

Health & Safety Update | July 2018

Welcome to Strutt & Parker's Farm Research Group Health & Safety Update. The quarterly Health & Safety Update is to assist you in ensuring that you are thinking about topical health and safety matters on your farm and/or estate. Health and safety is a vital part of any business operation.

Harvest and haymaking should be underway by the end of the month and some will be thinking about third cut silage. At busy times of year, everyone works under heightened stress levels and are frequently more tired than usual which is when accidents can happen.

For further assistance or information on the issues discussed below, please call your nearest Strutt & Parker office.

HEALTH & SAFETY BRIEFINGS

Providing regular health and safety updates for your employees is an important element of being a responsible employer and is a requirement of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Briefings may take a number of formats, from 15 a minute 'toolbox talk' to a more formal briefing. It is important to keep them practical and relevant to the type of work your employees undertake and use real examples to emphasise the impact that an accident can have not only on the person involved but also those around them and in the wider community. Safety meetings and toolbox talks are a useful way of building a strong safety culture and reinforcing your commitment to protecting your employees. Holding regular safety meetings and toolbox talks can prevent employees from getting complacent and taking safety for granted.

A good time to carry out a health and safety briefing is prior to harvest, when additional employees are taken on, who will be unfamiliar with the general workings of a business. It is important to incorporate all employees as they provide a good reminder to all, and can help reduce complacency on safety in the work place.

YOUNG PEOPLE & CHILDREN ON FARMS

Children are often attracted to large tractors and machines, particularly during harvest, as they are on holiday at this time of year. It must be reiterated to employees that children under the age of 13 are not permitted on machinery. For those operating machinery, it is important to think about where children might be playing, when entering yards or fields. Ensuring children do not play in farmyards at this busy time of year is essential.

Young people (under 18 years of age) are, from time to time, provided with work experience and young family members frequently carry out various tasks on farms and estates. Consideration must be given to the type of tasks they are capable of performing and the dangers that they may be exposed to. Assessing what they can do physically and safely as well as explaining the dangers of a working farm or estate is essential. Young people should not be allowed to use dangerous pieces of equipment or machinery unless they have had specific training which enables them to do so. Particular attention should be given to HSE guidance when taking on young people.

The following must be considered and explained thoroughly:

- The layout of the workplace and where they will be working;
- The nature of any physical, chemical or biological agents they may be exposed to, for what period and to what extent;
- What equipment will be being used and how it will be operated;
- Any work processes that have to be stopped or organised differently;
- Provision of safety equipment and briefings.



OVERHEAD CABLES

On average, one person a year is killed within the agricultural industry by working too close to overhead power lines and, in the last five years, there have been over 1,140 near misses incidents recorded involving machinery and/or equipment contacting overhead power lines where serious injury or death was a possibility.

Overhead cables can include everything from phone lines to high voltage electricity cables. Many high voltage cables are on wooden poles, particularly in rural areas, so don't assume a wooden pole is only carrying telephone cables. Overhead cables can be harder to spot during hours of darkness or dusk so extra care needs to be taken when working at such times. Electricity can jump large distances so take particular care if moving items of conductive material, such as irrigation pipes, below them.

If a power line has been brought down, it should not be approached, as it may still be live. Power lines will attempt to re-power themselves three times before indicating to the power company that there is a problem. Always assume that the power lines are live even if they are not sparking.

If you are in a machine and come into contact with a power cable you should:

- Try to drive clear if possible;
- Stay in the machine unless there is a risk of fire or overturning;
- Jump well clear – ensure you are not in contact with the ground and machine at the same time as you risk electrocution;
- Keep others away from the machine;
- Do not allow anyone to approach you or the machine until it has been confirmed that the power has been isolated by the power/utility company;
- Call 105 to alert the utility provider and 999 if necessary for the Fire Service's assistance.



Issue a plan to all operators and contractors of where all overhead cables are situated. Sprayer and combine operators and those operating tipping trailers should be particularly aware of where power cables are. Avoid opening/closing booms, operating discharge augers or tipping trailers under them. The use of material handlers should be avoided under cables, particularly those with a high reach capability. Avoid stopping under overhead power lines and never stack bales beneath them.

COMBINING

Combining is a job that carries a high level of responsibility on the farm. The operator must be aware of many things all happening at once and often at high speed. Simple safety procedures can make the job safer for all who operate on and around the combine.

Safe operation during harvest depends partially on pre-harvest preparation of the combine. Combine preparation should begin several weeks before harvest to enable replacement parts to be secured and to efficiently prepare the combine for harvest.

Experienced and inexperienced combine operators should be encouraged to review their combine operator's manual taking time to carefully read the manual and become thoroughly familiar with the operating instructions and safety precautions for the machine.

The only service operation that should be done while the machine is running is the adjustment of the drum or fan, which are adjusted with guards in place. Don't be tempted to make other adjustments with the engine running, even if it is convenient. Whenever work on the header or parts beneath it or behind it is required, be sure to block it securely. Never rely solely on the hydraulic system; it may fail. Properly secure the header latch, safety stand or another suitable block before starting any maintenance work.

- Note where overhead power lines are in every field before starting work, have a plan of where overhead cables are in case of entering a field at dusk or in the dark;
- Do not climb round the combine other than via designated access points and where available using steps, standing areas etc.;
- Never climb or reach into the tank unless the engine and all augers are stopped and the key is removed from the ignition;
- Use drive-reversing mechanisms to wind out blockages;
- Keep the cab door shut while the combine is operating, to control dust and reduce noise exposure;
- Guards must be in position and correctly fitted at all times when the combine is running;
- When reversing, make sure you can see what is behind you, use reversing cameras if available;
- Remember the hazards posed by straw chopper and spreaders – allow an adequate run-down time before approaching the rear of the combine.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Making the workplace safe includes providing equipment to enable employees to work safely and responsibly. Even where engineering controls and safe systems of work have been applied, some hazards might remain. These include injuries to:

- The lungs, e.g. from breathing in contaminated air;
- The head and feet, e.g. from falling materials;
- The eyes, e.g. from flying particles or splashes of corrosive liquids;
- The skin, e.g. from contact with corrosive materials;
- The body, e.g. from extremes of heat or cold.

