

HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR AGRICULTURE



Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association

WORK SAFE BC

About WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC (the Workers' Compensation Board) is an independent provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors. It is funded by insurance premiums paid by registered employers and by investment returns. In administering the *Workers Compensation Act*, WorkSafeBC remains separate and distinct from government; however, it is accountable to the public through government in its role of protecting and maintaining the overall well-being of the workers' compensation system.

WorkSafeBC was born out of a compromise between B.C.'s workers and employers in 1917 where workers gave up the right to sue their employers or fellow workers for injuries on the job in return for a no-fault insurance program fully paid for by employers. WorkSafeBC is committed to a safe and healthy workplace, and to providing return-to-work rehabilitation and legislated compensation benefits to workers injured as a result of their employment.

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The WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line can answer your questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and reporting a workplace accident or incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

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To report after-hours and weekend accidents and emergencies, call 604.273.7711 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1.866.922.4357 (WCB.HELP) toll-free in British Columbia.

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WorkSafeBC publications

Many publications are available on the WorkSafeBC website. The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and associated policies and guidelines, as well as excerpts and summaries of the *Workers Compensation Act*, are also available on the website: worksafebc.com.

Some publications are also available for purchase in print:

Phone: 604.232.9704

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Online ordering: worksafebc.com and click on Publications; follow the links for ordering

2014 edition

ISBN 978-0-7726-6605-5

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Introduction

Recently, a number of workers in British Columbia have been involved in serious incidents resulting in death and severe injuries. These incidents remind us how hazardous the agriculture industry can be.

Hazards in agriculture include those found in other industries, such as confined spaces, chemicals, rotating machinery, and mobile equipment. Hazards also arise from work that is largely unique to agriculture – hay baling, post driving, animal handling, and the use of orchard ladders.

Improving health and safety in agriculture helps protect workers covered by the compensation system, as well as other people on the farm, including young children, other family members, or visitors.

Acknowledgments

WorkSafeBC extends its thanks to all the people in the agricultural community who have provided advice over the years to WorkSafeBC on agricultural regulations.

Purpose of this booklet

This booklet provides a brief overview of how to use the Regulation in agriculture. It is meant for farmers, ranchers, health and safety coordinators, safety committees, and others concerned with health and safety in agriculture. This booklet includes the following information:

- How the Regulation is organized and how it applies to agriculture
- Responsibilities for owners, prime contractors, employers, supervisors, and workers
- How to identify hazards and control risks
- How to comply with requirements for confined spaces, transportation of workers, lockout, noise exposure, fall protection, and rollover protective structures (ROPS)
- First aid requirements
- Contact information and services available from WorkSafeBC and the Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA)
- A reprint from the Regulation of Part 28, Agriculture

Serious incidents

- In September 2008, workers were overcome by toxic gas at a mushroom composting facility. Three workers died and two others were severely injured.
- In March 2007, workers were en route to a greenhouse in the Fraser Valley when the van they were in rolled over. Three workers died and fourteen were injured.

How to use the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

Agriculture included in the Regulation

The current Regulation came into effect in April 1998 for all industries within the jurisdiction of WorkSafeBC except agriculture. Effective January 1, 2005, agriculture was also included in the Regulation.

The Regulation describes requirements for a range of hazards likely to be found in B.C. workplaces. The presence of these hazards varies from one sector to another, so only some of the requirements of the Regulation address hazards found in agriculture.

The information in the Regulation is organized in the following three categories.

Core requirements (parts 1–4) – These requirements deal with topics common to all workplaces, such as health and safety programs, workplace inspections, and the right to refuse unsafe work. Most core requirements apply to agriculture.

General hazard requirements (parts 5–19) – These requirements deal with health and safety hazards found in a number of workplaces, usually in higher-hazard operations. Topics include chemical safety, protection against noise, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), confined spaces, lockout, safety with machinery and equipment, mobile equipment, and transportation of workers. About half of the requirements in parts 5–19 apply to agriculture.

Requirements for specific industries and activities (parts 20–32) – These requirements apply to specific industries, such as agriculture, forestry, and construction. They also apply to hazardous activities, such as blasting, diving, and emergency rescue. These parts provide hazard control information not found in the general hazard requirements and may include modifications of other requirements of the Regulation to make them fit with the specific industry. Part 28 deals with agricultural operations on farm land.

The Regulation includes key excerpts from the *Workers Compensation Act* (the Act). Many sections of the Regulation also have accompanying Guidelines and Policies that will help clarify your requirements.

Industry-specific requirements for agriculture

Part 28 of the Regulation describes requirements that are specific to agriculture. Part 28 is organized in four divisions:

- **General conditions** – workplace structures, indoor air quality, drinking water, and other matters, such as instruction of workers and animal handling
- **Hazardous substances** – personal hygiene, anhydrous ammonia, and ventilation of buildings near manure tanks

-
- **Personal protective equipment** – an exception for horseback riding
 - **Equipment** – equipment for power take-offs, hay baling, orchard ladders, hoists, and mobile equipment

There are two broad types of requirements in Part 28:

- Requirements for hazards specific to agriculture
- Modifications and exceptions to other requirements in the Regulation, to address the specific features of agricultural operations

Examples of other requirements where modifications or exceptions apply include:

- Indoor air quality
- Means of evaluation of some types of equipment
- Operating features on mobile equipment
- Transport of workers on farm land

When using other parts of the Regulation, be sure to consider whether Part 28 provides any adjustment to the requirements.

How do I implement agriculture requirements?

All of the Regulation applies to the agriculture industry, but this booklet focuses on six critical areas that need to be brought to the industry's attention:

1. Confined spaces
2. Transportation of workers
3. Lockout
4. Noise control and hearing conservation
5. Fall protection
6. Rollover protective structures (ROPS)

For information on how to meet the requirements related to these topics, see pages 15–33 of this publication.

Where to find the Regulation

Online

You can search the Regulation and the accompanying Guidelines and Policies at worksafebc.com. Under "Quick Links" click "OHS Regulation."

Mobile devices

A searchable version of the Regulation is now available on Android, Apple, and Blackberry mobile devices.

CD-ROM

You can also order a copy of the Regulation on CD-ROM from worksafebcstore.com.

