



Safely Working Around Agricultural Machinery: Script

AgSafe, Coalition for Health and Safety in Agriculture¹

The following safety module is intended to be used as a refresher safety awareness session and is in no way to be used as a substitute for job training nor proper equipment use.

You must be trained by your employer on its agricultural machinery before you operate it. Agricultural machines are comprised of many parts requiring specific training in order to operate them safely and correctly. Large machines are designed using completely different engineering principles from cars and other smaller motor vehicles. If you lack the proper training, you could find yourself in trouble very fast.

INSPECT YOUR EQUIPMENT

After you have been trained on your employer's equipment, it is important to begin your operation with a safety inspection. (See Figure 1.) This means that you need to thoroughly inspect all parts of the machine to be sure they are in good working condition. Before operating equipment, you should:

- Inspect all safety guards, including chain guards and PTO guards. If any guards are missing or broken, notify your supervisor immediately so they can be replaced or repaired.
- Check all of the hydraulic lines and fuel lines to make sure they are securely fastened and in good condition. Notify your supervisor if you notice any leaks and bad connections so they can be repaired or replaced. Check hydraulic lines for pinhole leaks using cardboard only.

- Make certain that all stops and speeds are set correctly. During your equipment training you learned how the parts of the machine respond once the power is turned on. This will help you to notice any unusual noise or movements.
- Check to make sure that the tension belts and chain drives are adjusted properly.
- Keep machine parts clean and free of accumulation of crop material, dirt or debris.
- Never operate any equipment that is not in safe working condition.

WEAR ONLY PROPER CLOTHING

No jewelry or loose-fitting clothing should be worn while operating agricultural machinery. (See Figure 2.) Machines that have revolving parts can easily entangle jewelry and baggy clothes, drawing you into the machine very quickly. Make sure shirts that have buttons are buttoned together at the cuffs and front, and clothing with zippers are zipped up.

LOOK AROUND BEFORE STARTING THE EQUIPMENT

Adjust your seat so you can easily reach all controls and see all gauges and indicator lights. After you have completed the initial safety inspection, you can turn on the power.

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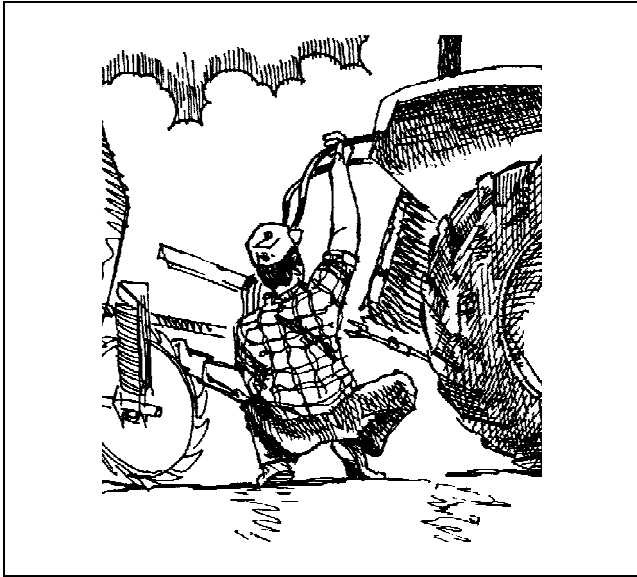