Only use PPE as a last resort. If PPE is still needed after implementing other controls (and there will be circumstances when it is), you must provide this for your employees free of charge. You must choose equipment carefully and ensure employees are trained to use it properly, and know how to detect and report any faults.

You should ask yourself the following questions in terms of selection and use:

- Who is exposed and to what?
- How long are they exposed for?
- How much are they exposed to?

When selecting and using PPE:

- Choose products which are CE marked;
- Choose equipment that suits the user – consider size, fit and weight. If the users help choose it, they will be more likely to use it;
- If more than one item of PPE is worn at the same time, make sure they can be used together, e.g. wearing safety glasses may disturb the seal of a respirator, causing air leaks;
- Instruct and train people how to use it, e.g. train people to remove gloves without contaminating their skin;
- Explain why it is needed, when to use it and what its limitations are.



Never allow exemptions from wearing PPE for those jobs that 'only take a few minutes'. PPE must be properly looked after and stored when not in use. If it is reusable, it must be cleaned and kept in good condition.

Using the right replacement parts which match the original, e.g. respirator filters and keeping replacement PPE available is essential. Ensure someone is responsible for maintenance and reordering PPE as required. Employees must make proper use of PPE and report its loss or destruction or any fault in it.

You must monitor and review the use of PPE, check regularly that PPE is being used and if it isn't, find out why not. Safety signs can be a useful reminder that PPE should be worn. Take note of any changes in equipment, materials and methods – you may need to update what you provide.

WORKING AT HEIGHT

The Working at Height Regulations 2005 applies to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. The regulations require that working at height is avoided wherever possible and, where essential, that the appropriate equipment is selected and used. Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, the use of work equipment that will enable the task to be carried out as safely as possible must be employed. When working at height, consider the following:

- Properly plan and organise all work;
- Take account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety;
- Ensure those involved are trained and competent;
- Ensure the place where work at height is done is safe;
- Ensure all equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected prior to use;
- Risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled;
- Risks from falling objects are properly controlled.

Where possible always avoid working at height. Where it is essential, ensure that equipment used (particularly safety equipment such as harnesses) are inspected to meet other appropriate legislation for example Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER).

You should make sure that people with sufficient skills, knowledge and experience perform tasks when working at height. In the case of low-risk, short duration tasks involving ladders, competence requirements may be no more than making sure employees receive instruction on how to use the equipment safely (e.g. how to tie a ladder properly) and appropriate training. Training often takes place on the job, it does not always take place in a classroom.

CONTACT US

OFFICES

London Head Office	020 7629 7282
Ascot	01344 876 363
Banbury	01295 273 592
Banchory	01330 824 888
Cambridge	01223 459 500
Canterbury	01227 451 123
Chelmsford	01245 258 201
Chester	01244 354 888
Chichester	01273 832 602
Cirencester	01285 659 661
Edinburgh	0131 226 2500
Exeter	01392 215 631
Farnham	01252 821 102
Gerrards Cross	01753 891 188
Guildford	01483 306 565
Harpenden	01582 764 343
Harrogate	01423 561 274
Haslemere	01428 661 077
Horsham	01403 246 790
Inverness	01463 719 171
Ipswich	01473 214 841
Lewes	01273 475 411
Ludlow	01584 873 711
Market Harborough	01858 433 123
Moreton-in-Marsh	01608 650 502
Morpeth	01670 516 123
Newbury	01635 521 707
Northallerton	01609 780 306
Norwich	01603 617 431
Odiham	01256 702 892
Oxford	01865 366 700
Pangbourne	0118 984 575
Perth	01738 567 892
Salisbury	01722 328 741
Sevenoaks	01732 459 900
Shrewsbury	01743 284 204
St Albans	01727 738 280
Stamford	01780 484 040
Sunningdale	01344 623 411
Winchester	01962 869 999
Windlesham	01276 489 500

CONTACTS

Land Management

James Farrell BSc(Hons) MRICS FAAV
01423 706770
james.farrell@struttandparker.com

Farming

Will Gemmill BSc FAAV MBPR (Agric)
01223 459471
will.gemmill@struttandparker.com

Development & Planning

Simon Kibblewhite BSc(Hons) BA FRICS MCIArb
020 7318 5177
simon.kibblewhite@struttandparker.com

Accounting & Taxation Services

Alex Heffer, BA(Hons) ACCA
01245 254656
alex.heffer@struttandparker.com

Building Surveying

Tony Saffery MRICS
01483 303098
tony.saffery@struttandparker.com

National Estate Agency

Guy Robinson
020 7318 5175
guy.robinson@struttandparker.com

Estate & Farm Agency

Mark McAndrew MRICS
020 7318 5171
mark.mcandrew@struttandparker.com

Health & Safety

David Canty MSc MRICS MBPR (Agric. Fert) Tech IOSH
01727 790480
david.canty@struttandparker.com

Energy

Alexander Creed BSc(Hons) MRICS FAAV
020 7318 5022
alexander.creed@struttandparker.com

Research

Jason Beedell MRICS PhD BSc(Hons)
020 7318 4757
jason.beedell@struttandparker.com