannot be totally guarded to keep hands and feet

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Gold Star Grower and Gold Star Flag Programs

The Gold Star Grower Program

The North Carolina Gold Star Grower Program began in the early 1990s as a response to the N.C. Department of Labor's inspection process. Inspectors noticed that some housing was always in great shape. Some growers provided housing exceeding the requirements of the Migrant Housing Act: installing telephones or providing appliances such as microwave ovens and freezers. Desiring to acknowledge these growers' efforts, the bureau started the Gold Star Grower Program.

It began with simple thank-you notes, blue cards with a gold star in the corner, sent to those whose housing met all the requirements of the act. In 2007 the Legislature amended the act to allow growers who received two consecutive stars to be eligible to conduct their own housing inspections the following year. They must attend the annual Gold Star Growers' luncheon, continue to register their housing, and have water and septic systems inspected. By conducting their own housing inspections, they save time and gain convenience. In January we will hold our 19th Annual Gold Star Luncheon.

The Gold Star Flag Program

If you are already a Gold Star Grower, you know and follow the regulations. The next level is earning the Gold Star Flag, which shows that you have devised ways to continuously promote a culture of safety on your farm. Gold Star Flag recipients have identified hazards, trained their employees and completed farm safety inspections. They follow and exceed the regulations pertaining to the agricultural workplace.

This may mean that you hold weekly or daily safety briefings—"tailgate talks"—to discuss current conditions. It also means conducting annual on-site training so that employees can become familiar with farm practices and machinery prior to use. Heat stress prevention may be one such focus.

To earn the Gold Star Flag, a grower needs to create a culture of safety. This means that in addition to following the required occupational safety and health standards, you have taken additional steps to promote a culture of safety. This may mean that you hold weekly or daily safety briefings—"tailgate talks"—to discuss current conditions. It also means conducting annual on-site training so that employees can become familiar with farm practices and machinery prior to use. Heat stress prevention may be one such focus. The Gold Star Grower Program and the Gold Star Flag Program are partnerships that address the health and safety of the agricultural workforce by viewing it from multiple perspectives: grower, farmworker and safety professional.



Gold Star Grower



A Shared Responsibility

Deborah Stewart, human resources manager at Berry Nursery, a Gold Star Flag site in Wilson County, explains her view of safety management:

We provide both excellent on-site training and benefits. As a Gold Star Flag site, we know the rules and follow them. But when I talk to our employees, I make sure that they know their role in our safety program. I ask them, "Who is responsible

for safety at your farm? I tell them "YOU ARE!" Each person who comes to work is responsible for ensuring that they do not get hurt at work and that no one else working gets hurt. They might say, "I just come to work and do as I'm told. I have no control."

I explain, "You need to come to work rested and able to do your job. **You** need to plan how to make that happen, get enough sleep the night before, bring a good lunch so **you** can work smart. After **you** get to work, **you** decide how fast to drive the tractor, **you** decide if you need help lifting something or doing something, **you** decide to wear the required PPE, **you** decide if you are going to follow the company's safety policies, **you** see things that need repaired, and **you** decide if you will say something when **you** see another worker doing something that might hurt them."

WOW! There are sure a lot of "YOUs" in those statements! If everyone that works here would make the right choices, our incident rates would surely reflect that safety responsibility belongs to each of us, top to bottom.

The successful Gold Star Flag candidate must:

- have owned or operated housing that meets the criteria for the Gold Star Grower award for a minimum of two years
- have conducted their own housing inspection at least once
- know and promote occupational safety and health standards such as:
 - ♦ providing safe and approved storage of equipment and chemicals
 - ♦ providing a written or oral safety program governing use of pesticides, injury prevention and worker training
 - ♦ using and maintaining appropriate field sanitation
 - ♦ ensuring that machines are guarded as required

In addition, any Gold Star Flag site will:

- include on-site training as part of annual farm schedule
- ensure that there is someone trained in first aid, CPR who is available on-site
- hold regular safety meetings
- provide certification for all personnel handling pesticides
- have an injury and accident record below the average rate for the industry (In 2010, the DART rate was 1.7 for agriculture, the same rate as the state's overall DART rate.)

