

# Fact Sheet

## Agriculture-related safety training

Minnesota OSHA (MNOSHA) establishes and enforces workplace safety regulations, including regulations on safety training, for nearly all industry types, including agriculture. This fact sheet summarizes some (but not all) of the more noteworthy training requirements for employees in agricultural settings.

### Introduction

This fact sheet describes several (*but not all*) OSHA requirements which may apply to individual agricultural operations throughout the University system (based on the nature of the specific work performed at any given location on any given day).

It is NOT the intent of this fact sheet to describe all requirements under each of these regulations. Rather, its intent is to summarize only the requirements under each regulation which pertain to training.

### Minnesota Employee Right to Know Act (MERTKA) (ref. MN Rules Chapter 5206)

The MERTKA act applies to any employer whose employees are exposed or potentially exposed to hazardous substances, harmful physical agents (such as heat, noise, ionizing radiation, or non-ionizing radiation), or infectious agents.

While there are certain exceptions in the regulation for farms, they rarely apply to University farms, at least not to any significant extent.

In summary, the MERTKA act requires all covered employees to receive training on general topics

such as chemical labeling, Material Safety Data Sheets, etc. In addition, employees must receive training on the specific hazards to which they are exposed. Training must focus on hazard recognition and exposure prevention.

In agricultural settings, these hazards may include (but are not limited to) pesticides, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, methane, diesel exhaust, fuels, heat, noise, insect bites, poisonous plants, etc.

Training is required at the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter. Training must be properly documented.

### Grain Handling (ref. 29 CFR 1910.272)

The grain handling regulation applies to any employer whose employees work in a grain handling facility, such as grain elevators, feed mills, flour mills, rice mills, etc.

Training must consist of general safety precautions including the recognition and prevention of hazards related to dust accumulations and ignition sources. Employees must also receive instruction on specific procedures and safety practices such as equipment cleaning, clearing choked legs, etc.

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Employees who perform specialized tasks such as grain bin entry require additional training.

Training is required at the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter. Training must be properly documented.

## **Bobcat/Skid Steer Training**

There are currently no specific OSHA general industry regulations that clearly and specifically apply to bobcat/skid steer training.

However, this should not be construed to mean that this topic is entirely unregulated. MNOSHA can require training on almost any topic through the application of the general duty clause, the AWAIR law, letters of interpretation, compliance directives, etc. Also, the use of skid steers in construction is regulated in the “operation of mobile earth-moving equipment” regulation (MN 5207.1000)

Employees who operate skid steers or bobcats must have training that complies with OSHA requirements for forklift training (this should not be interpreted to mean that OSHA considers skid steers to be forklifts. They do not). These requirements are very specific and can be found at 29 CFR 1910.178(l). In summary, the employee must receive training related to the operation of the skid steer (i.e., safety features, load capacities, controls/instrumentation, etc.). The employee must also receive training on the environmental hazards (the workplace) and the applicable

portions of the OSHA regulation (i.e., “rules of the road”).

Training is required at the time of initial assignment. There is no specific requirement for annual refresher training, but the operator’s performance must be evaluated at least every three years. Retraining is required whenever the operator’s performance indicates a need for retraining - for example, if he or she is involved in an accident, or is observed operating in an unsafe manner. Retraining is also required when there is a significant change in the type(s) of units to be operated, or in the workplace environment.

## **Rollover Protection Structure (ROPS) for Tractors (ref. 29 CFR 1928.51)**

Any employee who operates an agricultural tractor must receive training on tractor safety.

At a minimum, the training must include the information included in appendix A of subpart C of the agricultural rules. The information in this appendix is extremely brief and general. The training must also include any other relevant safety information and precautions dictated by the work at hand.

Training is required at the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter. Training must be properly documented.

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## **Guarding of farm field equipment, farmstead equipment and cotton gins (ref. 29 CFR 1928.57)**

626-5008 or [uohs@umn.edu](mailto:uohs@umn.edu), or see the website at <http://www.ohs.umn.edu>.

This regulation applies to any employer whose employees work with farm field or farmstead equipment.

Each covered employee must receive instruction on the safe operation and servicing of all covered equipment. Much like the ROPS training described above, the required content of the training is quite brief and general.

Training is required at the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter. Training must be properly documented.

## **Field Sanitation (ref. 29 CFR 1928.110)**

This regulation applies to any agricultural establishment where 11 or more employees are engaged in hand-labor operations in the field on any given day.

Employees must be trained on the importance of various good hygiene practices, including but not limited to proper hydration, hand washing, proper sanitation, etc.

The regulation does not specify if training is required at the time of initial assignment, or if annual refreshers are required.

## **Questions**

If you have questions on this topic, please contact the Office of Occupational Health and Safety at (612)