

What farmers need to know about their requirements under the OHS Act and regulations

All farmers must understand and comply with their duties and responsibilities under the **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act and regulations**. Farmers are responsible to ensure all workers do what is required by provincial law.

While everyone on the farm is responsible for health and safety, the farmer has the greatest degree of responsibility.

Farm Safety Nova Scotia recommends that all farms develop a **Farm Safety Plan** specific to their operation.

1–4 Farms with 1–4 regularly-employed employees are:

- Recommended to prepare and review a written health and safety policy.

5–19 Farms with 5-19 regularly-employed employees are:

- Required to prepare and review annually a written health and safety policy.
- Required to ensure employees select one employee who is not connected to management as safety representative.

20 or more Farms with 20 or more employees are:

- Required to prepare and review annually a written health and safety policy.
- Required to establish and maintain a written health and safety program.
- Required to ensure a joint health and safety committee is formed and maintained.

FARMERS RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure health & safety of the workplace.
- Provide and maintain equipment, machines and tools that are properly equipped with safety devices.
- Provide safety instruction and training.
- Ensure employees are familiar with hazards in the workplace.
- Ensure employees are not exposed to health and safety hazards.
- Report any fires or serious injury at the workplace.

WORKER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Protect themselves and other workers (take every reasonable precaution).
- Cooperate with the farmer regarding any health & safety requirements.
- Ensure safety clothing and equipment required are used or worn.
- Immediately report any safety concerns to the farmer or person in charge.
- Right to refuse unsafe work.

Applicable provincial OHS regulations

Chemicals

Maintain a list of chemicals on the farm. Worker training, proper labels, and safety data sheets available (WHMIS).

First Aid

Worker training, supplies and remote location plans.

Ventilation, Lighting, Sanitation and Accommodation

Ensure proper ventilation and lighting. Workers must have access to drinking water, eating areas, change rooms, washrooms and hand-cleaning facilities. Follow proper housekeeping procedures. Emergency eye wash stations and fire protection available.

Tools

All tools must be used according to manufacturer specifications.

Premises and Building Safety

Non-slip flooring. Catwalks properly designed. Identification of underground utility lines before digging. Ensure ladders are adequate and in safe condition. Always maintain 3-points of contact when climbing.

Mechanical Safety

Adequate guarding against crush points, pinch points, entanglement. Safe use of chainsaw, including proper personal protective equipment. Conveyors properly designed and used.

Hoists and Mobile Equipment (Tractors, Forklifts, Skidsteers)

Hoists and lift trucks inspected annually with rated load posted. Proper safety equipment installed, including ROPS. Safe operating procedures followed. Proper training and supervision of operator.

Lockout

Lockout procedure for servicing and maintaining machinery and equipment.

This document is meant to be a quick reference to the relevant Occupational Health and Safety requirements in Nova Scotia and is not a substitute for reviewing the legislation and regulations so the requirements can be properly applied.

For more information contact: info@farmsafetyns.ca or (902) 893-2293

Welding, Cutting, Burning and Soldering

Follow safe work procedures. Flashback arrestors on equipment.

Handling & Storage of Material

Proper storage and handling of bulk material stored in bins, hoppers, tanks or piles. Ensure hazardous substances are handled, stored and identified appropriately. Compressed gas must be stored, handled and labeled appropriately. Follow safe refueling procedures.

Personal Protective Equipment

Worn where a hazard exists: hard hat, safety glasses, respiratory protection, hearing protection, safety footwear.

Electrical Safety

Ensure safe distance from electrical lines when working. Electrical equipment maintained in good condition.

Confined Spaces & Restricted Areas

Identified by signage and communicated to workers. Follow safe work procedures.

Scaffolds and other Elevated Work-Platforms

Work-platforms used to lift people must be designed for that purpose (do not use tractor buckets). Mobile elevated work-platforms must have proper fall protection equipment.

Fall Protection

Required where there is a risk of falling that could cause injury. Fall protection procedure or plan in place where required. Workers must be trained.

Violence in the Workplace

May be applicable to farms selling at farm gate—prevention plan in place.

Smoke-Free Places Act & Regulations