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# Staying safe from entanglements

There are few other hazards on farms that can start off so small but end as devastatingly as ***entanglements***.

A tiny corner of a shirt sleeve. A few loose threads on a glove. How harmful could these small details be? Sadly, what starts off as a gentle, almost imperceptible tug can quickly lead to full on entanglement in a split second, resulting in devastating lacerations, amputations and, unfortunately, sometimes death.

OFA would like to remind our members and employers about the serious dangers of entanglement, and to ensure that everyone stays safe around farm equipment and machinery.

Depending on the farm, entanglements can occur at lot of locations:

- where you feed materials into machines
- where a machine cuts, turns, drills, shapes, punches, or moves in any way
- during cleaning and maintenance, troubleshooting and repairs, adjustments, set-ups, and ongoing operation
- at wrapping hazards such as gears, flywheels, cylinders, belts, rollers, pulleys, shafts, couplings, chains, and sprockets
- around moving equipment, Power Take-Off (PTO) devices, augers, conveyors, fans, soil mixers, potting machines, planting machines, robots, vine pullers, pallet wrappers, box makers, conveyors, and any other equipment, that can release energy

Every farm operation is different, so it's important to conduct an audit to identify your entanglement hazards. Once you know where the issues are, you can develop *operating procedures* and *train* all workers on how to safely work around machinery.

Here is a list of tips that apply across the board:

- Wear appropriate gear for the day's tasks —no loose-fitting clothing or jewelry, including wedding bands.
- Button those shirt cuffs, and tuck in your shirt tail, hoodie and scarf. Better yet, don't wear a hoodie or scarf.
- Tie your bootlaces so they don't drag.
- Don't wear gloves around reciprocating or rotating machine parts.
- Sporting a ponytail or long hair? Put it under a snug-fitting hat.

- Heed the warning decals on equipment.
- Circle check equipment before starting it. Ensure all guards are in place and in good shape. Look for leaking hydraulic oil.
- Never perform maintenance or try to clear an obstruction while the equipment is running. Shut down and lock out hazardous energy. If a guard is removed to perform maintenance, replace it immediately after servicing.
- Wait for rotating parts to stop before working on them.
- Never step over a PTO shaft, or above or below a conveyor belt while it is running.
- Use a jack stand when hitching or unhitching an implement so that the drawbar is supported. If the pin is damaged or bent, replace it.
- Keep bystanders and children away.

*\* Adapted from an original article provided by Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS).*