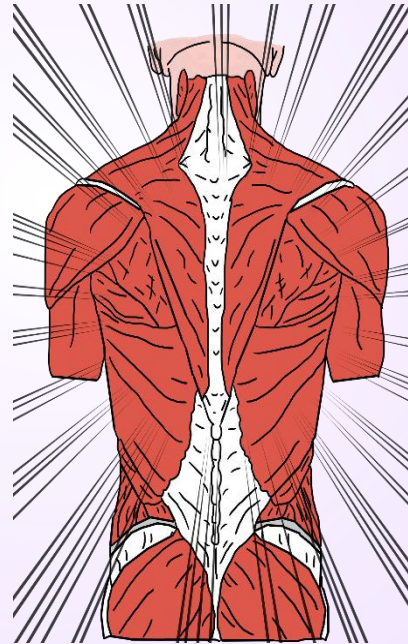
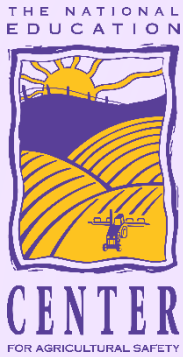


Discovering the Root of your Back Story: Prevention and Understanding of Back Injuries



This material was produced under a Susan Harwood Training Grant (SH-05172-SH9) from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor. It does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U. S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U. S. Government. The U.S. Government does not warrant or assume any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or usefulness of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed.

Who We Are



A Partnership in Safety and Health Between:



About Us



- Part of NICC Business and Community Solutions, the customized training, workforce development, and continuing education division of Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)
- Dedicated to preventing illnesses, injuries, and deaths among farmers, their families, and agricultural workers

➤ To date, **OUR TRAININGS HAVE SAVED 19 LIVES NATIONWIDE!**

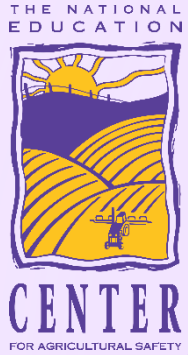
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- Provide safety trainings for business and industry, such as hazardous materials training, forklift operator, construction flagger, and more

Mobile Trainings & Props



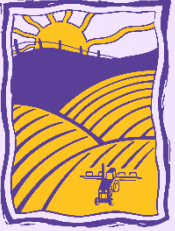
Objectives



- ▶ Upon completion of this training, participants will be able to:
 - ▶ Identify causes of back injuries/pain
 - ▶ Explain and utilize strategies to prevent back injuries/pain
 - ▶ Describe and utilize proper lifting techniques
 - ▶ Describe effects of whole-body vibration (WBV)
 - ▶ Apply strategies for maintaining back health
 - ▶ Recall ways to manage chronic pain