Responsibilities

In the Act

See sections 115–124, General Duties of Employers, Workers and Others

Each person in the workplace has specific responsibilities that they must fulfill to keep workers safe.

Due diligence

When a serious incident occurs, WorkSafeBC investigates to determine who was responsible. During this process, due diligence is considered.

Due diligence means taking all reasonable precautions to protect the well-being of employees or co-workers. To meet the standard of due diligence, you must take all reasonable precautions in the circumstances to carry out your work and your health and safety responsibilities. Demonstrating due diligence will help ensure your safety and the safety of those around you, and it can be used as a defence against penalties or prosecution when statutory requirements have allegedly been violated.

Owners

Farm owners are normally considered employers, so they have the responsibilities associated with employers, as described in the Employers section on page 6. Owners are also responsible for the following:

- Provide and maintain the land and premises that are being used as a workplace in a manner that ensures the health and safety of everyone at or near the workplace.
- Provide employers and prime contractors at the workplace with information, known to the owner, which is necessary to identify and eliminate or control hazards.
- Comply with regulations and any applicable orders.

Prime contractors

In some situations, there may be a workplace with multiple employers. According to section 118 of the Act, a *multiple-employer workplace* “means a workplace where workers of two or more employers are working at the same time.”

If this is the case, a written agreement is required between the owner of the farm or ranch and the prime contractor for the purposes of health and safety. In the absence of such an agreement, the owner, as noted in the Owners section, is responsible for performing the duties of the prime contractor.

In the Act

See section 118, Coordination at Multiple-Employer Workplaces

Safety systems

Overall, the prime contractor must ensure that a safety system is in place.

Examples include the following:

- Communicate safety expectations to all contractors, subcontractors, and workers on the worksite. This is usually done through a formal orientation program.
- Communicate the prime contractor's authority in the workplace and relationship with the owner and subcontractors on safety issues.
- Coordinate and sequence work as it relates to safety.
- Create and use visitor and site orientation procedures.
- Ensure that supervisors are identified for each employer in the workplace.
- Ensure that there is a system or process of compliance with the Regulation.

Safety coordination

The prime contractor must ensure that safety is being coordinated.

Examples include the following:

- Conduct a written assessment of high-risk situations and work timing.
- Determine the number of people expected and currently on site.
- Provide and coordinate suitable access and safe delivery of equipment and materials.
- Ensure that an emergency response plan is communicated to everyone on site.
- Establish and maintain first aid services, as required under section 3.16 of the Regulation.
- Ensure that hazard identification and risk control occur.
- Identify high-hazard processes.

How to exercise due diligence

To exercise due diligence, an owner or employer must do the following:

- Implement a health and safety program, including a plan to identify possible workplace hazards.
- Perform a risk assessment of hazards.
- Implement appropriate corrective actions to prevent incidents arising from hazards.

Employers

Under the Act, the primary responsibility for workplace health and safety rests with employers (including labour contractors), although workers, supervisors, and other stakeholders have important parts to play as well. Employer responsibilities include the following:

- Provide a healthy and safe workplace.
- Ensure that workers are adequately trained and supervised.
- Keep written records of training (documenting who, what, and when).
- Establish and maintain an occupational health and safety program, including a written health and safety policy and an incident investigation procedure.
- Ensure that workers and supervisors understand their health and safety rights and responsibilities under the Regulation and the Act, and that they comply with them.
- Take immediate action when a worker or supervisor tells you about a potentially hazardous situation.
- Initiate an immediate investigation into incidents.
- Provide adequate first aid.
- Provide PPE when and where required.

Supervisors

One of the most important employer responsibilities is to ensure that workers are properly supervised when carrying out their duties. Employers should work with supervisors to help foster positive worker attitudes toward safety.

Supervisor responsibilities include the following:

- Instruct workers in safe work procedures.
- Train workers for all the tasks assigned to them.
- Monitor workers in the safe performance of their duties. Ensure that they are working safely.
- Ensure that only authorized, adequately trained workers operate tools and equipment or use hazardous chemicals.
- Ensure that equipment and materials are properly handled, stored, and maintained.
- Enforce health and safety requirements.
- Correct unsafe acts and conditions.
- Assist in developing health and safety rules.
- Inspect the workplace for hazards.

Workers

Worker responsibilities include the following:

- Know and follow health and safety requirements that affect their jobs.
- Work safely, and encourage co-workers to do the same.
- Immediately report any injury to a first aid attendant or supervisor.
- Correct any unsafe conditions or immediately report them to your supervisor.

Hazard identification and risk control

Definitions

Hazard

A thing or condition that may expose a person to a risk of injury or occupational disease.

Risk

The probability that someone could be harmed as a result of the hazard.

There are many potential workplace hazards in farming and ranching, depending on the types of work being performed. Examples of hazards include pesticides, electricity, machinery, confined spaces, or working from ladders.

Identifying and controlling hazards is essential to keeping workers safe from injury. Follow these four steps:

1. Identify the hazard.
2. Assess the risk.
3. Control the hazard.
4. Monitor and review the control measures.

1. Identify the hazard.

What are the hazards in your workplace? Hazards can be identified through:

- Observation
- Inspection
- Testing
- Communication and consultation with staff
- Review of injury statistics and incident investigations

2. Assess the risk.

Once you've identified hazards, the next step is to assess the risks associated with them. A risk assessment will help you prioritize the hazards so you know which ones should be dealt with immediately and which ones can be dealt with later. When assessing risks, try to determine how likely an incident is and how serious it would be.

A. Determine the likelihood of an incident.

How likely is it that the hazardous condition or situation will result in an incident?

- Very likely – Could happen frequently
- Likely – Could happen occasionally
- Unlikely – Could happen, but rarely
- Very unlikely – Could happen, but likely never will

Consider the following:

- The frequency of working near a hazard
- The number of people exposed and the duration of exposure
- The training, skills, and experience of workers performing the task
- The presence or absence of qualified supervision
- The position of the hazard relative to operators and other hazards
- Worker characteristics, such as age, vision, and hearing

B. Determine the potential consequences of an incident.

If an incident does occur, how serious will it be?

