



Falls on the Farmstead

Falls are the most common accidents in agriculture, yet they are perhaps the most difficult to guard against. Falls often result in serious injuries that require hospital emergency room treatment or untimely death. The best weapon against unintentional falls is staying alert. Your chances of falling are increased by haste, fatigue, emotional upset, illness, alcohol and drugs. To combat injuries due to falls, the National Safety Council recommends the following measures for the farmstead.

- Keep all stairs, floors and working surfaces in good repair and as free as possible of mud, manure or snow. Use de-icers on outside stairs, walks or entrances, etc.
- Provide sturdy hand rails where needed. Every stairway should have one.
- Keep your workshop and other working areas clean and free of slipping and tripping hazards. Good housekeeping is a fall prevention management tool.
- Keep ladders in good condition. Use the 4 to 1 rule for straight ladders, setting the base one-foot out from a wall or building for every four foot up.
- Wear shoes or boots with non-skid soles and heels.
- Provide plenty of light so you can see what you are doing and where you are going.
- Do not work in a high place when the weather is windy, stormy or when you are ill, tired or taking strong medications.

Inspection

- Are work areas cluttered?
- Are floors and working surface in need of repair?
- Are surfaces slippery from ice, mud, snow, manure, oil or other chemical spills?
- Are ladders in good repair or do they need to be replaced?
- Do stairways have handrails?
- Do work areas have enough light?
- Do shoes or boots have good non-slip soles?

Information supplied by the National Safety Council's Agricultural Division, the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety (NECAS) – www.necasag.org or 888-844-6322.