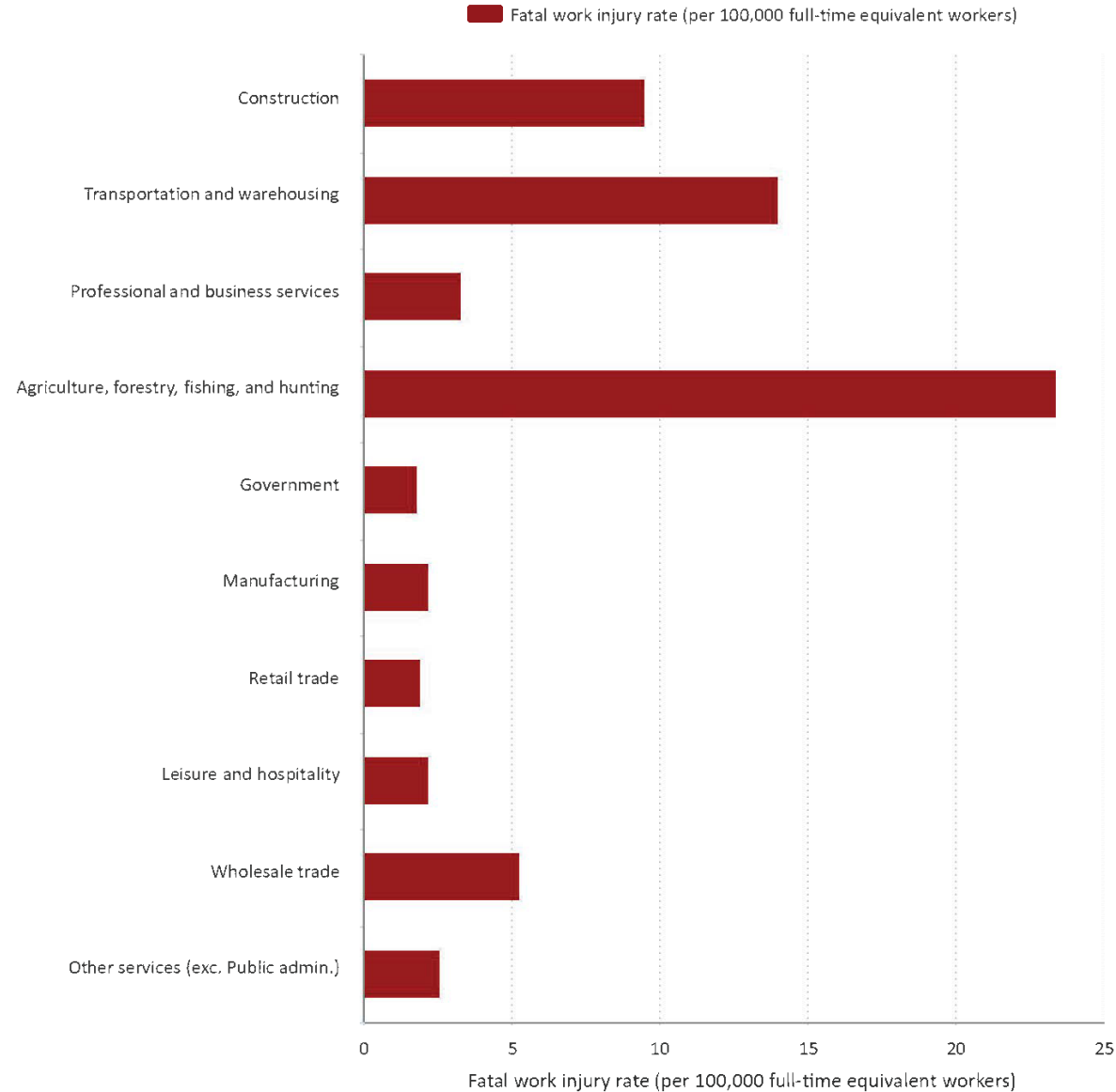
Agriculture – Hazardous Industry

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Rate of fatal work injuries, by industry sector, 2018



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Women in Agriculture Now



- ▶ Farming is the occupation most associated with injury to women.
- ▶ The number of women engaged in production agriculture is increasing.
- ▶ More women are farm owners and are more actively involved in day-to-day farming operations.

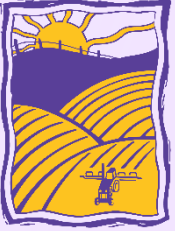


Meyers, et al (2001), Recognizing & Preventing the Industry's Most Widespread Health & Safety Problem

https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2012/Online_Resources/Race,_Ethnicity_and_Gender_Profiles/cpd99000.pdf

Importance for Agriculture

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- Because of the diverse nature of work and the many occupational exposures for workers in production agriculture, there is confusion and misunderstanding related to OSHA standards and exemptions.



OSHA Exemption Status – Farms



- ▶ A farming operation is exempt from all OSHA activities if it:
 - ▶ Employs 10 or fewer employees* (currently and at all times during the last 12 months) *and*
 - ▶ Has not had an active temporary labor camp during the last 12 months
- * Family members of farm employers are not counted when determining the number of employees*
- ▶ In a court of law OSHA rules and regulations can be used to identify and prosecute for unsafe conditions that could lead to worker injury or death. If no other standards apply, the **OSHA General Duty Clause** is a frequent reference point.

<https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/directives/cpl-02-00-051>

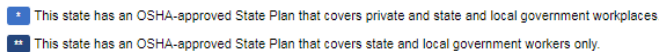
AgriSafe Network Understanding OSHA Agricultural Standards

OSHA General Duty Clause



- ▶ Requires employers to furnish each employee a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm.
- ▶ Is used to cite employers for recognized hazards where there is no direct standard that applies to the operation. Employee exposure to hazards related to heavy lifting and back injuries may be addressed under the General Duty Clause.
- ▶ If there is not a standard that applies directly to agricultural operations, OSHA could utilize the General Duty Clause, referencing the applicable standard.

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State Plans



- ▶ If you are operating in an OSHA-approved State Plan state, you must comply with the state's requirements (which may be different than those of the Federal rule).
- ▶ Employers in State Plan states should contact their state OSHA offices for more information.

Back Pain in America



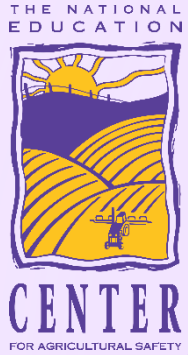
- Nearly 80% of Americans experience back pain at some point.
- Back pain is the second most common cause of lost work time, behind the common cold.
- Men and women alike are prone to work-related back pain, with the first episode usually occurring between the ages of 20 and 40.
- The frequency and economic impact of back injuries and disorders on the work force are expected to increase over the next several decades as the average age of the work force increases and medical costs go up.

http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1717&context=extension_curall

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=FS661>

https://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/otm/otm_vii/otm_vii_1.html

Back Pain in Agriculture



- ▶ Back pain can be a common complaint for farmers.
- ▶ Lower back pain occurs among all ages and jobs, but the people who are most at risk work in the agriculture sector and are 35-65 years old.

<https://www.agriculture.com/podcast/successful-farming-radio-podcast/farm-work-is-a-pain>

<http://www.safetynewsalert.com/new-study-confirms-impact-of-low-back-pain/>

Back Injuries



- Back injuries are one of the most common forms of farm-related injuries.
- Why?...



Causes of Back Pain & Injury in Agriculture



- ▶ Handling livestock
- ▶ Prolonged sitting to operate equipment
- ▶ Repetitive motions – bending/lifting/twisting
- ▶ Forceful movements – pushing/pulling
- ▶ Awkward working positions/body postures
- ▶ Reaching/lifting objects overhead
- ▶ Lifting heavy objects (possibly on uneven terrain)
- ▶ Long working hours – day/night
- ▶ Whole body vibration
- ▶ Slips, trips, or falls- especially noted for Women over 60 years of age.
- ▶ Physical condition – age, weight, disease, etc.

http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1717&context=extension_curall