- Extreme – Death, permanent disability
- Major – Serious bodily injury
- Moderate – Medical treatment and time away from work required
- Minor – First aid, but no time off work

Consider the following:

- The potential for a chain reaction (where a hazard develops into a more dangerous situation)
- Proximity of workers to the hazard
- Quantity of a chemical being used
- Size of equipment, forces, and energy level
- Emergency response preparedness

C. Assign a risk rating to the hazard.

Once you've determined the likelihood and consequences of a potential incident, use the "Risk Assessment Rating Matrix" (see page 10) to assign a risk rating to the hazard. Cross-reference the appropriate Likelihood row with the Consequences column to produce a number from one to seven. One is the highest degree of risk and seven the lowest.

Then, refer to the box below the matrix to determine whether the hazard has a high, moderate, or low level of risk. Each risk level has a corresponding recommended action.

Before using the matrix, make sure you've done a thorough assessment to ensure that you understand all aspects of the hazard, including all tasks and work associated with the hazard. If you are considering more than one hazard, the matrix rating system will help you prioritize the hazards.

Once you have established the risk level, enter it in the Risk column of the "Risk Assessment Worksheet" (see page 14).

Risk Assessment Rating Matrix

		Consequences			
		Extreme Death, permanent disability	Major Serious bodily injury	Moderate Medical treatment and time away from work required	Minor First aid, no lost time
Likelihood					
Very likely Could happen frequently		1	2	3	4
Likely Could happen occasionally		2	3	4	5
Unlikely Could happen, but rarely		3	4	5	6
Very unlikely Could happen, but likely never will		4	5	6	7

Score	Rating	Action
1,2,3	High	Do something about this hazard immediately.
4,5	Moderate	Do something about this hazard as soon as possible.
6,7	Low	This hazard may not need immediate attention.

3. Control the hazard.

Once you've identified hazards and assessed the risks associated with them, you need to find ways to control those risks. The best form of risk control is to eliminate the hazard entirely, if possible. If that is unrealistic, minimize risks as much as possible by using other control measures.

Hierarchy of control

Some types of controls are more effective than others, although it may not always be practicable to use the more effective solution. Whenever possible, though, controls must be implemented in the following order of preference:

- A. Elimination or substitution
- B. Engineering controls
- C. Administrative controls
- D. PPE

You may need to use a combination of strategies to achieve the best protection – for example, a tractor cab (engineering control) and hearing protection (PPE) to minimize noise exposure.

A. Elimination or substitution

Whenever possible, eliminate the hazard so there's no risk of injury.

Consider the following:

- Is the task necessary to begin with?
- Can the hazardous part of the task be removed?
- Can the task be done in such a way that no workers are exposed to the hazard?

If you can't eliminate the hazard, substitute a safer material or process.

Consider the following:

- Can a different machine or tool be used?
- Can a less hazardous material or chemical be used?
- Are there alternative work practices that can be used or developed?

B. Engineering controls

If a hazard cannot be eliminated, it may be possible to reduce the risk by designing safeguards for equipment. Engineering controls deal with the hazard right at the source, by adding safety features to machinery or by redesigning a system or task.

A familiar example of an engineering control for a long-standing hazard is the use of a ROPS. Control measures that are built in by design are reliable and their success does not depend on individual judgment, training, or decision making.

C. Administrative controls

Where engineering controls are not possible (for example, when using older equipment that best suits the task), consider administrative controls. These involve the use of policies or written safe work procedures to minimize exposure to the hazard. Administrative controls include reduction of exposure time, and worker training and education. An employer may decide to adopt a company policy that requires everyone to follow specific procedures to reduce the risk of injury. Supervision of workers is essential for administrative controls.

There are a few downsides to administrative controls:

- Workers may not understand the seriousness of a hazard or they may underestimate the risk.
- Workers may not remember all the steps of a procedure.
- Workers may feel pressure to cut corners.

You must be especially vigilant with administrative controls to ensure that worker exposure to the hazard is effectively controlled.

D. Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE should only be used as a last resort, when it's not possible to reduce risk in any other way. Or it can be used in addition to another control. The use of PPE is an admission that the hazard still remains and that the risk cannot be reduced at its source.

Workers who use PPE must understand the hazards and accept the importance of using PPE consistently and correctly. PPE must also be chosen, used, and maintained correctly. Workers must be trained in its use and care.

Choosing the right control for each hazard

In many cases, controls are already built in by design (for example, tractor cabs provide ROPS), so there's not much more for the employer to do. However, in some situations, employers will need to choose a control that is appropriate to the situation. Whenever this is the case, you are required to follow the hierarchy of controls and adopt the most effective method possible given the circumstances.

A control is considered appropriate if it meets the following criteria:

- Tailored to the hazard and risk level in a given situation
- Meets the intent of the law
- Practicable, given the size and resources of the workplace

4. Monitor and evaluate the control measures.

Determine whether your controls have been implemented as planned:

- Are controls in place?
- Are they being used?
- Are they being used correctly?

Determine whether chosen controls are working:

- Have changes had the expected result?
- Has exposure to the identified hazards been eliminated or adequately reduced?

Determine whether there are any new problems. Implemented controls should not introduce new problems or worsen existing problems.

Risk Assessment Worksheet

Company:

Workplace location:

Prepared by:

Date:

Task	Hazard	Risk level	Control measures

Confined spaces

Confined spaces can be deadly if the hazards within them are not eliminated or controlled. Confined spaces are a concern in any industry, but they are particularly important in agriculture. Bins, sumps, and manure pits are key concerns. Other confined spaces in agriculture include tanks, sheds, and underground facilities.

In the Regulation

See Part 9, Confined Spaces

Dangers of confined spaces

Common types of confined spaces	Dangers
Bins (grain and feed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon dioxide• Ammonia• Oxygen deficiency• Bacteria and mould• Pesticides and fumigants• Flowing feed• Fragments of bridges and hang-ups on walls• Movement of unguarded equipment
Crawl spaces and cellars	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon dioxide• Hydrogen sulfide• Oxygen deficiency• Bacteria and mould
Manure tanks, ponds, and pits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon dioxide• Hydrogen sulfide• Ammonia• Methane• Bacteria• Oxygen deficiency• Exposure to flammable gases• Drowning
Pump stations/sheds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carbon dioxide• Hydrogen sulfide• Ammonia• Methane• Bacteria• Oxygen deficiency

Common types of confined spaces	Dangers
Sumps (water and waste water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon dioxide • Hydrogen sulfide • Methane • Bacteria • Oxygen deficiency • Drowning
Tanks (for example, water towers, cisterns, milk tanks, septic tanks, and tanks on trucks or trailers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon dioxide • Hydrogen sulfide • Ammonia • Methane • Oxygen deficiency • Cleaning chemicals and disinfectants • Bacteria and waterborne micro-organisms (biofilm) • Drowning
Well pits (potable water)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon dioxide • Oxygen deficiency • Drowning • Electrocutation

For information on other types of confined spaces that you may encounter, refer to the *Management of Confined Spaces in Agriculture* manual for your specific farm. Go to worksafebc.com, and under Safety at Work click “by industry” and select “Agriculture.” Then look for the “Centre of Excellence for Confined Spaces in Agriculture” link.

