

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry

# FARM SAFETY NEWSLETTER

## Alberta observes Canadian Agricultural Safety Week March 13 – 19

As Albertans gear up for another season of farming, we join the rest of the nation in observing [Canadian Agricultural Safety Week](#) (CASW) March 13 – 19. This is a time to reflect on the importance of keeping safety top of mind in all aspects of farming throughout the year.

The theme for CASW this year is “keeping kids safe.” Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has many resources, activities and tools to help educate rural parents and youth on how to stay safe and healthy on the farm.

The new Animal Safety Adventures with Farm Safety Star activity book teaches young children important livestock safety information with stories, hazard hunts, puzzles and more. Children learn the importance of understanding animal behaviours and how to identify dangerous situations involving animals around the yard.

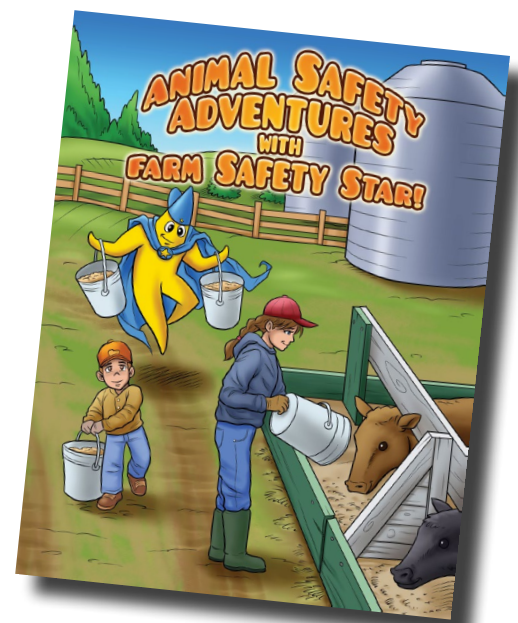
As children grow they begin to develop more advanced skills they can use to help with chores on the family farm. Often times parents question when their child is ready to take on more complicated tasks. The North American Guidelines for Children’s Agricultural Tasks (NAGCAT) gives detailed descriptions to help parents and caregivers gauge when their child is ready for increased responsibilities without putting them at risk of being injured. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has compiled guidelines of tasks that relate to Alberta farms and created an Alberta-specific publication. This resource takes much of the guess work out of knowing when a child is ready to take on increased responsibilities around the farm.

The Quick’N’Dirty Guide to Farm Safety is a

new take on a very popular information booklet. This guide fits in the pocket of your coat or coveralls, and is invaluable when it comes to handy nuggets of information.

Topics include farm machinery safety, personal protective equipment, ATV safety, livestock safety and even information on safe handling of agricultural sharps. More popular features of the booklet include a measurement conversion table, diagrams to tie useful knots and a guide to identify popular bolt and screw heads. This is a must-have resource for any young farm worker.

In addition to information resources, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry has an assortment of safety decals and signage to warn of dangerous areas, indicate where to find safety tools and remind workers of specific safety practices. Reminders of “Danger – No Play Area,” “First Aid Kit Inside” and “No Extra Riders” continually keep safety top of mind no matter where you go on the farm. These resources can be ordered by contacting an Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Farm Safety Coordinator. Go on-line at [agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety](http://agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety) or contact Raelyn Peterson: [Raelyn.D.Peterson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Raelyn.D.Peterson@gov.ab.ca) or phone 780-538-5633.

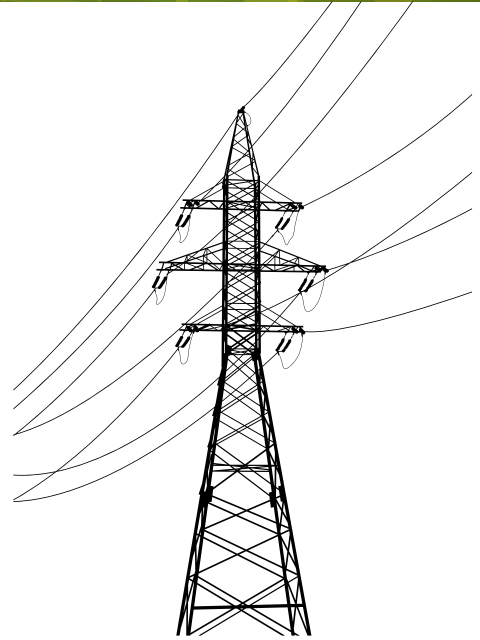


## Spring power line safety tips

Source: [www.atcoelectric.com](http://www.atcoelectric.com)