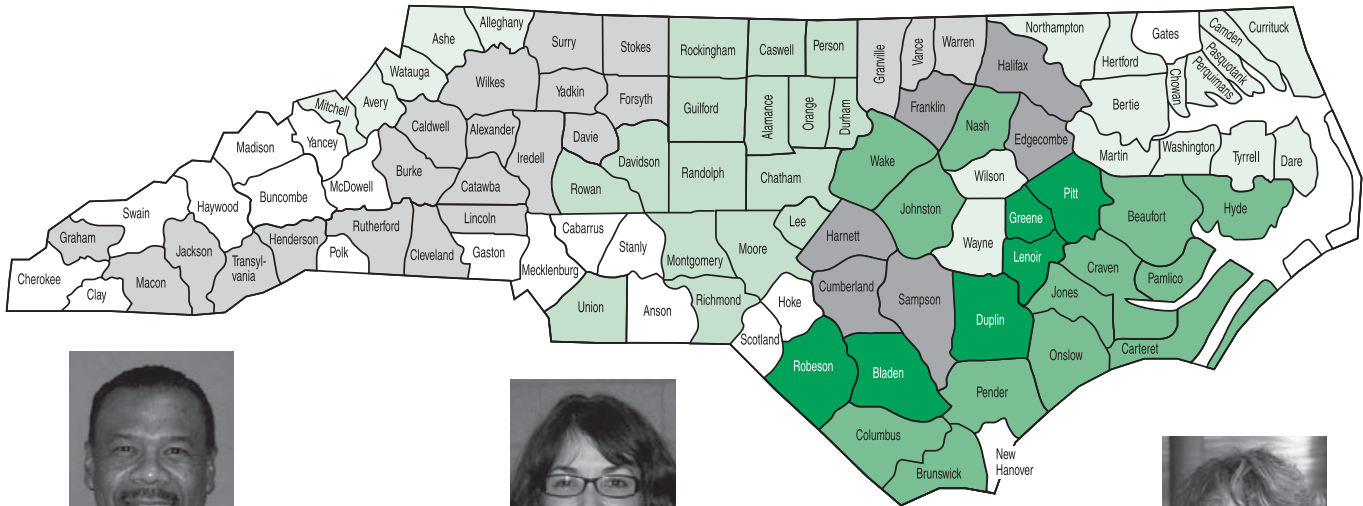
Please visit our website for additional information on the Gold Star Grower Flag Program: www.nclabor.com/ash/goldstar.htm.

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Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau

2013 Districts



"I inspect housing units and the farming workplace to ensure that workers are not exposed to health risks and unsafe work environments and practices."

ASH compliance officer
Larry Watts ★



"Don't assume that just because your employees have done the same task year after year that they know how to do it safely. Always train your employees about farm safety and do it every year."

ASH compliance officer
Johana Ramirez ★



"Regular post-occupancy inspections by the grower and ongoing maintenance are key."

ASH compliance officer
Lauren Norton ★



"I'll inspect your housing for the minimum standards. I want you to tell me where you go beyond the minimum standards. Try to improve your housing conditions in at least one area each year: Your workers will appreciate it."

ASH compliance officer
Alan Fortner ★



"My top priority for preoccupancy housing inspections is to ensure that the employer is providing safe and compliant housing for workers."

ASH compliance officer
Phillip Sykes ★



"Meet your inspector for the preoccupancy inspection. This is your opportunity to ask questions about the standards and seek assistance if needed."

ASH compliance officer
Beth Rodman ★



Agricultural Safety and Health Bureau

Happy Holidays

Creating and Promoting a Culture of Safety

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out and still perform their intended function. NEVER attempt to hand-feed materials into moving feed rollers. Also, do not service or unclog a machine while it is operating or the engine is running.

Power-take-off shafts, known as PTOs, are widely used on farms. They transfer power from tractors to trailing implements. They can also be very dangerous. They rotate at speeds up to 1,000 rpm and can instantly pull you in by entangling clothing, limbs, jewelry or hair.

Electrical Hazards

Working around overhead power lines is one of the more common sources of shock or electrocution in agricultural operations. Accidental contact with live overhead power lines can kill or cause someone serious injuries. Farm workers are also harmed when a person or object gets too close to a line and a flashover occurs. Work involving tall vehicles or long equipment is particularly risky. Such equipment includes combines, sprayer booms, grain augers, materials handlers, tipper vehicles, ladders, irrigation pipes, polytunnels, and crop storage equipment such as balers and stackers.

At a minimum, always treat overhead power lines as if they were bare. There may be no insulation or inadequate insulation due to time and weather. Determine equipment clearance heights and maintain a clearance of 10 feet between power lines and tops of equipment. Electrocutions may occur even if actual contact is not made with the line. The greater the line voltage, the further electricity is able to “jump” to a ground conductor. Prohibit storage or upending of irrigation pipe within 100 feet of power lines.