Hazard alert

Three workers died and two suffered severe brain injuries after being exposed to hazardous gases at a mushroom composting facility. It started when three workers were working in a shed built around pipes containing “process water.” They disconnected a blocked pipe at the valve, releasing hazardous gases (including hydrogen sulfide and carbon dioxide) into the confined space of the shed. Three other workers involved in the incident were unaware of the hazard and tried to rescue the downed workers. Only one of the three surviving workers escaped permanent injury.

Confined space entry program

The employer must ensure that there is a written confined space entry program that documents the following:

- Responsibilities of the employer, supervisors, and workers
- A list of known confined spaces in the workplace
- A hazard assessment for each confined space
- Written safe entry and work procedures (if workers must enter the space)
- Training provided to workers

There are five basic steps for managing confined spaces:

1. Identify confined spaces.
2. Post warning signs and secure entry to confined spaces.
3. Determine the hazards for each space.
4. Communicate with workers.
5. Determine which spaces need to be entered.

1. Identify confined spaces

The first step in addressing confined space requirements is to identify all the confined spaces on your farm operation and create a written inventory of these spaces. Confined spaces are not always obvious. Start by looking at areas where work does not normally take place and where it might be difficult to get an injured person out of a space.

A space is considered a confined space if all of the following four criteria are met:

1. The space is enclosed or partially enclosed.
2. The space is not designed or intended for continuous human occupancy.
3. The space has limited or restricted means for entry or exit that may complicate the provision of first aid, evacuation, rescue, or other emergency response services.
4. The space is large enough and configured so a worker could enter to perform work.

Get help from a qualified person.

A qualified person is someone who has training and experience in recognizing, assessing, and controlling the hazards of confined spaces. A qualified person is required for the following tasks:

- Determining the hazards for each confined space
- Developing safe work procedures before workers enter confined spaces
- Testing the atmosphere in a confined space
- Developing rescue procedures

Although it is not a requirement, you may also want to have a qualified person help you identify confined spaces on your farm.

2. Post warning signs and secure entry to confined spaces.

Employers must ensure that all confined spaces in the workplace are identified. Every point of access to a confined space must be either:

- Secured against entry with locks, fences, or guards
OR
- Identified with a sign or notice that indicates the nature of the hazard and either prohibits all workers from entering or prohibits unauthorized workers from entering.

The use of signage is recommended to identify all confined spaces, even locked ones, because someone might attempt to break the lock to gain entry.

3. Determine the hazards for each space.

The employer must ensure that each confined space is assessed by a qualified person who can identify all the hazards of the space and develop written safe work procedures to control those hazards.

4. Communicate with workers.

Employers are responsible for educating workers about confined spaces. Workers need to know what a confined space is and that they must not enter confined spaces unless they have the proper training, equipment, and permission to do so. Employers must also inform workers about any confined spaces that are on the farm and the hazards that may be in them.

5. Determine which spaces need to be entered.

Employers must also determine which confined spaces will need to be entered (for example, for inspection, maintenance, or equipment repair). If entry may be required, list the reasons on the written inventory of confined spaces.

Permits

Most confined spaces in agriculture will require written entry permits prior to entry. Written permits are required for:

- High-hazard atmosphere spaces
- Spaces that require lockout or isolation procedures
- Spaces where there is a hazard of entrapment or engulfment

Confined space entry procedures

Before workers enter a confined space, the employer must develop and implement a confined space entry program, including safe entry procedures. The procedures may be simple or complex, depending on the following:

- Nature of the confined space (for example, how difficult it is to get in and out)
- Nature of the hazards
- Type of work to be performed (for example, welding or painting within the space will introduce additional hazards)

Standby persons

All confined space entries must have a standby person stationed at or near the entrance to the space. The duties of a standby person depend on whether the space has been classified as a low-, moderate-, or high-hazard space. A standby person is responsible for checking on workers in a confined space and contacting rescue services in the event of an emergency.

Note

A qualified person must write procedures specific to each confined space entry.

Rescue personnel

A dedicated rescue team must be available on-site for any confined space entry. Rescue personnel must be properly equipped and trained. If rescue is provided by an outside source, such as another farm, a rescue service,

or the fire department, there must be an agreement in writing. Employers are required to pre-arrange any rescue services. Do not rely on 911 to provide rescue services.

Lockout and isolation

Before a worker enters a confined space, hazards must be isolated and controlled. Workers must be protected from hazardous energy (electrical, hydraulic, and mechanical) and harmful substances (solids, liquids, gases, and vapours) that could be discharged from pipes or conduits beside or leading to the confined space.

Air testing

Before a worker enters a confined space, the atmosphere must be tested in accordance with written procedures developed by a qualified person. Testing must be conducted within the confined space before it is ventilated and at least 20 minutes before a worker enters the space. The results must be recorded and posted at all points of entry to the confined space.

At least one worker in the confined space must wear a gas monitor, whenever practicable. Gas monitors must be properly configured, calibrated, and maintained. The instrument must be equipped with the right kind of gas sensors for the situation.

Ventilation

The employer must ensure that clean, respirable air is provided to the confined space during work activity, except in certain circumstances such as inerted spaces, some low-hazard spaces, and in an emergency rescue where ventilation is not practicable. Ventilation is typically provided by portable mechanical ventilation units. Natural ventilation may be permitted in some cases. If a contaminant is produced by work done in the confined space (for example, during welding), then the space must be ventilated using a local exhaust ventilation system.

Note

Except for certain low-hazard spaces, all confined spaces must be ventilated before and during any work.

