

DID YOU KNOW?

Electrocution hazards can also be found underground. Prior to a large-scale dig, contact your local utilities company so they can mark the location of any power lines. This simple action can go a long way in preventing accidents and ensuring the safety of your workers.

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7 Safety Tips for Working Around Power Lines

To protect your workers from the electrocution hazards of power lines, keep in mind these safety tips.

Best Practices When Employing Migrant Workers

Many farms in Canada utilize seasonal, migrant workers to help ensure the smooth operation of their farms during busy months. However, when employing foreign agricultural workers, there are a number of considerations employers need to be aware of.

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7 Safety Tips for Working Around Power Lines

When working near or around powerlines, farm equipment like augers and hoisted truck boxes can pose a serious electrocution hazard. This is because most overhead powerlines have no protective insulation, which means that even the slightest physical contact can be deadly.

Moving heavy machinery, clearing storm-damaged trees and raising ladders are some of the most common activities that lead to accidents. To protect your farm and workers, it's important to keep in mind the following safety tips:

1. Utilize a spotter whenever a worker is operating machinery around power lines. Utilize nonverbal hand signals for added safety.
2. Be mindful of your surroundings, especially when moving or raising equipment like augers and grain trucks.
3. Keep equipment away from power lines at all times. Experts recommend a distance of at least 3 metres (10 feet) in all directions.
4. Inspect the total height of equipment to determine clearance. This will be particularly important in instances when you have to pass under power lines.
5. Lower all extended equipment when moving grains or other loads.
6. Never move power lines without the assistance of an expert, like a local utilities company.
7. When moving equipment, take alternate routes to avoid power lines altogether, if possible.

In general, understanding the risks associated with power lines and training employees on them can help promote overall safety and prevent accidents. For more safety tips, contact Thor Insurance & Registries Ltd today.



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Best Practices When Employing Migrant Workers

Many farms in Canada utilize seasonal, migrant workers to help ensure the smooth operation of their farms during busy months. In fact, approximately 38,000 temporary foreign agricultural employees work in Canada each year.

These workers can be critical to the health of farms and can give owners some much-needed hiring flexibility. However, when employing foreign agricultural workers, there are a number of considerations—regarding workers’ values, norms, beliefs and language—that employers need to be aware of. Specifically, farm owners should keep in mind the following:

- **Safety considerations.** The safety standards migrant workers may be used to in their own country could differ greatly from the ones used in Canada. To ensure that there are no gaps in safety, appropriately communicate and enforce safety requirements across your organization. Health and safety documentation should be provided in workers’ native language whenever possible.
- **Work expectations.** Foreign workers may be used to working longer or shorter hours than what is expected of them. To ensure that employees are not overworked, properly communicating your expectations is key. Ensure that there is an open and friendly dialogue so workers feel comfortable bringing up any concerns.
- **Communication.** In some cases, there may be a distinct language barrier between you and your workers. As such, it’s important to speak slowly and politely. Try avoiding jargon or slang terms, as these can be especially confusing to someone not native to the region. Learning key words or phrases in your worker’s language, particularly around rules, policies and equipment demonstrates a level of respect for a worker’s culture and can help improve safety. Some farm owners designate or hire a staff member to communicate with foreign workers fluently, relaying any pertinent information.
- **Internal hierarchy.** In some cultures, it’s common that foreign workers establish an unspoken hierarchy, or chain of command, among themselves. When this happens without your knowledge, a foreign worker could unknowingly communicate improper instructions because of the language barrier, thus, risking the safety of all of your employees. To avoid this, it’s crucial that farm owners or managers communicate directly to all migrant workers. That way all employees are receiving the same information and important safety instruction is not lost in translation.

Overall, it’s important to encourage all of your employees, regardless of their backgrounds, to interact with one another. This will not only boost internal relationships, but workplace health and safety as well.