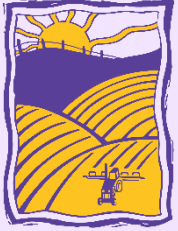
<http://www.safetynewsalert.com/new-study-confirms-impact-of-low-back-pain/>

http://www.ncfh.org/uploads/3/8/6/8/38685499/fs-occ_health.pdf

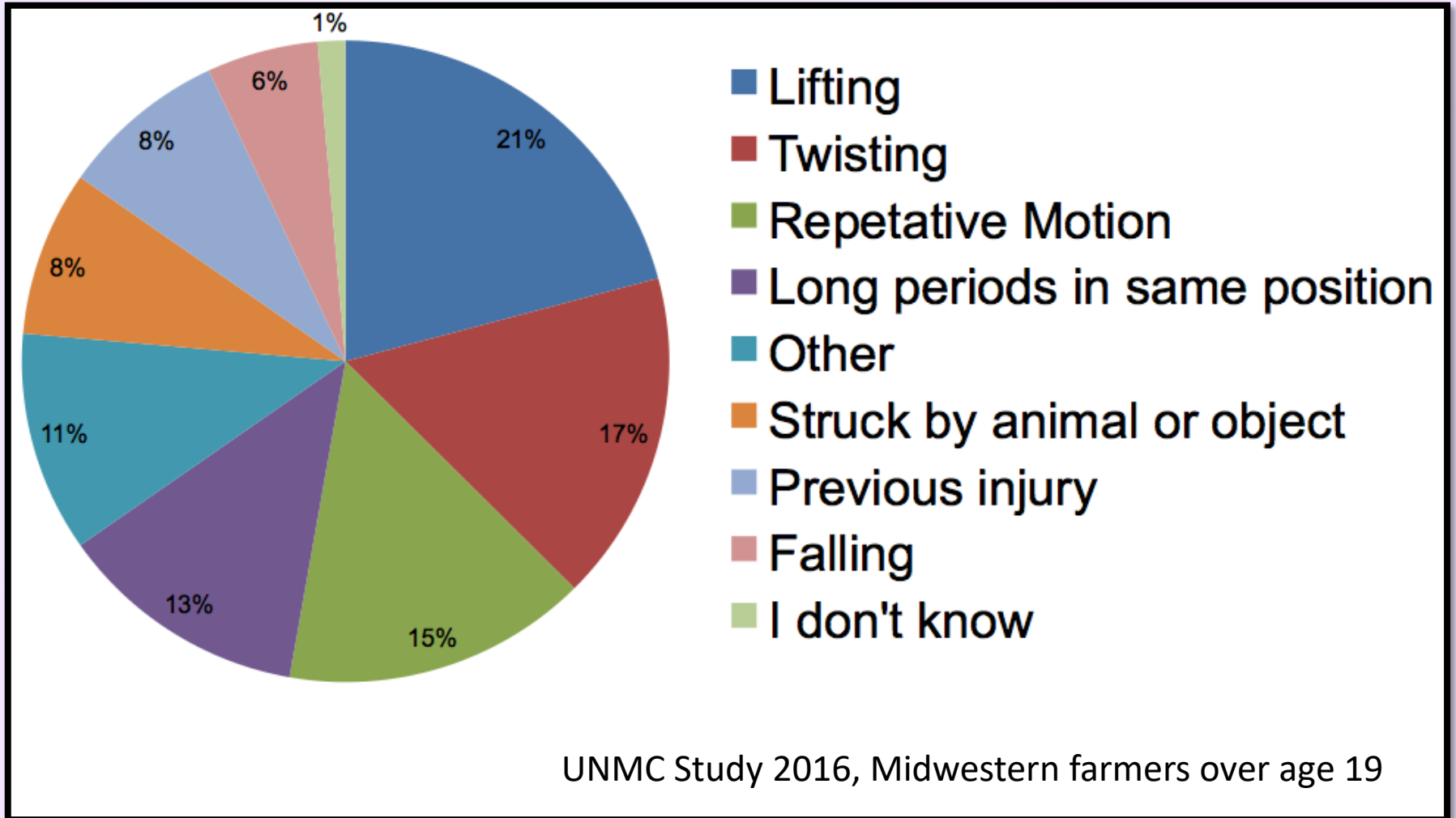
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=FS661>

Perceived Cause of Back Pain

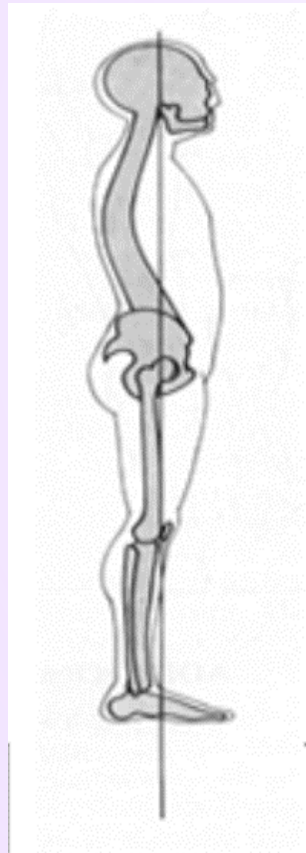
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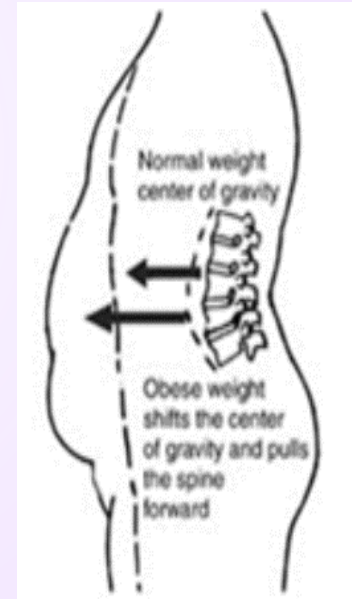


Physical Factors – Body Mass Index (BMI)Impacts Balance Ability



**Normal weight-
Line of gravity**

- Through jaw
- Front of shoulder joints
- Through or behind hip joints
- Front of knee and ankle joints

