

## **Does Your Farm Have An Emergency Plan?**

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Working safely on the farm is important. Minimizing risks, using personal protective equipment, and doing jobs the right way every time can help workers avoid illness and injury. Still, emergency situations can happen when you least expect it, and the first few minutes are crucial. It's important for farm owners and managers to have a plan and ensure that all workers know what to do in a fire, power outage, pesticide exposure, illness, injury or other sudden emergencies.

Every farm should have an emergency plan outlining:

- evacuation procedures
- workers responsible for ensuring the safety of others
- communication and who to contact
- a safe meeting area

Having a clearly established emergency plan and reviewing it with all employees can help make first response faster and less confusing in a fire, injury, sudden illness or other emergency situations. If everyone on the farm knows what to do and where to go, it will be easier to account for all workers and ensure their safety.

There are a few easy ways you can help protect yourself and your workers in the event of an emergency. Post important phone numbers and directions to the farm near every phone, and keep this information up-to-date. Have supplies readily available: first aid kits, fire extinguishers and personal protective equipment are a small investment that could help save a life.

First aid kits and supplies can be lifesaving tools. However, even the best first aid kit is useless if no one knows how to use it properly. It is crucial to have your workers trained so they know what to do in an emergency. Untrained and inexperienced first responders can themselves become victims. To avoid this, all workers should know basic emergency response skills such as calling for help, ensuring that the scene is safe, assessing the victim, and using a fire extinguisher. Also, workers should be trained in first aid and CPR. Having a trained first responder on-site to provide this care can help make a huge difference in the outcome of the victim.

Being prepared and having trained workers can improve your chances of a good outcome in an emergency. Review your farm emergency plan annually, and go over safety procedures with new workers when they come on board.

Make sure all your workers know the location of the following:

- fire extinguishers
- machinery shut-off switches
- emergency exits

- first aid kits
- phones or two-way radios
- emergency phone numbers
- personal protective equipment (PPE)
- designated “safe meeting place”
- fuel and pesticide storage areas

Although immediate care given by the first responder can make the difference between life and death in an emergency, advanced medical care is critical. Make sure someone knows what to do until the ambulance or fire department arrives, and have them stay with the victim and give first aid. Send someone else to call 911, and get help on the way as soon as possible.

Remember, having a plan and being prepared may mean the difference between life and death for the victim. NYCAMH offers services that can help you prevent and be ready for an emergency situation on the farm. We are proud to provide the following for New York farmers and growers:

- free on-farm safety training in English and Spanish
- bilingual print materials including posters, farm safety brochures, and emergency contact information cards
- farm emergency response trainings
  - fire safety and extinguisher use
  - CPR and first aid certification
  - first response to farm emergencies

These free services are made available by grant funding from the New York State Department of Labor and the New York State Department of Health. For more information or to schedule training, please contact me at 800-343-7527, ext 291 or email me at [ameyerhoff@nycamh.com](mailto:ameyerhoff@nycamh.com). NYCAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare Network, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury.