

MAFES Dawg



October 1, 2007

Farm Shop Safety



Farm Shop Safety is an important issue that affects everyone. We have to be “jack-of-all-trades,” especially during the off seasons between harvest time and the spring planting seasons. It behooves us to be abreast of the safety issues involved in maintaining a sound work atmosphere in these areas. There are times when we become mechanics, welders, carpenters, painters, and any other tasks that might unexpectedly arrive.

As a review for all experienced staff members and an orientation for the newer staff members, we want to talk about the various aspects of shop safety:

- **Fire Extinguishers** – This should be a priority as it is definitely an accident and equipment saver. Every shop should have ample extinguishers; an ideal formula is having a minimum of a 10-lb., Type ABC so that no area is more than 30 feet away. The National Fire Protection Association requires that all portable extinguishers be inspected and tagged annually.

When the fire protection representative comes in for his inspection, he will remove the unit from its holder and flip it a couple of times, which is called “fluffing.” This loosens the chemical and protects it from becoming impacted. This allows for the unit to work efficiently as it is designed to do. Without the fluffing, the chemical becomes impacted and reduces the effective use of the unit.

- **Electrical outlets and wiring** – All electrical wiring and cords should be in good repair; if not, they should be replaced or repaired. If you have water in the shop area, it would be good to change the regular grounded outlets out to GFCI’s, especially in the location of an outlet within six feet of the source.
- **Floors** – All floors should be clean and free of clutter. Besides the esthetics of a clean shop area, it reduces the opportunity for a slip, trip, or fall hazard (a fire hazard.)
- **Personal Protection Equipment** – It is very important for the proper PPE to be accessible for the staff to use and just as important for it to be utilized by the staff. Face shields, goggles, welder’s gloves and aprons, chaps and hearing protection, etc. are some of the items that are required.
- **Adequate Lighting** – Obviously, other things being equal, the better the lighting, the better the quality of the work.
- **Ample Ventilation** – With equipment repairs, welding and sometimes painting, it is critical to have adequate ventilation.

- **First Aid/Shower facility** – A well-stocked first aid kit and shower facility are necessary for the shop area for obvious reasons. If there is a shower accessible in a nearby area for the shop to utilize, then it wouldn’t be necessary to have one dedicated solely for the shop.
- **Flammables** – Flammables are to be stored in a secure location for safety and security.
- **Guards / Shields** – The guards and shields all power equipment should be in place before use.
- **Lockout / Tag out** – Be sure that all personnel are oriented in turning off any piece of equipment for repairs with the keys removed and by applying a tag to that effect. All rotating parts should be completely stopped before any repair or adjustment commences.
- **Hand Tools** - The hand tools should be organized for easy accessibility for those that need to use them. The staff should be oriented to return the tools to their rightful location and clean them when the task is finished. The tools should be used for their intended purpose.
- **Shop Hygiene** – Already mentioned is floors clear of clutter, but just as important is keeping lights, tops of parts or storage bins clean and free of dust and lint. With a fire, lint and dust is like putting gas or kerosene on the fire, it only magnifies it.
- **Equipment Jacks** – Be sure that you have adequate jacks to station equipment on while “in the air” repairs are being performed.

In the hustle and bustle of farming activities, it is very easy to put off the program of keeping a clean, neat and orderly shop. But with all pertinent parties involved working on the “same page,” it becomes much easier and simpler to maintain good order in this area. It also carries over to maintaining clean and good working farm equipment. We have all seen how a good program works. When everyone gets into the program and they expect the shop to be clean, pretty soon everyone will remind each other to clean up.

Cleanliness and orderliness should be the rule of the day and not an exception.

WIPE IT UP-AVOID A SLIP-UP!

Ted Gordon-Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.
MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201

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K.I.S.S.
KEEP IT SAFE & SOUND!!
BE ALERT- - ACCIDENTS HURT!!