

Montana Ag Safety Program



Farm and Ranch Safety – Children

Children are frequently exposed to the same hazards as adults on working farms and ranches; however, they are less likely to understand the severity of these hazards. Although no farm or ranch can be “child-proof”, there are ways to make them as safe as possible!

- Identify specific issues of concern: overhead power lines, ditches, equipment, corrals, livestock, work areas, ponds, etc.
- Create markers/physical identifiers or barriers for places of concern (where hazards exist).
 - Signs or posters
 - Painted Posts
 - Fences
 - Gates
 - Locked Doors
- Establish “Go” and “No Go” Zones. Create safe play areas where children can be easily supervised.
- Talk about near misses, when they happen, so everyone can learn.
- Continually survey all work areas for safety hazards. Take immediate corrective action.
- Tractors and machinery are involved in 3 out of 4 injuries to children. Utilize all shields and guards. Remove keys from idle machinery. Keep all hydraulics in the down position. Lock brakes and main power sources. Conduct a walk around of all equipment before moving.
- Livestock are unpredictable, always supervise children around livestock – even when outside of the fence. Never allow children independent access to animals. Always wear hard shoes. Teach children simple rules about livestock such as how to treat them, where to stand, what animals to avoid, etc.
- Grain acts like quicksand and entrapment can occur quickly. Do not allow children to play in grain bins, hoppers, or wagons.
- Properly store all hazardous substances: pesticides, fertilizer, medication, cleaners, paints, fuels, treated seed, etc. Follow approved procedures for use. Dispose of properly.
- Teach children to recognize hazardous substances and toxic plants.
- Make fixed ladders inaccessible and store all portable ladders out of reach.
- Fence around farm ponds and manure pits.
- Cap wells, well pits, cisterns, etc.
- Store tools out of reach. Unplug all tools/equipment when not in use.
- Lock unloaded firearms and ammunition in separate locations.
- Avoid leaning unused tires, posts, etc. against buildings or trees – place flat on the ground.
- Ensure all family members are familiar with communication and emergency response procedures.