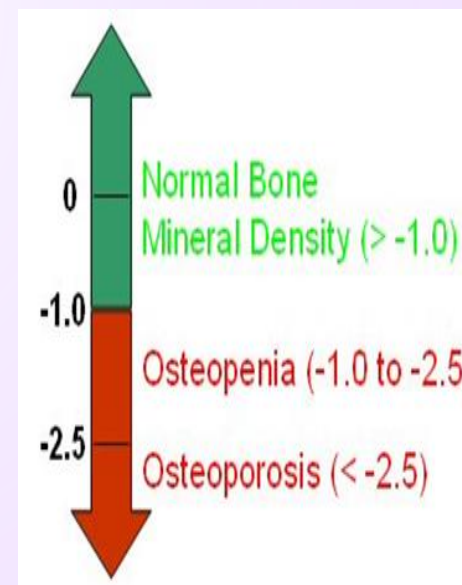


Obesity: Line of gravity shifts forward, causing all posterior muscles to work harder

Contributing Factors to Injury

Physiological & Social Factors

- Working alone
- “Shift time” varies frequently and is seldom an 8-hour day
- Age
- Hearing acuity
- Visual acuity
- Arthritis
- Osteoporosis / Osteopenia



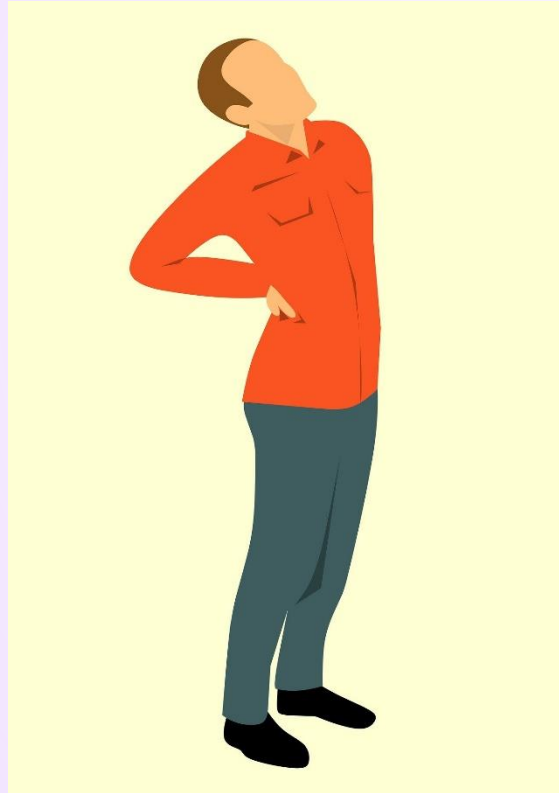
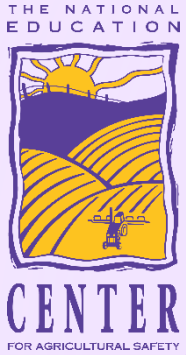
Ergonomic Differences



- Women have anatomical and physiological differences that may place them at risk for farm injuries (Engberg, 1993).
- Females are, on average, shorter than men and have more adipose tissue. Females also have narrower shoulders, wider hips and proportionally have shorter legs and arms than their male counterparts (Mackay, & Bishop, 1984).
- ***On average upper body strength is 40% - 75% less in females than in males, while lower body strength is 5% - 30% less in females*** (Falkel, Sawka, Levine, Pimental, & Pandolf., 1986).



Symptoms of Back Injuries



- Severity of symptoms can vary, ranging from relatively mild and short in duration to pronounced and incapacitating.
- Stiffness
- Pain
- Inability to move
- Sciatica-type pain down one or both legs
- Numbness in foot or toes
- Difficulty walking/sitting

Types of Back Injuries

Sprain/Strains

- Sprains occur when ligaments (tissues that attach bones at a joint) become stretched or torn.
 - Can be caused by falling, twisting, or being hit
- Strains occur when muscles or tendons (tissues that connect muscle to bone) become stretched or torn.
 - Can be caused by twisting or pulling
 - May occur suddenly or develop over time

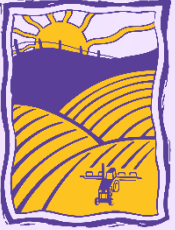
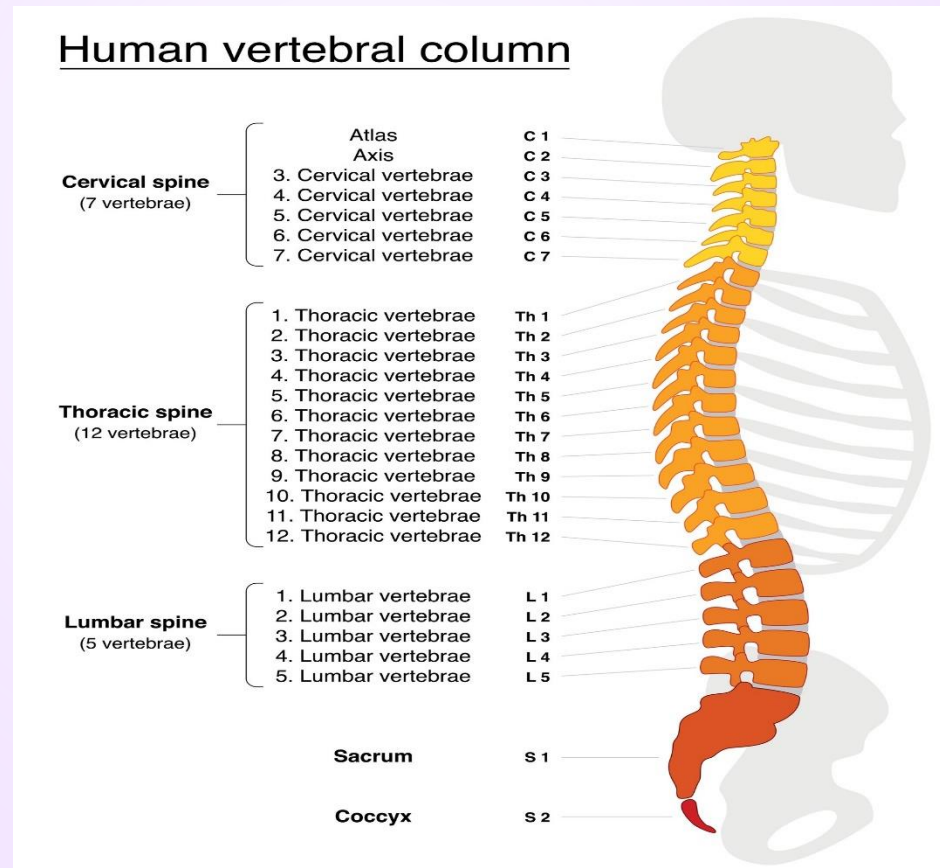
Herniated Disks

