

## Managing Safety and Fatigue this Harvest

With harvest near, it's time to make sure that your most important resource, the people that work with and for you, are safe and up to the tasks ahead.

“Growers experience intense pressure and fatigue during harvest, and there is usually a higher number of inexperienced seasonal workers employed - all factors that expose the industry to a heightened risk of danger” said Dr Tony Lower Director of the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety.

There are key strategies that growers can use to reduce risks:

- Make sure all guards on machinery and equipment (harvesters, tractors, chaser bins, silos, field bins and auger), are in place.
- Ensure all people working during harvest - whether employees, contractors or family members, are inducted into the way you will manage safety during the harvest, including fatigue. Make your expectations for safety very clear to everyone.
- Have a standard policy where all harvester/machinery engines are stopped and keys removed from the ignition during maintenance; before working under raised hydraulics, header fronts and combs, ensure hydraulic and ram locks have been fitted and that the comb is chocked and supported; replace all guards after servicing/repairs.
- Look up and live, make everyone aware of electrical hazards and where they exist on the property. Consider having no-go areas, if practical.
- Fire is always a risk at harvest - check that the water trailer is full; regularly clean down headers to keep trash and straw away from pulleys, belts and bearings; fit a fire extinguisher on the header, tractors and fuel trailer.

The mix of people, machinery, extended working hours and fatigue, provides a potent cocktail for an increased risk of injury and downtime during harvest.

“It is in everyone’s interest to manage fatigue and while there is no one-size fits all solution, there are things that you can do. Talking with all workers and family members about fatigue and how you will manage fatigue during the harvest as part of the induction is vital.”

To help start this discussion with workers and contractors, a self-assessment fatigue checklist poster has been developed and can be downloaded from the Resources for Farmers (Fatigue Management) at <http://sydney.edu.au/medicine/aghealth/>

“One error made in tiredness can have tragic consequences for individuals or others working on the harvest. Let’s make this harvest a productive and injury free one.”

Further information on grain safety is available on the website or call 02 6752 8210 for further information.

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Contact: Dr Tony Lower

Director - Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety

Ph: (02) 6752 8210