



**Indiana**  
**Department of Labor**

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

**INDIANA**  
**STATE DEPARTMENT OF**  
**AGRICULTURE**

## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### WORKER SAFETY AND HEALTH IN GRAIN HANDLING FACILITIES

INDIANAPOLIS (Sept. 16, 2011) – As many Hoosier grain handling facility workers are preparing for this year's harvest, employers and employees are reminded of how to stay safe and healthy on the job. In 2010, the agriculture industry had one of the highest rates of workplace fatalities in Indiana.

The Indiana Department of Labor and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture remind employers and employees about the hazards of working in grain handling facilities and the steps necessary to prevent occupational injuries and fatalities.

Employees working in or near grain handling facilities should **never work alone** because they are exposed to significant occupational safety and health hazards that include falls, electrocution, engulfment, auger entanglement and dust explosions. Working with a partner ensures help is available if trouble strikes.

Additionally, employers and employees should take the following steps to reduce the likelihood of worker injury, illness or death:

- 1. Prevent falls:** Provide all employees with a body harness and lifeline, or a boatswains chair, and ensure it is properly secured before entering a grain bin.
- 2. Prevent electrocution/auger entanglement:** Before grain bin or silo entry, shut down and lockout all equipment power sources. Station an observer outside the bin or silo who continuously monitors and tracks the employee inside the bin.
- 3. Prevent engulfment:** Prohibit employees from walking-down the grain or using similar practices to make the grain flow. Prohibit entry into bins or silos underneath a bridging condition, or where there is a build-up of grain products on side walls that could shift and bury a worker.
- 4. Prevent dust explosions:** Prior to any entry, test the air within a bin or silo for the presence of combustible and toxic gases and make sure there is sufficient oxygen for safe entry.

Employers and employees are strongly encouraged to learn about safe grain handling procedures and take necessary precautions for the prevention of work-related injuries and fatalities. Learn more about safe grain handling practices, please click [here](#).

For questions about worker safety and health, please contact the Indiana onsite OSHA consultation program, INSafe, at [insafe@dol.in.gov](mailto:insafe@dol.in.gov) or (317) 232-2688.



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EDITOR'S NOTE: Two sidebars follow.

**Upon entry into the top of a silo or bin:**

1. Never work alone during any entry of a silo or bin.
2. Turn off the auger and lockout the shut-off switch.
3. Turn on the aerator.
4. Conduct a pre-use inspection on all rescue equipment. Have all rescue equipment readily available for immediate use.
5. Ensure the silo or grain bin entrant is wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment—dust mask, safety glasses, rescue harness, etc.
6. All workers must be familiar with the communication procedures and within communication distance.
7. Ensure tie off at an adequate anchor point. Make sure there is enough rope to travel up the ladder and into the silo to attach to the harness and employee.
8. An employee attendee should be placed at the top of the silo or bin and another at the base of the ladder at the anchor point.
9. Never allow slack on the lifeline.
10. In the event of entrapment at or above waist level:
  - a. Train the entrant to cover his or her faces with his/her T-shirt or dust mask.
  - b. Never attempt to rescue the entrapped employee from the top of the bin or silo. Implement Emergency Action Plan procedures.

**Entrapment or engulfment procedures:**

1. Turn off the auger and lockout the shut-off switch.
2. Turn on the aerator.
3. Call 911.
4. If the victim is within reach, without entering the bin, place a rescue sleeve around the victim. If a rescue sleeve is not available, place any flat, hard surface material (i.e. plywood, sheet metal, etc) at the face of the victim.

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**About the Indiana Department of Labor (IDOL):**

The mission of the Indiana Department of Labor is to advance the safety, health and prosperity of Hoosiers in the workplace. In order to make significant strides, we emphasize both enforcement and compliance assistance by employers. [www.in.gov/dol](http://www.in.gov/dol).

**About the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA):**

The mission of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture is to support growth in Indiana agriculture by serving as an advocate at the local, state and federal level; defining and nurturing economic opportunity in the food, fuel and fiber sectors; and enhancing the stewardship of natural resources on agricultural land. [www.in.gov/isda](http://www.in.gov/isda).

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