- Herniations occur when the disks (cushions between the bones of the back) bulge or rupture.
 - Reduce cushioning between the bones
 - Irritate nearby nerves
 - Cause sharp pain, numbness, or tingling in the back or running into the leg
 - Can be caused by injury, but disks also break down with age



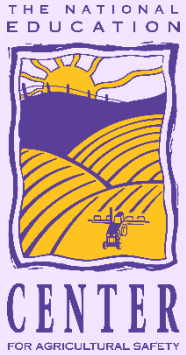
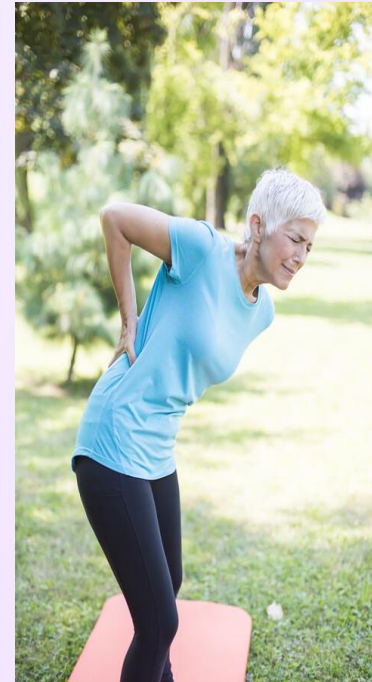
Types of Back Injuries – Fractured Vertebrae

- Can be caused by falls, blows to the spine, or compression of the back



Chronic Conditions

- Health conditions, such as arthritis, can cause or contribute to back pain



Preventing Back Injuries – Lifting or Carrying



- ▶ Use help when lifting and lighten loads – make more trips
- ▶ Know the destination and have a clear path before lifting
- ▶ Bend at the knees, not at the back
- ▶ Turn and face the object being lifted rather than twisting while lifting; rotate the body by moving feet
- ▶ Carry objects close to the body
- ▶ Use hydraulics and pneumatics to lift heavy items whenever possible
- ▶ Use equipment to move items long distances

http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1717&context=extension_curall

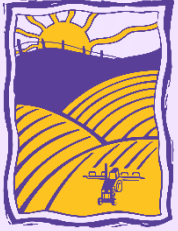
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.php?pid=FS661>

Mindful Lifting

- ➔ Test the Load
- ➔ Bend Knees Deeply-keeping toes behind the knees
- ➔ Engage the Abdominals-Core
- ➔ Inhale deeply before the lift, Exhale while lifting



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Preventing Back Injuries – Working with Livestock

- Have assistance
- Use feeding equipment and bale handlers
- Be careful not to trip over shorter animals (young pigs, etc.)
- Avoid falls from horses



Preventing Back Injuries – Working with Livestock Continued...

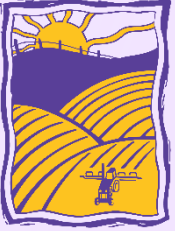


- ▶ Use animal handling equipment to restrict animal movement and position animals at proper working height for medicating, branding, etc.

- ▶ Use animal handling/safety equipment to reduce your exposure to direct animal contact
 - ▶ Squeeze chutes
 - ▶ Handling pens
 - ▶ Small animal transportation devices



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Preventing Back Injuries – Completing Maintenance/Shop Tasks



- ▶ When possible, position workstations/equipment at the proper height to minimize bending and stooping.
- ▶ Store frequently used parts/tools between waist and shoulder height.
- ▶ Place anti-fatigue mats in areas where you stand for long periods of time.
- ▶ Use a stool when working close to the ground.
- ▶ Use long-handled tools to increase leverage and reduce the need to bend/reach.

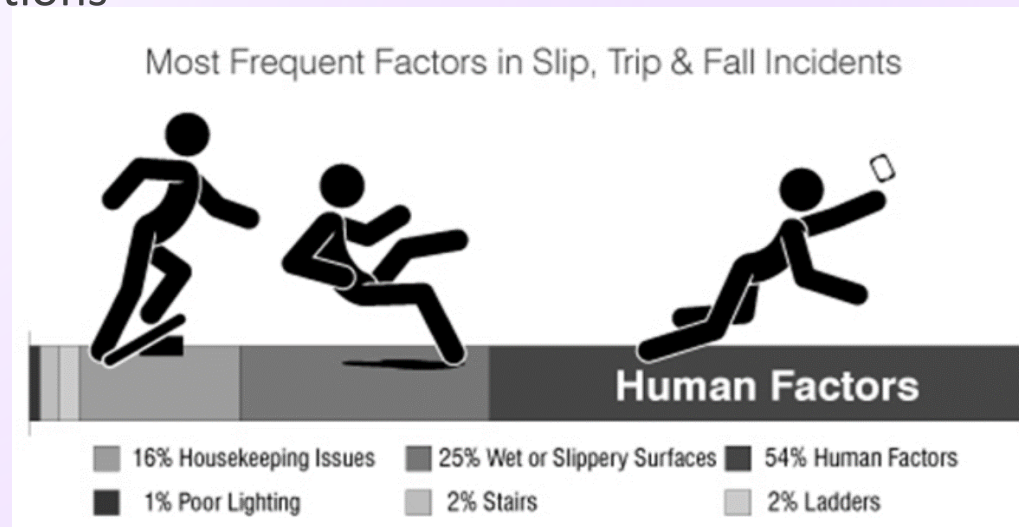
http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1717&context=extension_curall