Figure 1. Inspect your equipment



Figure 3. Look around before starting the equipment

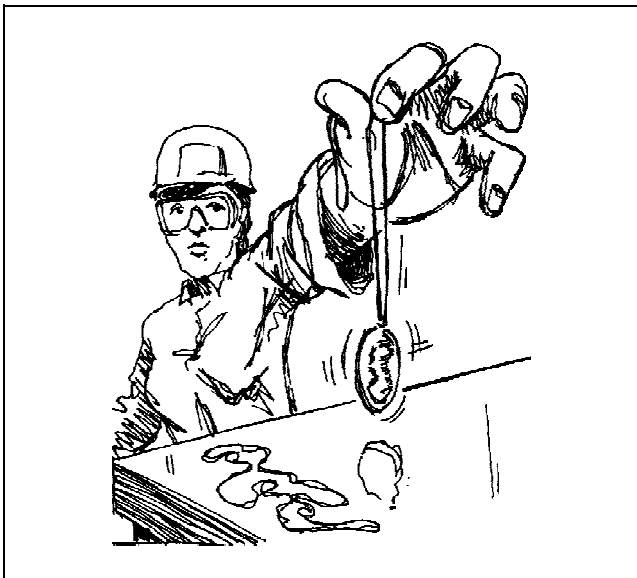


Figure 2. Wear only proper clothing

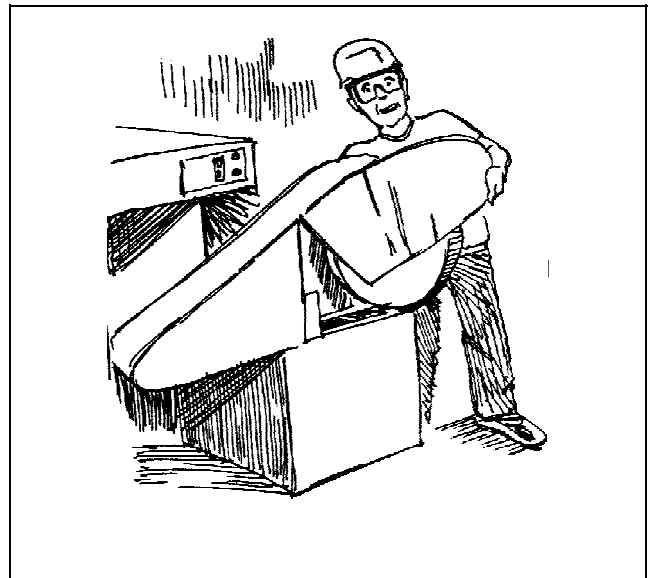


Figure 4. Leave the guards on the machine

However, make sure that everyone is at a safe distance away from the machine before starting. (See Figure 3.) Keep your mind on your work. Most agricultural machines require your concentration in order for the process to run safely and efficiently. Do your best to avoid distractions from your work.

Never by-pass start any equipment. If the machine does not start the way it was designed, inform your supervisor.

LEAVE THE GUARDS ON THE MACHINE

If it is necessary for you to remove a safety guard, first get permission from your supervisor and make sure the machine is locked out. Replace the guards immediately when the adjustment or repair is completed. (See Figure 4.)

USE LOCKOUT/BLOCKOUT PROCEDURES

If the machine you are working with jams or gets caught up on something, turn off the power and lock it in the "off" position. (See Figure 5.) You must do this **FIRST** before you attempt to make any adjustments.

Your employer's lockout/blockout procedure is to be followed immediately when you discover the machine to be malfunctioning. NEVER leave a machine running unattended. Never attempt to repair the machine yourself; however, inform your supervisor immediately after locking it out.

A lockout procedure simply means to put a lock on the part of the machine that controls the power to prevent it from being turned back on. Or, remove the key and take it with you. To begin a lockout procedure, turn off the power to the machine and lock the switch, valve or block with a lock and key that is only used for lockout purposes. It is VERY important that the machine is locked off and not just switched off. Many deaths and serious injuries occur each year when a machine is turned back on while another person is inside it making the necessary repair.

