



AG YOUTH WORK GUIDELINES

Although children and teens may be eager to help out around the farm, it is important to remember that they may not be physically or mentally capable of completing the same tasks as an adult. Ensure that children and teens are trained and supervised performing these tasks before they may complete them unsupervised.

STATISTICS + FACTS

- In 2014 an estimated 893,000 youth lived on a farm and an additional 265,600 were hired to work on U.S. farms.¹
- An estimated 738 hired youth were injured on farms in 2014.¹
- Of the estimated 7,469 household youth that were injured on-farm in 2014, only 40% were working when the injury occurred.¹
- Vehicles were the leading source of injury for household working youth.¹
- Animals were the leading source of injury for both household non-working youth and visitors.¹
- From 2001 to 2015, 48% of all fatal injuries to young workers occurred in agriculture.²

National Children's Center for Rural and Agricultural Health and Safety-Ag Youth Work Guidelines³

AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS FOR 12-13 YEAR OLDS:

- Hand raking, digging and limited power tool use
- Operating a lawn mower or garden tractor
- Repairing fence
- Working with livestock

AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS FOR 14-15 YEAR OLDS:

- Equipment refueling
- Operating non-articulated tractors for field work
- Raking & unloading hay
- Cleaning grain bins and service alleys
- Milking cows

AGE-APPROPRIATE TASKS FOR 16 AND UP:

- Ordinary use of tractors, self-propelled machinery, augers and other farm equipment
- Pulling oversized loads, simultaneous use of multiple vehicles and application of chemicals with specific training and close supervision.
- Harvesting tree fruit

If you hire youth on your farm, be sure to follow all current child labor laws for the above tasks.

PREVENTION

Regardless of their age, assess your child's ability to perform any task in order to prevent injury or death.

- Can the child reach and operate all controls while remaining seated on the equipment?
- Does the child have the strength to operate controls without using both feet or excess strain?
- Can the child use their hands and feet simultaneously?
- Does the child have quick reaction time and good peripheral vision?
- Can the child understand and consistently complete a 10-step process without instructions?
- Has the child successfully and safely completed the task four to five times with supervision?
- Do you feel comfortable leaving your child alone with tasks while not under adult supervision?

REFERENCES

1. Childhood Agricultural Injury Survey (CAIS) Results. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/childag/cais/demotables.html>
2. NIOSH [2019]. Analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries microdata. Morgantown, WV: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Unpublished.
3. Agricultural Youth Work Guidelines. <https://marshfieldresearch.org/nccrahs/agricultural-youth-work-guidelines>