Transportation of workers

When using a vehicle to transport workers to a worksite, the vehicle itself is considered a workplace. Such a vehicle must comply with the requirements of WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and other applicable agencies.

In the Regulation

See Part 17,
Transportation of
Workers

Responsibilities of employers (farm labour contractors)

- Ensure the safe transport of workers.
- Hire drivers with valid B.C. driver's licences.
- Inspect all vehicles before using them.
- Provide drivers with a vehicle inspection report.
- Provide drivers, supervisors, and workers with education and training.
- Ensure that workers use seat belts.
- Do not exceed the safe seating capacity of the vehicle as stated by the manufacturer.
- Ensure that no workers jump on or off moving vehicles.

Responsibilities of drivers or supervisors

- Ensure that first aid kits and fire extinguishers are always available in vehicles.
- Ensure that the treatment record book is in the first aid kit and all injuries are duly recorded.
- Correct unsafe conditions immediately, and report them to your supervisor.
- Report all vehicle defects to your supervisor or employer.
- Ensure that every worker is wearing a seat belt.
- Follow posted speed limits.
- Do not exceed the safe seating capacity of the vehicle as stated by the manufacturer.
- Ensure that the vehicle is not overloaded.
- Ensure that each passenger has at least 41 cm (16 in.) of seating space.

Vehicle operation and maintenance

Worker transportation vehicles must be inspected before first use on work shifts and properly maintained to ensure they are safe for use. Any defect that might affect worker safety must be corrected before using the vehicle.

Inspection checklist

An inspection before first use on a shift should include at least a visual inspection and function check of the following:

- Wheels, rims, lug nuts, and tires, including the spare tire
- Service brakes, including trailer brake connections and brake adjustment
- Parking brake
- Steering mechanism
- Lighting devices and reflectors, including backup lights
- Turn signals
- Windshield wipers
- Securing of material and tools, including any coupling devices
- Emergency equipment, including first aid equipment
- Glazing
- Rear-vision mirrors
- Horn
- Engine oil, coolant levels, and fan belts

Many of these inspection items are mandatory daily inspection or check requirements for a commercial motor vehicle being operated under the jurisdiction of the *Motor Vehicle Act Regulations* (section 37.22).

For more information

Refer to the WorkSafeBC publication *Farm Labour Contractor Vehicle Inspection Checklist*.

www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/flc_vehicle_inspection_checklist.pdf

Lockout

What is lockout?

Lockout is the use of a lock or locks to render machinery or equipment inoperable or to isolate an energy source. The purpose of lockout is to prevent an energy-isolating device (such as a switch, circuit breaker, or valve) from accidentally or inadvertently being operated while workers are performing maintenance on machinery or equipment. Lockout makes sure machinery or equipment won't start or move and injure a worker.

In the Regulation

See Part 10,
De-energization and
Lockout

Why is lockout important?

Tasks such as maintaining, repairing, adjusting, cleaning, and lubricating equipment are important in agriculture. Equipment such as augers, tractors, combines, balers, mowers, discs, rakes, trucks, and hoisting equipment are critical to agricultural operations. When maintaining or repairing this equipment, workers must deal with a range of hazardous energy sources, including mechanical and electrical energy, compressed gas, hydraulic pressure, tensioned springs, and elevated objects (gravity).

Failure to properly isolate and control energy has led to serious injuries and fatalities in agriculture. Controlling or isolating hazardous sources of energy during maintenance means stopping and securing the machine, process, or system and protecting the worker by eliminating, controlling, or guarding against the danger of uncontrolled release of hazardous energy.

Lockout basics

The first step is to eliminate or isolate the energy source and de-energize the system wherever possible. Examples include the following:

- Shut down machines.
- Open circuit breakers or main disconnect switches.
- Eliminate material from an auger to prevent the auger from rotating because of gravity.
- Disconnect and de-pressurize compressed air tools.
- Lower or block hydraulic systems and implements.

A lock is then applied to guarantee that the source of energy will not be turned on or stored energy will not be released, re-energizing the equipment. This is commonly referred to as "locking out" or "lockout."

Lockout requirements

Section 10.2 of the Regulation states the following:

If the unexpected energization or startup of machinery or equipment or the unexpected release of an energy source could cause injury, the energy source must be isolated and effectively controlled.

Effective control typically means locking out the source of energy.

Before starting work

When equipment is shut down for maintenance, work must not be performed until all of the following have occurred:

- All parts have been secured against inadvertent movement.
- The hazards have been effectively controlled.
- All relevant energy isolating devices, such as switches and valves, have been shut off and locked out in the off position.

Before work is started on the machinery or equipment, procedures for lockout must be established as required by section 10.4 of the Regulation.

When developing the procedures you must do all of the following:

- View the location where the work is to be done.
- Identify all relevant energy sources.
- Assess the risk of possible injury to a worker from the release of energy or inadvertent movement of equipment.

Risk assessment and safe work procedures

When assessing risks and developing written safe work procedures, watch out for the pitfalls described in the following table.

Possible lockout pitfalls

Pitfall	Examples	Comments
Overlooking energy sources	Working on a truck with an elevated box.	Gravity is often overlooked as a source of energy. The box must be restrained from falling.
Misinterpreting energy action	Performing work on sophisticated conveyor systems that are electrically interlocked to prevent “plugging” in case one part of the system fails.	Locking out only the conveyor being worked on may not eliminate the hazards in other parts of the system. Ensure that all parts of the system are locked out.
Relying on control circuits such as start/stop buttons or switches	The starter system in a piece of mobile equipment.	It is not enough to control the starter circuit by switching off the circuit and removing the key, even if there is no other key to the equipment. Proper control involves disconnecting the battery and ensuring it cannot be inadvertently reconnected during maintenance work.
	Some stationary equipment powered by large electric motors may have a low-voltage control circuit for starting and stopping the equipment.	It is not enough to lock out the control circuit. The source of the electrical energy that feeds the motor, such as a circuit breaker, must be locked in the open, de-energized position.
Using procedural options rather than lockout	Using extension tools to try to ensure safety when working near a motor.	If the motor were to start up, the worker could still be in danger.
Relying on vague written procedures	—	Written procedures can result in a hazardous situation if they are not specific to the task or they do not specifically describe when lockout is required.