<https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/AEX-982.7>

Preventing Back Injuries – Slips, Trips, & Falls



- ▶ Minimize stumbling or fall hazards by practicing good housekeeping methods in all areas of the farm. (Keep tractor platforms clear of tools/clutter.)
- ▶ Complete work at ground level whenever possible
- ▶ Maintain three points of contact when climbing
- ▶ Ensure that work areas are well-lit
- ▶ Wear correct footwear for the job and conditions
- ▶ Eliminate distractions (phones)
- ▶ Use handrails
- ▶ Use a lift and harnesses to work at heights
- ▶ Open gates rather than climb over them



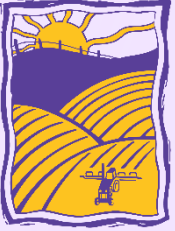
Machinery Build and Women

The placement of levers and the strength required to move them, may be more suited to the average male. (Carruth et al. 2001)



We know this photo should show a ROPS – but the reality is that women are often using smaller, older tractors to perform farm and ranch chores that are not retro-fitted

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Correlation of Tractor use and Injury

Driving tractors an average of one day a week has been found to increase the risk of nonfatal farm injury (Carruth et al. 2001)

Whole Body Vibration (WBV)



- Ag workers have been found to exceed the European Union recommended daily action limits regarding occupational whole body vibration exposure.
- The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not enforce a whole-body vibration standard.
- Poses substantial risk for spinal musculoskeletal disorders.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284178418_Predicting_Whole_Body_Vibration_Exposure_from_Occupational_Quad_Bike_Use_in_Farmers

<https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/news-items/ui-study-looks-at-ag-machinery-vibration-back-pain-among-farmers/>

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/business/university-of-iowa-study-farmers-harvest-season-iowa-farmers-back-problems-musculoskeletal-problems-iowa-college-of-public-health-why-does-my-back-hurt-iowa-harvest-season-20181019>

University of Iowa WBV Study



- Defined whole body vibration as mechanical vibrations transmitted to the human body through a contact surface, such as a seat.
- Examined 112 machines (combines, tractors, skid loaders, forklifts, ATVs) as more than 50 midwestern farmers went about their daily work.
- Measured the vibration levels of the machines and how effective the seats were in reducing vibration levels to the operator.

<https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/news-items/ui-study-looks-at-ag-machinery-vibration-back-pain-among-farmers/>

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/business/university-of-iowa-study-farmers-harvest-season-iowa-farmers-back-problems-musculoskeletal-problems-iowa-college-of-public-health-why-does-my-back-hurt-iowa-harvest-season-20181019>

University of Iowa WBV Study Results



- ▶ Within 8 hours of continuous use, ATVs, heavy utility vehicles, and tractors were most likely to reach the EU recommended daily action level regarding occupational whole body vibration exposure.
- ▶ Among the 18 combines measured in the study, none would reach the action level in 8 hours of continuous use – most likely due to their mass and common presence of “relatively sophisticated” seat suspension systems.

<https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/news-items/ui-study-looks-at-ag-machinery-vibration-back-pain-among-farmers/>

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/business/university-of-iowa-study-farmers-harvest-season-iowa-farmers-back-problems-musculoskeletal-problems-iowa-college-of-public-health-why-does-my-back-hurt-iowa-harvest-season-20181019>

“Daily Dose” of Whole Body Vibration



- ▶ A person’s “daily dose” of vibration depends on the magnitude of the vibration and the exposure time.
- ▶ Farmers often use multiple machines each day, so each machine and the amount of time it is operated contributes to the “daily dose”.



Whole Body Vibration



Health Effects



Speech
interference



Increased
heart rate and
blood pressure



Muscle fatigue
and cramping



Increased
breathing rate



Disruption of
balance and
perception



Low back pain
and damage to
the spine

Courtesy of University of Iowa & the Great Plains Center for Agricultural Health: Nate Fethke, PhD, CPE (nathan-fethke@uiowa.edu) Diane Rohlman PhD (diane-rohlman@uiowa.edu)

The Problem with Whole Body Vibration



- ▶ As a person sits, the curvature of the lower back is typically lost without a lumbar support.
- ▶ Combine this with the whole body vibration and there is repeated stretching of the low back, which is one possibility for how prolonged exposure to WBV can lead to problems.

Maintenance of Equipment – Seats



- ▶ Seats with shock-absorbing suspension should be adjusted properly for the operator's weight.
- ▶ Include the seat in the overall maintenance plan of the machine.
- ▶ Replace older equipment seats with new ones (adjustable lumbar support, arm rests, and adjustable thigh support). A new seat cushion will not help reduce vibration levels.