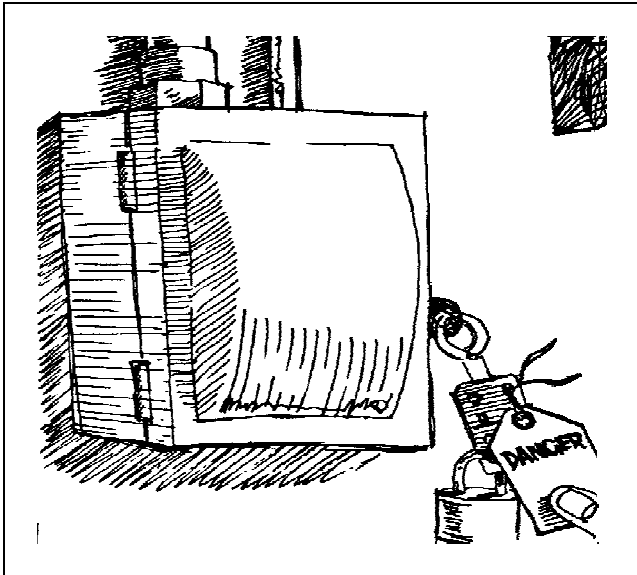


Figure 5. Use lockout/blockout procedures

Use the lockout procedure whenever possible; only use the tag-out method when a lockout method is unavailable. A tag-out means using special tags that warn others of the danger of starting up the machine. A tag should have a printed warning of what could happen if the power to the machine is turned on, and must be tough enough so it can't be removed accidentally. Remember, tags alone do not prevent equipment from starting. They are only warnings. If you use a tag system, you need to be extra careful.

IF YOU FEEL ILL, STAY OFF THE MACHINE

Do not operate any machine, large or small, if you are feeling sick. (See Figure 6.) If you are not well, notify your supervisor. Illnesses and fevers can dampen your judgment and can create hazardous working conditions. It's just not worth the risk of injury.



Figure 6. If you feel ill, stay off the machine

STAY CLEAR OF UNSHIELDED MOVING PARTS

Unshielded moving parts, such as snapping or husking rolls, straw spreaders and choppers, cutterbars, discs, and feed rolls, cannot be shielded to protect you and still operate correctly. For this reason, it is important that you concentrate on your work and watch your movements and clothing around machinery. (See Figure 7.) Do not allow other people to go near unshielded moving parts, except when the machine is locked out and the person is a qualified person hired to make adjustments or repairs.

USE GOOD HOUSEKEEPING TO PREVENT ACCIDENTS

Keeping your work area and machine clean and free of clutter should become a habit for you. (See Figure 8.) Keeping walkways clear of clutter helps prevent slips and falls and also reduces the risk of fires. All platforms and access ladders or steps should be kept free from grease, dirt or debris by washing them with soap and water regularly. If you must go to the top of the machine, clean your shoes or boots of any grease with soap and water before climbing, and use the handrail as