Lockout/Tagout

Before employees service equipment, it is critical that they know that the equipment could start or move unexpectedly. To prevent inadvertent startup, re-energizing or release of uncontrolled hazardous energy, it is essential that lockout procedures are

implemented and enforced. When most people think of uncontrolled hazardous energy, they immediately think of electricity, but there are other sources of energy that can be just as hazardous. These energy sources include thermal, chemical, pneumatic, hydraulic, mechanical and gravitational.

Slips, Trips and Falls

Slips, trips and falls are the No. 1 safety hazard both at work and at home. Often ignored and overlooked, slips, trips and falls are responsible for one in every five work-related injuries.

No riders should be permitted on tractors, trucks, or other self-powered or towed equipment unless a safe seat or workstation is provided.

Workers at high elevations, such as ladders, platforms or catwalks, should be protected from falling by some kind of fall protective device. This can be a protective cage, a lifeline, lanyard, safety belt or harness. There are numerous devices on the market.

Same-level falls are generally slips or trips. Injury results when the individual hits a walking or working surface or strikes some other object during the fall. Over 60 percent of elevated falls are from less than 10 feet.

Falls kill more than 12,000 people a year, about 1,200 of them at work. That makes them the biggest cause of workplace fatalities after motor vehicle accidents.

Farm Equipment on Public Roads

Farm equipment is legally entitled to travel on most roads in North Carolina. It is not allowed to be driven on the Interstate highways. Make sure that your tractors and other slow moving farm vehicles have the appropriate lighting and a slow moving sign visible to those travelling behind them.

Our goal is to provide you with the materials and information you need so that you can customize a training program for your employees that makes sense. This DVD helps make that a reality.

What's the Law?

Are agricultural employers required to maintain records of injuries and illness that occur on the farm?

If you employed 10 or fewer employees at all times during the previous year, you do not need to keep OSH injury and illness records. Regardless of the number of employees, you must orally report any workplace incidents that result in a fatality or the hospitalization of three or more employees.

How do I report workplace deaths or workplace incidents that results in in-patient hospitalization of three or more employees and is there a time limit?

You must report these incidents within eight hours by calling the OSH Division at 1-800-625-2267 or 919-807-2796 during working hours and by calling the State Capitol Police at 919-733-3333 after hours.

If I am subject to the recording requirements, do I have to record every injury or illness that occurs on my farm?

No, you only need to record those injuries/illnesses that are work-related and meet the general recording criteria. An injury or illness involving death, days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, medical treatment beyond first aid, or loss of consciousness.

What about injuries that occur at the labor camp, are those recordable?

If the person was not engaged in a work activity, the injury would not be recordable. **Note:** Heart attacks resulting in death, regardless of whether they occur at the labor camp or on the farm, must be reported within eight hours.

Do I have to maintain injury and illness records for seasonal workers as well as year-round employees?

Yes, injury and illness records must be maintained for all employees.

What about migrant workers who work for a farm labor contractor (FLC)?

Who maintains those records? Agricultural employers who use the services of an FLC are often considered joint employers with the FLC. Joint employment means that an individual is employed by two or more persons at the same time. Where a joint employment relationship exists, each of the employers must ensure that the requirements of all applicable OSH standards are met. If either party fails to comply with the law, both parties may be held liable. Generally it is the host employer (farmer) who maintains the injury and illness records for all employees.

Are there specific forms that I must use to record injuries and illnesses?

Yes, you must use OSHA 300, 300A, and 301 forms or equivalent forms. The 300 form is called the Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, the 300-A is the Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, and the 301 is called the Injury and Illness Incident Report. Many employers use an insurance form instead of the 301 Incident Report. This is fine as long as the insurance form includes all the information required on the 301.

Where do I get these forms?

You can download these forms at www.nclabor.com/osha/etta/2004forms.pdf or call 919-807-2923 to request copies. If you maintain a labor camp, you can request copies from the inspector during your pre-occupancy inspection.

How long do I keep these forms?

You must save the forms for five years following the end of the calendar year that these records cover. **Note:** You must post a copy of the annual summary (300A) in a conspicuous place from Feb. 1 until April 30.

Do I have to provide government officials with access to these records?

Yes, when an authorized government representative asks for the records, you must provide copies of the records within four business hours.