<https://www.agriculture.com/podcast/successful-farming-radio-podcast/farm-work-is-a-pain>

<https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/AEX-982.7>

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/business/university-of-iowa-study-farmers-harvest-season-iowa-farmers-back-problems-musculoskeletal-problems-iowa-college-of-public-health-why-does-my-back-hurt-iowa-harvest-season-20181019>

Other Considerations for WBV



- Keep tires properly inflated.
- Maintain vehicle suspension system.
- Use different tractors/machinery for different tasks
- Reduce vehicle speed over rough terrain
- Rotate workers between tasks to limit exposure
- Avoid physically demanding activities for a short time after exiting machinery to allow the back to recover a bit.

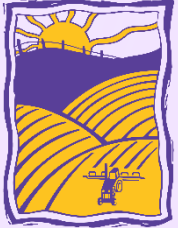
<https://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/news-items/ui-study-looks-at-ag-machinery-vibration-back-pain-among-farmers/>

<https://www.nfuonline.com/cross-sector/farm-business/health-safety-and-wellbeing/health-safety-and-wellbeing-news/whole-body-vibration-in-agriculture/>

<https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/business/university-of-iowa-study-farmers-harvest-season-iowa-farmers-back-problems-musculoskeletal-problems-iowa-college-of-public-health-why-does-my-back-hurt-iowa-harvest-season-20181019>

RESOURCES

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Whole Body Vibration

WBV occurs when the shaking motion of a vehicle is transferred to the operator through the feet, seat, or backrest.



Health Effects



Speech interference



Increased heart rate and blood pressure



Muscle fatigue and cramping



Increased breathing rate

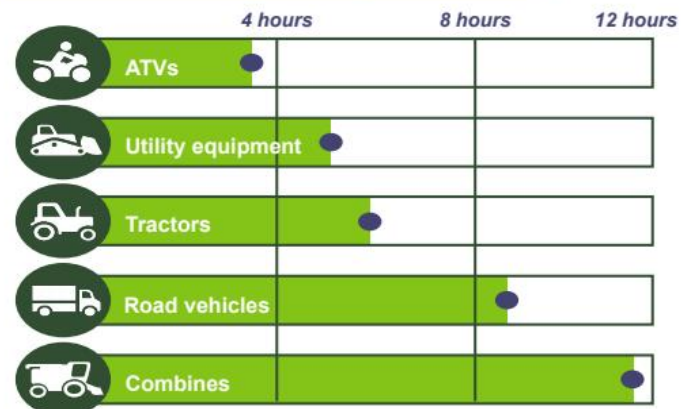


Disruption of balance and perception



Low back pain and damage to the spine

Average Operation Time before Reaching Recommended Daily WBV Exposure Limits



* Each vehicle used during the day contributes to overall WBV exposure

**Recommendations based on exposure limits from the European Union

Prevention Strategies



Maintain Equipment

Keep tires properly inflated

Maintain vehicle suspension system according to the manufacturer's specifications



Adjust the Seat

Adjust the seat suspension properly so the seat doesn't bottom out during use

Adjust the position of the seat to improve posture

Use a backrest with lumbar support



Be Aware of Terrain

Slow down when traveling across rough terrain

Maintain soft-surface roads/tracks

Alter your routes to avoid rough terrain if possible



Take Care of Your Back

Avoid long hours of continuous operation

Avoid twisting your back while operating vehicle

Minimize forward leaning posture when driving



Stop and Take Breaks

Take breaks periodically

Avoid lifting materials immediately after long periods of driving

www.facebook.com/GPCH

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GREAT PLAINS
Center for Agricultural Health
www.gpcah.org

Preventing Back Injuries – Education



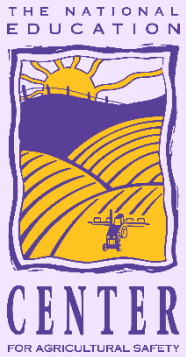
- ▶ Employee training should include general principles of ergonomics, recognition of hazards and injuries, procedures for reporting hazardous conditions, and methods and procedures for early reporting of injuries.

Treatment of Back Pain & Injuries



- ▶ Take care of injured areas. Don't let it go.
- ▶ Could include:
 - ▶ Rest
 - ▶ Ice/Heat
 - ▶ Anti-inflammatory medication
 - ▶ Stretching
 - ▶ Physical Therapy
 - ▶ Surgery

How to Maintain Back Health



- Establish routine activities that protect and strengthen the back.
 - Strengthen the core muscles through regular exercise.
 - Stretch daily to maintain flexibility.
 - Practice proper posture, especially when seated.
 - Sleep on your back with a supportive mattress and pillows to maintain proper spine alignment.



http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1717&context=extension_curall

<https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/AEX-982.7>

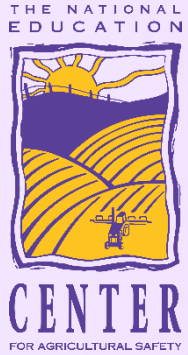
Tools, Gloves, Hats



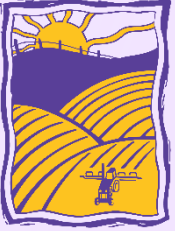
<https://www.greenherontools.com/>



Anti-vibration gloves



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More Healthy Habits for Preventing Back Injuries

- ▶ Wear boots/shoes with high-quality insoles
- ▶ Alternate strenuous tasks with less strenuous tasks.
- ▶ Push rather than pull objects.
- ▶ Manage stress to prevent muscles from becoming tense.
- ▶ Eating right gives muscles the nutrients they need to work properly.
- ▶ Understand your body's limitations and ask for help when needed.