Today's farm equipment is bigger than ever, and that can mean big problems when you're working around power lines. Stay safe with these tips:

- **Check the height of your equipment.** If you're buying it new, confirm the height, update your GPS with any changes and consider your route to ensure you can cross safely under power lines. Exercise caution if equipment is higher than 4.1 metres.
  - **Stay seven metres away from power lines.** Keep this in mind when operating grain augers or air seeders, or when lifting truck boxes or back hoes.
  - **Stack and store wisely.** Whether it's a grain bin or bale storage, stack and store it seven metres away from power lines.
  - **Plan before moving tall equipment.** Map your route and locate any overhead power lines. If you don't know whether it's safe to cross under
- or work near a power line, call your service provider for help.
  - **Click before you dig.** Before digging or driving posts into the ground, visit [alberta1call.com](http://alberta1call.com) to request an underground locate. Utilities are closer to the surface of the ground than you think.
  - **Assume downed power lines are energized.** Stay at least **10 metres** away and warn others of the danger. Call 911 or your service provider's emergency line or you can visit [wherestheline.ca](http://wherestheline.ca).



### Responding safely to power line contacts

Contact with power lines is 100 per cent preventable when you plan ahead, know the size of your equipment and watch for lines.

But if you do happen to contact a power line with your equipment, avoid injury or death with these steps:

1. **Break the contact.** Do what you can to break the electrical circuit. When possible, move the arm of your sprayer or auger, or whatever is touching the line, away from the line.
  2. **Stay put and keep others away.** If you can't break the contact, stay in your vehicle, keep others away and call for help.
  3. **Call for help.** Call 911 or your service provider's emergency line so crews can isolate and ground the line to make it safe to work around.
- If you must exit your vehicle, follow these steps to stay safe:
1. **Call for help.** Call 911 or your service provider's emergency line.
  2. **Open the door to your vehicle.** Be sure to open it as wide as possible.
  3. **Jump from your vehicle, landing with both feet together.** When jumping, make sure you don't touch the vehicle and ground at the same time.
  4. **Shuffle or hop, don't step.** After you jump, shuffle or hop at least **10 metres away**. Make sure the heel of one foot never passes the toe of the other. **Don't touch anything** (vehicle, passengers) until you're clear, and don't return to your vehicle until help arrives and tells you it's safe.

# ATV safety on the farm

Source: *Injury Prevention Centre*

When operated safely, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are time-saving workhorses on most farming operations. But when used improperly, they can become dangerous machines capable of creating tragic incidents.

**To ensure safe use of ATVs on the farm, consider the following messages.**

- ATVs can cause serious injury or death. ATV injuries can be reduced by following these safety practices:
- Follow all ATV manufacturers' guidelines.
- Children under 16 years of age have an increased risk of injury and death on ATVs.
- ATVs weigh hundreds of kilograms and are harder to control than they appear.
- Rollover events are the most common cause of serious ATV-related injury and can happen even on flat ground.
- ATVs cause more injuries than any other consumer product.

**No child/youth under 16 years of age should operate an adult ATV. Ensure your child/youth only rides an ATV that is appropriate for their age, weight, and maturity. Follow manufacturers' recommendations.**

- Children and adolescents are injured as drivers of and passengers on ATVs.
- In Alberta, children and adolescents accounted for 15% of all ATV-related deaths.
- Children and youth are at particular risk as they do not have the physical strength, control, coordination or judgment of an adult. Youth-size ATVs might reduce the risk of injury.
- Use questions from The North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks ([www.nagcat.org](http://www.nagcat.org)) to find out if your child or youth is ready to ride a youth-size ATV for chores.

- Anyone under 16 years of age operating a youth-size ATV should have constant, close, visual supervision by an adult.

