



Indiana

Department of Labor

Advancing the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace

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Dear Hoosier Grain Storage Facility Operator:

On July 28, 2010, a deadly grain elevator incident in northwest Illinois claimed the lives of two teenagers, ages 14 and 19, and critically injured a third. The two fatally injured young workers suffocated after being engulfed in a grain bin, which they had entered to help clear. The third worker was rescued after being trapped for 12 hours.

All employers, especially those in high hazard industries such as the grain industry, must recognize and eliminate workplace safety and health hazards. Employers must be vigilant in their safety and health efforts, and implement and follow safe practices that will prevent occupational-related deaths, injuries and illnesses.

The Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA) has recently adopted an enforcement program for the inspection of grain handling facilities within the department's jurisdiction. These inspections will focus on the six major hazard areas including engulfment, falls, auger entanglement, struck by, combustible dust explosions and electrocution.

Employers in need of assistance in developing and implementing workplace safety and health management systems are urged to contact INSafe, the Indiana Department of Labor's OSHA consultation program. INSafe works with Hoosier employers to assist them in the identification and elimination of occupational safety and health hazards. Services provided by INSafe are free and confidential, provided the employer agrees to correct all serious hazards identified by the consultant.

INSafe has also launched an educational outreach initiative for those working in the agriculture industry. More information about this worker safety and health initiative may be found online at www.in.gov/dol/2729.htm. For more information about INSafe, please visit www.in.gov/dol/insafe, e-mail insafe@dol.in.gov or phone (317) 232-2688.

Additional resources for employers and employees concerning safe grain handling practices may be found on the reverse side of this letter.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Carter
Deputy Commissioner for IOSHA
Indiana Department of Labor



Online Resources and References

Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Grain Handling Standard

www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=9874

Indiana Occupational Safety and Health Administration (IOSHA)

www.in.gov/dol/iosha.htm

Grain Handling Inspection Emphasis Program for Enforcement

www.in.gov/dol/files/LEP_Grain_Handling.pdf

INSafe (Indiana Department of Labor's OSHA Consultation Program)

www.in.gov/dol/insafe

INSafe's Agriculture Safety and Health Initiative

www.in.gov/dol/2729.htm

Safe Entrance of Grain Storage Bins

- 1) Turn off and lock out all powered equipment associated with the bin, including augers used to help move the grain, so that the grain is not being emptied or moving out or into the bin. Standing on moving grain is deadly; the grain acts like "quicksand" and can bury a worker in seconds. Moving grain out of a bin while a worker is in the bin creates a suction that can pull the workers into the grain in seconds.
- 2) Prohibit walking down grain and similar practices where an employee walks on grain to make it flow.
- 3) Provide all employees a body harness with a lifeline, or a boatswains chair, and ensure that it is secured prior to the employee entering the bin.
- 4) Provide an observer stationed outside the bin or silo being entered by an employee. Ensure the observer is equipped to provide assistance and that their only task is to continuously track the employee in the bin.
- 5) Prohibit workers from entry into bins or silos underneath a bridging condition, or where a build-up of grain products on the sides could fall and bury them.
- 6) Test the air within a bin or silo prior to entry for the presence of combustible and toxic gases, and to determine if there is sufficient oxygen.
- 7) Ensure a permit is issued for each instance a worker enters a bin or silo, certifying that the precautions listed above have been implemented.