

# Live Safe! Work Smart!

Health and safety e-news for Ontario teachers

## ? YOU ASKED US

**Q: A student wants to be in an Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) on a farm and be able to drive the farm tractor. Is there a minimum age to work on a farm? And, is a license required to drive a tractor?**

**A:**  
There is no minimum age set out in regulation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act for working on a farm. There is also no licence required to drive a tractor. The Highway Traffic Act has a minimum age requirement of 16 for driving tractors on roads.

**Note:**  
The operator should be emotionally and physically able and have the maturity to be competent to drive a tractor with both adequate training and supervision.

## Students on Farms: Co-op and Agricultural Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSMs)

BY TISH AMICO, Education Consultant for the Ministry of Labour

Over 150 years ago, many people in Canada lived on a farm, whereas today only about 2.5% of the population live and work on a farm, providing food for Canadians and exporting farm products to the rest of the world.

"One reason for this change is **mechanization**. A farmer with a tractor and other machines can do the work that used to require dozens of farm hands. Another reason is **chemicals** which can be used to produce crops with higher yields and less spoilage". (*Sciencepower 9*).

There are many aspects to health and safety on a farm. Farming operations may involve working with animals, working with chemicals, working in silos, or using mechanized equipment, especially tractors. These are probably the most common vehicles that are used on a farm. They are multi-purpose vehicles and as such, can be quite dangerous, especially if the worker has not been trained to use them properly.

It is evident that farming has changed considerably in the last couple of centuries, and with some of these changes has come a heightened awareness of health and safety in the agricultural industry. The Ontario Regulation 414/05 for Farming operations under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act came in force on June 30, 2006. As of June 20, 2006, farm operations with paid workers both resident and off-shore now have the same basic health and safety rights and protection as other Ontario workers.

With some of our students leaving school early to work on family farms, or those who plan to work part time in the

summer on farms, it is important that we raise farming health and safety awareness given that there is no legislated minimum age to work on a farm.

In addition to early school leavers, the number of students taking part in SHSMs in Agriculture, as well as Co-op students placed at Horticultural and Landscaping placements, call for particular attention to be paid to the kinds of work that the students will be performing, and the strong relation this work has to curriculum.

Some elective certifications that students may earn through their SHSM in Agriculture (e.g., equipment operation safety, hazardous atmospheres and confined spaces, large animal handling), are related to specific hazards addressed by eight Guidelines for Farming Operations in Ontario, developed by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and farm safety experts.. For more detailed information, go to:

[www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/index.php#farming](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/index.php#farming).

Each year in Canada an average of 115 people are killed and another 1,500 are hospitalized due to farm-related incidents.

By getting to know the hazards on a farm, and especially those hazards involved in working with machinery, students who are in these types of placements, earning high school credits toward their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) can become more health and safety aware.

## BRIGHT IDEA

HAVE STUDENTS RESEARCH THE TYPES OF MACHINERY THAT ARE USED ON FARMS. WHEN FINISHED, HAVE THEM CREATE A CHART WITH THE HEADING "DOWN ON THE FARM". ON ONE SIDE, HAVE STUDENTS LIST ALL THE EQUIPMENT THEIR RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT IS USED IN A FARMING OPERATION. ON THE OTHER SIDE, LIST WHAT THEY HAVE FOUND TO BE THE SAFETY MEASURES THEY CAN TAKE TO PREVENT INJURY OR DEATH. CREATE A POSTER WITH A "CATCHY" SLOGAN BASED ON THIS INFORMATION. POST IN THE SCHOOL.

## TISH'S TIPS

THE WORKPLACE SAFETY AND PREVENTION SERVICES (WSPS) FARM SAFETY HAS A NUMBER OF HEALTH AND SAFETY RESOURCES, INCLUDING A MANUAL FOR NEW WORKERS, AND MANUALS FOR TRACTORS OPERATION, GUARDING, SILO SAFETY, AND SAFE MOVEMENT ON FARMS.

THEY ALSO HAVE A NUMBER OF FACT SHEETS ON TOPICS SUCH AS HARVESTING SAFETY, HANDLING FARM ANIMALS, AND POWER TAKE-OFF SAFETY (I.E., SAFETY AROUND THE POWER TAKE OFF (PTO) SHAFT, WHICH TRANSFERS MECHANICAL POWER BETWEEN FARM TRACTORS AND IMPLEMENTS). CHECK THESE OUT!

We welcome your questions, comments and suggestions for future newsletters at [info@livesafeworksmart.net](mailto:info@livesafeworksmart.net)

## Links

[www.farmsafety.ca](http://www.farmsafety.ca)  
[www.farmsafety.ca/public/manuals/manual-new\\_worker.pdf](http://www.farmsafety.ca/public/manuals/manual-new_worker.pdf)  
[www.farmsafety.ca/public/pages/manuals-dwnld.html](http://www.farmsafety.ca/public/pages/manuals-dwnld.html)  
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[www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_990572\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_990572_e.htm)

**Disclaimer:** This newsletter has been prepared to help the workplace parties understand some of their obligations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) and regulations. It is not legal advice. It is not intended to replace the OHSA or the regulations. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE SEE THE [FULL DISCLAIMER](#).