Managing Chronic Pain



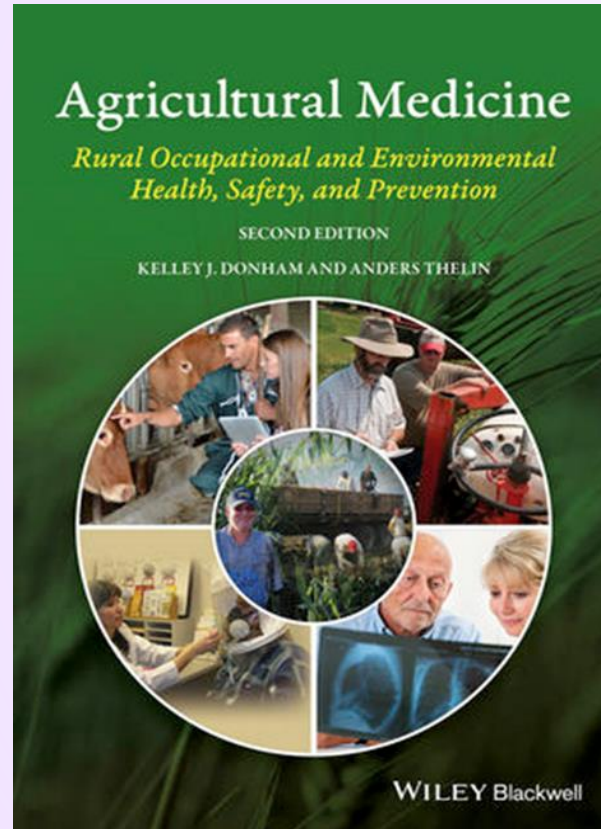
- ▶ Treat general achiness with massage, heat, or Epsom salt baths to relieve some of the muscle tension.
- ▶ Ideal treatment is comprehensive and addresses a person's physical, emotional, and cognitive needs.
- ▶ The first step should always be to seek proper treatment from a healthcare provider.

More on Managing Chronic Pain



- ▶ Other steps that can make living with chronic pain more tolerable include:
 - ▶ Relaxing through deep breathing and other stress management techniques
 - ▶ Don't overdo it on good days; learn to pace yourself
 - ▶ Positive self-talk/positive attitude
 - ▶ Incorporate rest, exercise, and relaxation into your daily schedule
 - ▶ Join a chronic pain support group
 - ▶ Decrease or eliminate alcohol consumption.
 - ▶ Know your medications
 - ▶ Quit smoking

Additional Resources

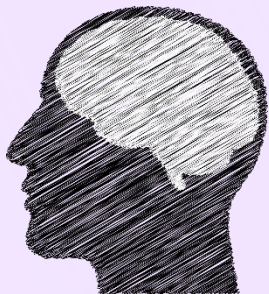


<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/patient-caregiver-education/fact-sheets/low-back-pain-fact-sheet>

Final Thoughts



- ▶ “We want [back pain] to not be just part of the job. We want [it] to be something farmers are thinking about early in their careers so they do what they can to protect themselves.” – Nathan Fethke, University of Iowa College of Public Health
- ▶ Use your head before you use your back.



<http://www.agrability.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ps26.pdf>

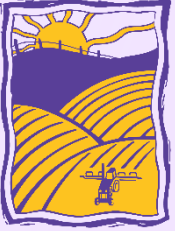
Employee Rights - Overview



- ▶ Under federal law, you are entitled to a safe workplace.
- ▶ Your employer must provide a workplace free of known health and safety hazards.
- ▶ If you have concerns, you have the right to speak up about them without fear of retaliation.

Employee Rights

THE NATIONAL
EDUCATION

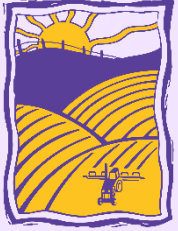


CENTER
FOR AGRICULTURAL SAFETY

- Be trained in a language you understand
- Work on machines that are safe
- Be provided required safety gear, such as gloves or a harness and lifeline for falls
- Be protected from toxic chemicals
- Request an OSHA inspection, and speak to the inspector
- Report an injury or illness, and get copies of your medical records
- See copies of the workplace injury and illness log
- Review records of work-related injuries and illnesses
- Get copies of test results done to find hazards in the workplace

OSHA Whistleblower Protection Programs

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR



Find it in OSHA



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THE WHISTLEBLOWER Protection Programs



File a COMPLAINT

File a complaint if your employer has retaliated against you for exercising your rights as an employee. In states with approved State OSHA Plans, employees may file a complaint under the OSH Act with both the State and Federal OSHA. Under the other federal laws, a complaint must be filed with Federal OSHA directly. You may file a complaint by calling 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), contacting your local OSHA office or filing online here.

[Learn More](#) →

Know Your RIGHTS

OSHA's whistleblower statutes protect you from retaliation. An employer cannot retaliate by taking "adverse action" against workers who report injuries, safety concerns, or other protected activity.

[Learn More](#) →

Worker PROTECTIONS

Since passage of the OSH Act in 1970, Congress has expanded OSHA's whistleblower authority to protect workers from retaliation under twenty-two federal laws. Complaints must be reported to OSHA within set timeframes following the retaliatory action, as prescribed by each law.

[Learn More](#) →

Resources Available



- ▶ OSHA website: www.osha.gov
- ▶ OSHA phone: 800.321.OSHA
- ▶ OSHA educational materials
- ▶ Compliance Assistance Specialists in OSHA Regional and State Offices
- ▶ National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) – OSHA's sister agency
- ▶ OSHA Training Institute Education Centers
- ▶ Doctors, nurses, other healthcare providers
- ▶ Public libraries
- ▶ Other local, community-based resources

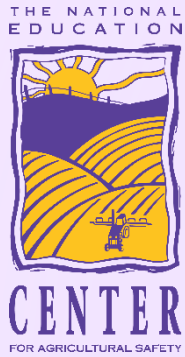
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