Lockout procedures

Section 10.4 of the Regulation establishes the following required procedures:

- (1) When lockout of energy isolating devices is required, the devices must be secured in the safe position using locks in accordance with procedures that are made available to all workers who are required to work on the machinery or equipment.
- (2) The employer must ensure that each worker required to lock out has ready access to sufficient personal locks to implement the required lockout procedure.
- (3) Combination locks must not be used for lockout.
- (4) Each personal lock must be marked or tagged to identify the person applying it.
- (5) Procedures must be implemented for shift or personnel changes, including the orderly transfer of control of locked out energy isolating devices between outgoing and incoming workers.
- (6) If the use of a personal lock is not practicable for lockout, another effective means, if approved by the Board, may be used in place of a personal lock to secure an energy isolating device in the safe position.

Situations when the application of locks is not required

According to section 10.11 of the Regulation, the application of a lock is not required if either of the following is true:

- (a) the energy isolating device is under the exclusive and immediate control of the worker at all times while working on the machinery or equipment, or
- (b) a tool, machine, or piece of equipment which receives power through a readily disconnected supply, such as an electrical cord or quick release air or hydraulic line, is disconnected from its power supply and its connection point is kept under the immediate control of the worker at all times while work is being done.

For example, an energy-isolating device such as a circuit breaker for a piece of electrical equipment is under the exclusive and immediate control of a worker if:

- It is in the immediate field of view of the worker doing work on the equipment
- AND
- It is located so that any move by another worker to activate the isolating device will be immediately obvious to the worker who is performing the task.

In some circumstances in agriculture there may be no other workers present, which helps ensure that the breaker is under the exclusive control of the worker.

An example of a situation where a worker has immediate control of the connection point of a power supply is with circular saws or other corded electrical equipment. As long as the worker controls the use of the plug, there is no need for locks.

For more information

Refer to the WorkSafeBC publication *Lockout*.

www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/lockout.pdf

Noise control and hearing conservation

In the Regulation

See Part 7, Noise, Vibration, Radiation and Temperature.

One-quarter of all B.C. workers are exposed to occupational noise that is loud enough to damage hearing. Noise can damage hearing at levels above 85 decibels.

How hearing damage occurs

Excessive noise damages tiny sensory cells deep inside your ear. The first danger sign of hearing loss is the inability to hear high-pitched sounds, such as children's voices. Noise can also cause a ringing or buzzing in the ears. At the end of a day's work, you may notice that some sounds have become muffled or indistinct.

The length of your exposure to noise is as critical as the loudness. Continuous noise throughout a working day is more damaging than a few minutes at a time. Most workdays on a farm or ranch will not expose you to enough noise to cause permanent damage. However, many agricultural activities are extremely noisy and may be hazardous.

Hearing loss can build up so gradually that you may not realize it is happening. Noise-induced hearing loss is permanent – it can't be cured or improved.

Limits and measuring noise levels

The Regulation sets limits for noise exposure in the workplace, based on loudness and duration. If there is reason to believe that workers are exposed to levels above 82 decibels (averaged over the workday and adjusted to an eight-hour shift), you may need to measure the noise levels to make sure. However, if information on noise levels is available from another source, for example from the equipment manufacturer or a WorkSafeBC publication, then you may not need to conduct a noise level survey.

For more information

The WorkSafeBC handout *How Loud Is It?* has a few noise levels related to agriculture.

www2.worksafebc.com/pdfs/hearing/How_Loud_Series/general.pdf

If you need help identifying dangerous noise levels and finding workable solutions, contact a FARSHA regional safety consultant or WorkSafeBC officer for assistance.

Noise control and hearing protection

If noise exposure levels are more than 85 decibels (averaged over the workday and adjusted to an eight-hour shift) or if there are peak levels above 140 decibels at any time, the employer must have a hearing conservation program. One aspect of the program is the reduction of noise to non-damaging levels. If noise cannot be reduced to safe levels, the employer must provide appropriate hearing protection – earplugs or earmuffs. The program should also include annual hearing tests for workers who are exposed to potentially dangerous noise levels.

Hearing tests

Workers may require hearing tests if they routinely operate noisy equipment or work indoors with swine or other animals that produce a lot of noise. Field workers who work for short periods during harvesting and similar activities and who are at a distance from noisy equipment are not likely to require tests.

Arranging hearing tests

Contact a private hearing test business (an audiometric contractor) to arrange for hearing tests. Test facilities and staff should be authorized by WorkSafeBC and should have a certificate on display.

Businesses with mobile facilities have vans that can visit individual worksites or nearby meeting places. Businesses with fixed facilities have offices that workers can visit. For a current list of hearing test contractors, go to www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/HearingLossPrevention/Home.asp.

In some areas, you may be able to make arrangements with a nearby employer who has an in-house hearing test facility. Another option is to have a cooperative, or other organization of farmers or ranchers, arrange for a hearing test contractor to provide tests.

For more information

Contact the WorkSafeBC occupational audiologist:

Telephone

604.276.3100,
ext. 5885

Direct line

604.232.5885

Toll-free

1.888.621.7233,
ext. 5885

Fall protection

In the Regulation

See Part 11, Fall Protection

As in many industries, falls from elevation are a leading cause of injury to workers in the agricultural sector. Employers are required to have a fall protection system in place if workers are working at heights of 3 m (10 ft.) or more. Employers must assess the potential hazards involved in any work at heights and ensure that workers use the appropriate form of fall protection for the task.

Guardrails

Properly constructed guardrails are generally the best system of fall protection. Once installed, they protect all workers on that work surface. Guardrails are considered practical controls on elevated ramps and walkways, and on the roofs of tanks and silos where permanent access is provided by way of stairs or fixed ladders. They are often practical on the open sides of haylofts, but in some cases other means of fall protection may be appropriate.

There are various reasons why it may not be practical to install guardrails. If guardrails aren't practical, the employer must consider the next best available option: a fall restraint system.

Fall restraint

Similar to guardrails, fall restraint systems prevent workers from falling by restraining or restricting their travel to the unguarded edge of a work surface. Typically, such a system involves personal fall restraint, which consists of a safety belt or harness worn by each worker and a lanyard or lifeline tied to a safe anchorage point. The lanyard or lifeline is adjusted to a length that will prevent the worker from moving to the open or unguarded edge of the work surface.

