



News Release

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Hospital stresses importance of farm safety during harvest

For Immediate Release

(COLUMBUS, Neb.) – Columbus Community Hospital would like to stress the importance of farm safety during National Farm Safety and Health Week Sept. 19-25.

It is especially important to take all precautions against fire. According to the National Ag Safety Database, combine and tractor fires cause more than \$20 million in property losses each year — and millions more because of lost time and downed crops during the busy harvest season.

“Fires not only cause huge losses and waste time, but they also cause 40-50 serious injuries each year, including death,” said Teresa Duffek, registered nurse at Occupational Health Services.

According to Duffek, area agriculture workers can prevent combine and tractor fires this season by cleaning and performing regular maintenance on their equipment.

“Keep those heat sources clean by spraying them with compressed air,” said Duffek. “It’s also a good idea to keep two fully charged fire extinguishers on your machine at all times.”

Duffek said ABC fire extinguishers are recommended on farm machinery. She advises keeping a 10-pound unit in the cab and a 20-pound unit mounted at ground level.

“If a fire does break out on a machine you’re operating, quickly shut off the engine, grab your extinguisher, get out and get help,” she said. “If you forget to grab the extinguisher, don’t go back in after it unless the fire is extremely small, or confined to an area well away from the cab.”

Another safety measure Duffek said agriculture workers should keep in mind during harvest is getting adequate rest — experts recommend a minimum of seven hours per night.

“Fuel your combine and fuel your body,” she said. “Drink plenty of water, take breaks and stretch every two hours, if not more.”



Additionally, she advises using flashers and slow-moving signs when traveling from field to field.

One last tip: When entering and exiting machinery, face the machine, and have two hands on the ladder rails and one foot on the steps.

For more information on National Farm Safety and Health Week, visit <https://www.necasag.org/nationalfarmsafetyandhealthweek/>.

To learn more about the services provided through Columbus Community Hospital's Occupational Health Services, call 402-562-4480 or visit www.columbushosp.org.

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