**Wear an approved helmet with face and eye protection.**

- Head injuries are the leading cause of serious injury and death in ATV-related injury events.
- Facial injuries frequently happen to ATV operators.
- Wear over-the-ankle boots with heels, sturdy gloves, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants.

**Drive Sober – Alcohol, drugs and ATVs don't mix.**

- The consumption of alcohol and/or drugs (medication or illicit) is a major factor in ATV injuries and deaths.
- Even a couple of drinks will impair the ability to operate an ATV.
- Drinking alcohol and operating an ATV could result in an impaired driving charge.

**Refuse to carry or be a passenger on ATVs built for one person.**

- A passenger on a single rider ATV reduces the driver's ability to stop, turn or shift their weight. A passenger will make the ATV unbalanced.
- Only carry one passenger on a tandem ATV in the designated passenger seat.
- Never carry a passenger under 12 years of age or too small to grab the hand rails or plant their feet on the foot rests of a tandem ATV.

**Take an ATV operator training course.**

- Formal hands-on training is needed to understand how to avoid ATV risks.
- Look for an ATV training course offered through reputable organizations such as the Alberta Safety Council.



## Avoid spring-related farmer fatigue

It's that time of year where farmers are busy preparing for seeding and spring work. They aim to get seed and other inputs into the soil to preserve moisture.

However, with all of the rushing and pushing limits there is a risk of serious injury due to fatigue.

The 2001 Canadian Census of Agriculture found that fatigue is a major factor in causing farm-related injuries.

Many farmers push themselves, especially during the really busy times. Too often, it's a case of 'I'm going to finish that field tonight even if it kills me'. Health and safety is a worker's most valuable asset – nothing should come before.

Often fatigue creeps up on a person and this makes it difficult to recognize. In addition to feeling sleepy and tired, some common symptoms of fatigue include:

- Headaches, dizziness, blurry vision
- Slow reflexes and reactions, poor concentration
- Feeling irritable, moody and short tempered
- Aching, weak muscles

We often see safety as being all about equipment and guards, but the most important safety tool a person can have is their attitude and subsequent decisions. That could mean taking a 20 minute snooze when you are exhausted, or having another person lined up to spell you off.

It's important for farmers to recognize things they can do to ward off fatigue:

- Get adequate sleep. This means parking your worries at the bedroom door and regularly getting a good night's rest.
- Eat nourishing food to keep your mind and body sharp.
- Stay hydrated with plenty of water.
- Incorporate some healthy activity in your day's work. Many times spring work equals long hours operating the same equipment. If you find yourself in the cab of a tractor for hours on end be sure to stop periodically and go for a walk to stretch out your muscles.
- Plan for physical and mental demands. This may mean adding workers to your team to alleviate the demands of spring farm work, keeping a promise to yourself that you will take a well-deserved break after a set amount of time and not making critical decisions while you are weary.

Although the human factor is a significant cause of farm-related hazards your safety is about the choices you make. It just takes a moment to make a decision that could literally be the difference between life and death.

### Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Farm Safety Newsletter

1201 10320 – 99 St.  
Grande Prairie, AB T8V 6J4  
[agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety](http://agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety)

**Kenda Lubeck**  
Farm Safety Coordinator  
Grande Prairie  
P: 780-538-5606  
E: [kenda.lubeck@gov.ab.ca](mailto:kenda.lubeck@gov.ab.ca)

**Nicole Hornett**  
Farm Safety Coordinator  
Airdrie  
P: 403-948-8524  
E: [nicole.hornett@gov.ab.ca](mailto:nicole.hornett@gov.ab.ca)

**Raelyn Peterson**  
Farm Safety Coordinator  
Grande Prairie  
P: 780-538-5633  
E: [raelyn.d.peterson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:raelyn.d.peterson@gov.ab.ca)

**Lindsay Rodriguez**  
Project Coordinator  
Edmonton  
P: 780-427-4187  
E: [lindsay.rodriguez@gov.ab.ca](mailto:lindsay.rodriguez@gov.ab.ca)

**Al Dooley**  
Labour Recruitment Specialist  
Edmonton  
P: 780-422-0907  
E: [alan.dooley@gov.ab.ca](mailto:alan.dooley@gov.ab.ca)