Personal fall restraint systems are practical alternatives for repairing low sloped roofs or in situations where a section of a guardrail has to be removed to facilitate work.

Fall restraint may also be provided by a system that applies to an area of work. For example, an option for work on haylofts is the use of retractable netting adjacent to the work area, positioned and tensioned to provide fall restraint.

Fall arrest

There are also situations where both guardrails and fall restraint systems are not practical. The next level of fall protection to consider is fall arrest.

Fall arrest systems are designed to catch falling workers before they strike the surface below them. These systems consist of either safety nets or fall arrest harnesses, lanyards, and lifelines connected to a substantial point of anchorage.

Fall arrest systems are most practical when a worker is on a narrow work surface or working at the edge of a structure and is required to reach beyond the safe work area. Fall arrest systems may be appropriate during the construction of buildings (for example, installing trusses and the roof sheathing on a barn or similar tall structure).

Personal fall restraint and fall arrest systems may not be practical if an anchor point of sufficient rated capacity is not available. The final means of protecting workers against falling is to minimize the risk of falling by using work procedures.

Work procedures

Work procedures consist of careful planning of the work, and instruction, training, and supervision of the workers to carry out the tasks safely. Work procedures must take into account a number of factors, including the type of work, environmental conditions and hazards, worker experience, and the length of time the task will take.

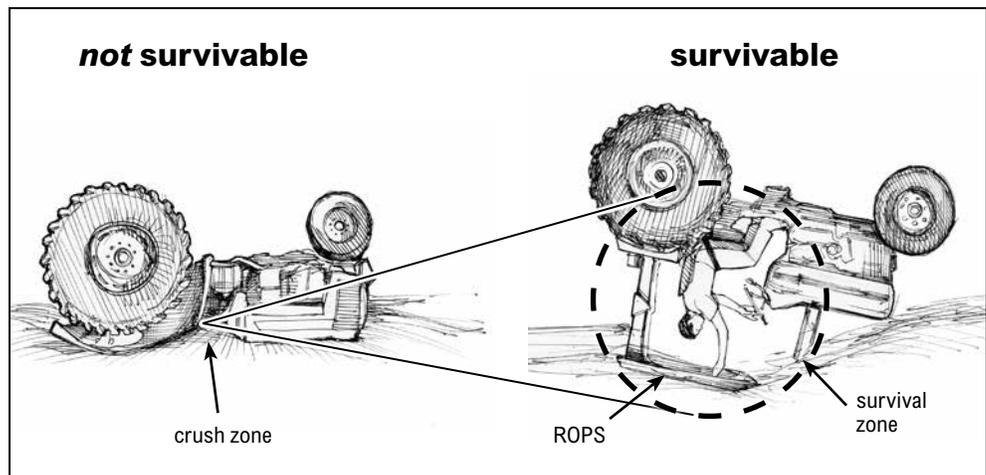
An example of work procedures being used in place of conventional fall protection systems is light-duty work conducted from ladders, such as fruit picking from an orchard ladder. Another example is carrying out small painting jobs while standing on an extension ladder.

Work procedures can only be used as the method of fall protection when other conventional means are not practical. In some cases, they may be used in combination with other forms of fall protection, such as when using platforms to clean greenhouse roofs.

For more information on the types and uses of personal fall restraint and fall arrest systems, see the WorkSafeBC publication *An Introduction to Personal Fall Protection Equipment* (www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/fall_protection.pdf). You can also find other information on fall protection requirements in the Guidelines that accompany the Regulation.

Rollover protective structures (ROPS)

The use of rollover protective structures (ROPS) on agricultural tractors, in combination with seat belts, saves lives. Each year in B.C., serious accidents occur when tractors without ROPS roll over, crushing the operator under the machine. ROPS create a survival zone, and the use of a seat belt keeps the operator in that space.



Wearing a seat belt in a ROPS-equipped tractor can save the operator in a rollover accident.

ROPS requirement

Because many fatalities and serious injuries have occurred with tractor rollovers, the Regulation does not allow tractors to be used without ROPS. Workers cannot drive or use an agricultural tractor as part of agricultural operations on farm land unless the tractor is equipped with a ROPS.

ROPS exception

The only exception is if a risk assessment has been performed by a qualified person who determines that the agricultural tractor can be used safely with a low risk of rollover **and** any of the following conditions applies:

- The agricultural tractor was manufactured before January 1, 1985.
- The tractor is a low-profile agricultural tractor used in locations with low overhead clearance, such as in buildings or in an orchard with a low canopy. (However, when leaving a building or coming out from under a canopy of trees, ROPS must be used.)
- The tractor is fitted with implements that are incompatible with ROPS.

Definitions

For a definition of *qualified person*, see page 18.

For a definition of *risk assessment*, see section 28.41 of the Regulation.

Hazard alert

A farm worker was killed when his tractor overturned. He was transporting a 360-kg bin of fruit on the tractor's rear fork attachment (or "bin lift"), when the tractor rolled at the bottom of a 32-percent slope. The tractor came equipped with a ROPS, but it had been removed.

Notice for tractors not equipped with ROPS

If the risk assessment shows that an agricultural tractor without a ROPS has a low risk of rollover, the employer must permanently affix a notice that is legible and visible to the operator. The notice must state the following:

- The tractor does not have a ROPS.
- It may be driven and used only in areas and for activities authorized by the employer.

If your tractor is older and did not come with a ROPS, FARSHA has resources to help you with this. They can also help you with conducting a tractor rollover risk assessment.

Note

Seat belts must be used when operating an agricultural tractor with a ROPS.

First aid

In the Regulation

See sections 3.14 to 3.21, Occupational First Aid. The associated Guidelines for Part 3 contain additional information.

All workplaces must meet the first aid requirements in Part 3 of the Regulation. Effective first aid treatment can reduce the severity of work-related injuries, which helps minimize the financial costs associated with extensive medical treatment or the need to replace employees who are unable to work. All businesses must keep a first aid kit on site and many will also need a first aid attendant. The type of kit and the need for a first aid attendant depend on three factors:

- The hazard rating for your business
- The number of workers
- The travel time to the nearest hospital

First aid requirements

Your first aid requirements will depend on the risk classification for your specific ranch. Many agriculture operations are considered high-risk workplaces. Some are low- or moderate-risk workplaces. To determine the risk level for your specific operation, refer to the Regulation Guidelines for first aid (G3.14–3.20), and look for your type of business in the Assigned Hazard Rating List.

