A hazard identification system is a requirement of a program under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. By identifying hazards, farmers will decrease the likelihood of an incident. Farm Safety Nova Scotia recommends all farms have a hazard identification system in place, regardless of program requirements.

An evaluation of the entire farm should be performed on an annual basis. For areas or equipment only used seasonally, an inspection prior to the working season should be adequate. By performing an annual risk assessment, farmers can ensure that all potential hazards and risks are addressed prior to working in the area (e.g. fixing a washed out road into a field).

A hazard identification system must include:
- An evaluation of the workplace.
- Procedures and schedules for regular inspections.
- Procedures for ensuring the reporting of hazards and the accountability of the person responsible for correction.
- An identification of the circumstances where the employer must report hazards to the committee/representative and the procedures for doing so.

**Regular Inspections**

Farmers must develop procedures and schedules for regular inspections of the farm. Depending on the size and activities of the operation, the schedule may vary. The procedure should include who is responsible for conducting the inspection (committee, employer, etc.) and how to complete the inspection.

When determining the frequency of the inspections it is important to consider the risks and hazards associated with the area, task or equipment. For example, a storage shed may require an annual inspection, but the main barn may need to be inspected monthly.

On top of regularly scheduled inspections, it is important that all those on the farm are aware of their surroundings and continually on-the lookout for hazards. Employees should always assess the risks associated with the task at hand.

**Reporting Hazards**

All those working on the farm must be aware of the procedure for reporting the hazard. It is good practice to report the hazard in writing. It is extremely important that the person receiving the report is accountable for ensuring the hazard is investigated and corrected. Generally, an employee is responsible for reporting hazards to their immediate supervisor or employer.

There may be circumstances on the farm when the farmer must report hazards to the committee or representative to ensure they are aware of the hazards in the workplace. It is the responsibility of the farmer to ensure all employees understand the hazards present at the workplace. There must be a clear procedure for reporting hazards to workers.

*Disclaimer: This fact sheet is a general overview for information purposes only. Farmers must reference legislation to ensure compliance.*