



# Maine Farm Safety Program

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## *Preplanning for Farm Emergencies*

**P**replanning is an important part of farm safety. Preplanning may take some time, but it may save a life. An emergency response plan in a notebook should be available in the event of an emergency. This plan should include instructions on what to do in case of an emergency, maps, inventory lists and emergency phone numbers.

### **Making a Plan**

Sit down with family and farm workers and put together a list of things that would have to be done should an emergency arise. In the event that an emergency happens on the farm, it is a big advantage to be prepared.

### **Basic Emergency Response Information**

Communication with others is very important in times of emergency. The emergency response plan should include a list of telephone numbers to call in the event of an emergency. The

list should be in the order of how the calls should be made. This list should also include the owner's home and other farm telephone numbers, the names and numbers of local chemical dealers and emergency response personnel (fire department, ambulance, local police/sheriff, state police, Poison

### **Preplanning for Farm Emergencies**

- **Write out an emergency plan.**
- **Post emergency numbers next to telephones.**
- **Have farm maps and detailed directions to all locations easily accessible.**
- **Make sure family and employees know how to disengage or shut down equipment and the location of fire extinguishers and first aid kits.**

Control Center and electric/gas supplier). Post the list near all phones on the farm.

When calling for help, remember to give your name, telephone number, and state the emergency situation. The telephone number should be clearly marked on the phone or beside it. Post clear, concise directions, since a stranger may be using the telephone in times of emergency. Be sure to give clear and concise directions to the location of the accident or to someone who will take rescue personnel to the scene.

**Here are the specific things rescue workers need to know when a call is made:**

1. **The location** of the accident and directions to the location.
2. **The telephone number** from which the call is made.
3. **The nature of the accident** (tractor roll-over, PTO injury, etc.).
4. **Number of victims.**
5. **Condition of victims** (breathing, bleeding, etc.).
6. **Type of first aid given**, if any (CPR, etc.).
7. **Whether someone will meet them at the entrance** to direct them to the victim. Do this when possible.
8. **Any special conditions** in the area that will interfere with rescue efforts (muddy fields, etc.).
9. **Any other necessary information.**

**NOTE:** *It is important not to panic; stay on the phone until the rescue staff hang up first!*

### **Notification System**

It is very important for people with whom you are working to know where you are. Notification can be as easy as telling someone where you will be working, or keeping a bulletin board in a farm office or other workplace with time, date, and the location where you're working. Cellular phones and two-way radios are also good ways to keep in touch. If you do not report back after a certain time, other workers will know your location and can check on you.

### **Farm Maps**

Many roads in rural areas do not have signs or are known by other names. In the event of an accident, area rescue personnel need to know the names of the roads in the area and their location. Make a map of the fields on your farm and the access roads with their proper and better known names. Keep a copy of this map in your office and home, give a copy to your local rescue office, and post one near phones.

A facility map should show all buildings, fixed equipment and utility shut off points. Put a distance scale and a compass on the map. Label and name the buildings on the map and note their contents, such as chemical storage or equipment. Show loading tanks, fixed equipment, wells and sewer lines. Point out where electricity, water and gas



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may be turned off. Keep this map with the field map.

Often, people will be called to meet you somewhere or drop something off. Other times, people may just be curious. It is very important to mark buildings with their name, purpose or contents. Some buildings may not be appropriate for visitors or younger family members and should be marked as such.

### **Inventory Lists**

The emergency response plan should have an inventory list. The list should include quantities and locations of pesticides, first aid kits, tools, fire extinguishers, protective clothing, shovels, disposal containers and absorbent materials. Knowing the quantities and locations of pesticides is a must. Should there be a natural disaster or fire, it is essential to know where the pesticides are to prevent further catastrophes. The other items are very important if an emergency arises because they could be needed to protect people from harmful exposure.

### **Dealing with the Media**

The media will report on major farm disasters in their area. The media needs to receive timely and accurate information. Appoint one person to talk to the media and direct all questions to that person. Prepare the spokesperson with information the public should know such as the nature of the emergency, chemicals involved, injuries and potential hazards. Spokespersons should not speculate, lie or say “no comment.” They should give a reason why they can’t respond (such as it is unconfirmed information or a legal matter). Being calm, confident and honest will help relieve the public and promote good media relations.

**Make sure family and employees know how to disengage or shut down equipment and the location of fire extinguishers and first aid kits.**



## Show Me List

If there is a farm accident, all people need to know a few key facts. Here is a checklist to follow. Each person involved in the operation of the farm needs to know how to do these things.

- Where and how to turn off the ignition on gas powered equipment.
- How to operate the fuel shut off on diesel equipment.
- How to adjust the tractor seat.
- How to drive forward and in reverse.
- Where and how to turn off lights (to prevent fire).
- Location of fire extinguisher.
- How to disengage the power take off (PTO).
- Location of power lines in relation to movement of equipment.
- How to turn off augers and elevators.
- How to disconnect electrical power.

- How to operate equipment.
- How to turn on fan to get air movement in manure pits.
- Location of first aid kits.
- Where other personal protective equipment safety items are located and how to use them (respirators/masks, welder's mask, etc.).

## Grain Bin Controls Checklist

- How to turn on the aeration fan.
- How to turn off the drier.
- How to turn off the automatic grain cycling equipment.

This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

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