Once you know your risk classification, you can determine your first aid requirements. The following tables show first aid requirements for high-risk workplaces (pages 35–36) and moderate-risk workplaces (pages 37–38). If you determine that your ranch is a low-risk operation, look for your requirements in Schedule 3–A of the Regulation.

Note

First aid requirements are based on the number of workers per shift, so the requirements may vary from day to night shifts.

High-risk workplace — 20 minutes or less surface travel time to hospital

Number of workers per shift	Supplies, equipment, and facility	Level of first aid certificate for attendant	Transportation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal first aid kit 	N/A	N/A
2–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 first aid kit 	Level 1	N/A
16–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 first aid kit • Dressing station 	Level 2 *	N/A
31–300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 first aid kit • First aid room 	Level 2 *	N/A
301 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 2 first aid kit • First aid room 	Two attendants, each with Level 2 certificates *	N/A

* A Level 3 first aid certificate is required and an emergency transportation vehicle (“ETV”) must be provided if either of the following is true:

- On the access route to the workplace there is an obstruction, barrier, rough terrain, or other similar circumstances likely to delay the arrival of an ambulance service for more than 20 minutes after it was dispatched.
- There are areas in the workplace that an ambulance service cannot safely access and for which workers at the workplace are required to be trained, equipped, and capable of effecting rescue.

High-risk workplace — More than 20 minutes surface travel time to hospital

Number of workers per shift	Supplies, equipment, and facility	Level of first aid certificate for attendant	Transportation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal first aid kit 	N/A	N/A
2–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 first aid kit 	Level 1	N/A
6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 first aid kit • ETV equipment 	Level 1 with Transportation Endorsement	ETV
11–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • Dressing station • ETV equipment 	Level 3	ETV
31–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • First aid room • ETV equipment 	Level 3	ETV
51–200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • First aid room • Industrial ambulance equipment 	Level 3	Industrial ambulance
201 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • First aid room • Industrial ambulance equipment 	Two attendants, each with Level 3 certificates	Industrial ambulance

Moderate-risk workplace — 20 minutes or less surface travel time to hospital

Number of workers per shift	Supplies, equipment, and facility	Level of first aid certificate for attendant	Transportation
1	• Personal first aid kit	N/A	N/A
2–5	• Basic first aid kit	N/A	N/A
6–25	• Level 1 first aid kit	Level 1	N/A
26–75	• Level 2 first aid kit • Dressing station	Level 2 *	N/A
76 or more	• Level 2 first aid kit • First aid room	Level 2 *	N/A

* A Level 3 first aid certificate is required and an emergency transportation vehicle (“ETV”) must be provided if either of the following is true:

- On the access route to the workplace there is an obstruction, barrier, rough terrain, or other similar circumstances likely to delay the arrival of an ambulance service for more than 20 minutes after it was dispatched.
- There are areas in the workplace that an ambulance service cannot safely access and for which workers at the workplace are required to be trained, equipped, and capable of effecting rescue.

Moderate-risk workplace — More than 20 minutes surface travel time to hospital

Number of workers per shift	Supplies, equipment, and facility	Level of first aid certificate for attendant	Transportation
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal first aid kit 	N/A	N/A
2–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 first aid kit 	Level 1	N/A
6–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 1 first aid kit • ETV equipment 	Level 1 with Transportation Endorsement	N/A
16–50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • Dressing station • ETV equipment 	Level 3	ETV
51–100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • First aid room • ETV equipment 	Level 3	ETV
101–300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • First aid room • Industrial ambulance equipment 	Level 3	Industrial ambulance
301 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 first aid kit • First aid room • Industrial ambulance equipment 	Two attendants, each with Level 3 certificates	Industrial ambulance

For more information

WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC is available to provide information and consultation on the Regulation. To contact a WorkSafeBC officer, contact your local WorkSafeBC office (listed on the inside back cover of this publication) or call:

- 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland
- 1.888.621.7233, toll-free in Canada

Publications

Many publications are available on the WorkSafeBC website. The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and associated policies and guidelines, as well as excerpts and summaries of the *Workers Compensation Act*, are also available at worksafebc.com.

Agriculture site

Worksafebc.com. also has information aimed specifically at the agriculture industry. Go to www2.worksafebc.com/Portals/Agriculture/Home.asp for health and safety resources and references.

Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA)

FARSHA provides information to farm employers and workers on all aspects of agricultural health and safety. This includes guidance on implementing the requirements of the Act and the Regulation. FARSHA regional safety consultants across B.C. are available for consultation, including speaking engagements at commodity associations, agricultural community groups, farm site visits, and training courses.

FARSHA is an industry-based health and safety association with a mandate to develop and provide health and safety services to agriculture. FARSHA is independent of WorkSafeBC and does not play a role in regulatory enforcement, collection of insurance assessments, or the provision of workers' compensation services. FARSHA's work is funded by a levy on the assessments paid to WorkSafeBC by registered farm employers in B.C.

Contact FARSHA (or ask for the FARSHA regional safety consultants nearest you) at:

Suite 311, 9440 – 202 Street

Langley, BC V1M 4A6

Tel: 604.881.6078

Toll-free: 1.877.533.1789

Fax: 604.881.6079

Email: farmsafe@farsha.bc.ca

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1.800.663.3935
Fax 250.371.6031

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Fax 250.717.4380

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Fax 250.751.8046

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1.800.663.6623
Fax 250.561.3710

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Phone 604.276.3100
1.888.621.7233
Fax 604.232.7077

Terrace

4450 Lakelse Avenue V8G 1P2
Phone 250.615.6605
1.800.663.3871
Fax 250.615.6633

Victoria

4514 Chatterton Way V8X 5H2
Phone 250.881.3418
1.800.663.7593
Fax 250.881.3482

Head Office / Richmond

Prevention Information Line:
Phone 604.276.3100
1.888.621.7233 (621.SAFE)

Administration:
6951 Westminster Highway
Phone 604.273.2266

Mailing Address:
PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal
Vancouver BC V6B 5L5

After hours health & safety emergency

604.273.7711
1.866.922.4357 (WCB.HELP)

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