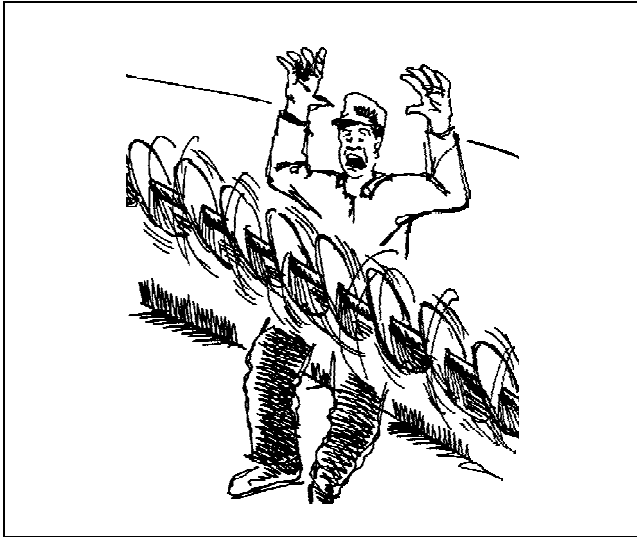


Figure 7. Stay clear of unshielded moving parts

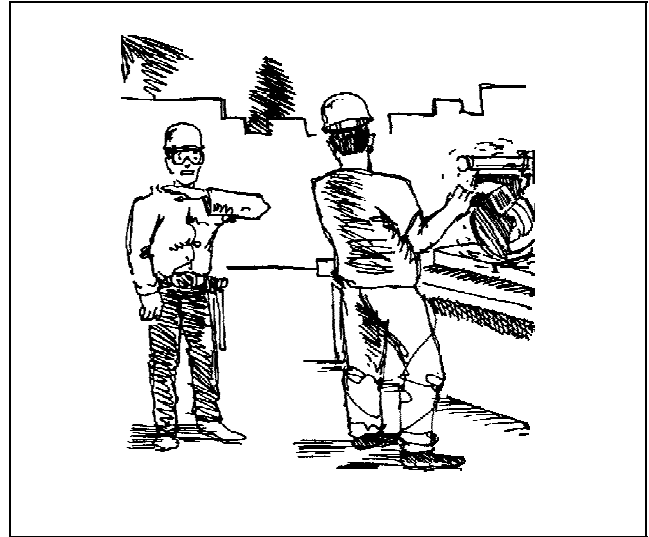


Figure 9. Use hand signals when noise level is high

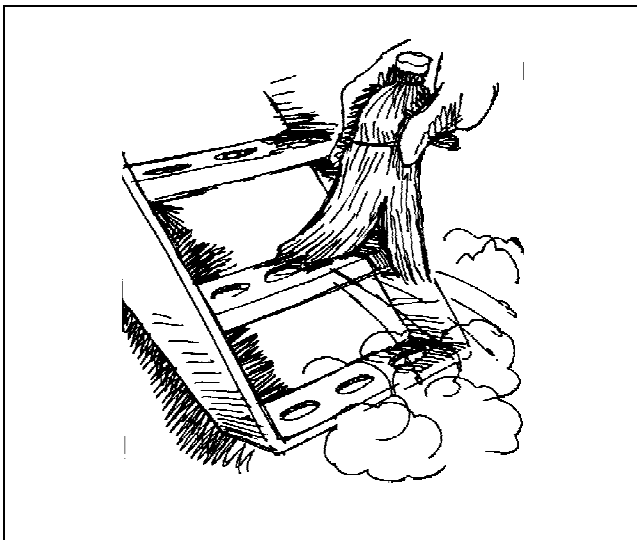


Figure 8. Use good housekeeping to prevent accidents

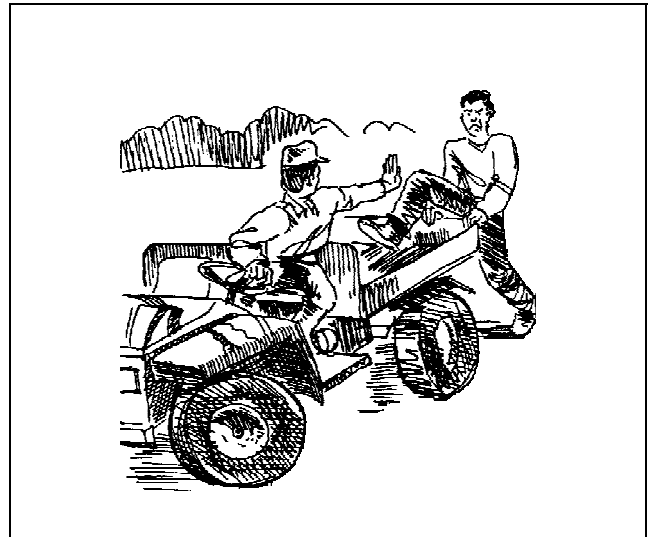


Figure 10. Never permit riders

you climb. When you are on top of the machine, watch your step to prevent falling off. Never jump down from the top of the machine. Instead, use the ladder or steps.

USE HAND SIGNALS WHEN NOISE LEVEL IS HIGH

If the noise level gets too high for you to be heard correctly when you speak loudly, use hand signals. (See Figure 9.) Ask your supervisor about the hand signals that are used for your job. It is important for you to maintain constant communication with your fellow employees at all times.

NEVER PERMIT RIDERS

Do not permit riders on any moving equipment, such as tractors, forklifts, etc., even if it is for a short distance. (See Figure 10.) While moving the equipment, keep your eyes watching for bystanders who may not see you coming, and always travel at a safe, slow speed. If your machine is heavy and very large, check out your path in advance for clearances, obstructions and ditches; locate an alternate route if any are encountered. Drive with extra care if visibility is limited due to rain or fog, or if ground conditions are icy, wet or very dusty.

Always wear seatbelts, even if the machinery is equipped with a ROPS. Seatbelts prevent you from being thrown from an over-turning vehicle that could crush you from its weight.