

Farm Shop Safety

During the winter months, a lot of farm work moves from out in the field to indoors. When performing maintenance work in the shop, each new task presents a new set of safety challenges. Here is a quick checklist of things to cover before you start working:

- **Fire extinguishers – Fully charged and in place. The University of Illinois recommends that you have a minimum of 20 lbs. near each exit. (Dry Chemical A,B,C)**
- **Floors dry and clear of clutter**
- **Personal protective equipment (goggles, face shields, hearing protection) readily available**
- **At least two unblocked exits from immediate work area**
- **Ample ventilation- including exhaust fumes from engines, welding, and paint**
- **Proper storage for oils, lubricants and other flammables**
- **First-aid kit – Stocked and easily accessible**

Most serious injuries occur when hoisted or raised equipment falls. Whenever you are working under equipment, make sure to block it properly and use the right equipment, especially jack stands. Make sure the jack stands are in proper working order and are capable of holding the weight being placed on them. Once raised, add blocks to further brace the load.

Since shop work is often conducted alone, it is important that someone always knows where you are, what you are doing, and when you will return. Also make sure that you are able to quickly contact someone in case of an emergency. When working alone, it is important to not do jobs that require two people. Attempting to lift something that would normally take two people could lead to serious injury.

Here are some general safety tips to make work in the shop much safer:

- **Organize your workshop so that everything has a designated place. Make sure hanging items are secure so they don't fall on anyone.**
- **When working on equipment, make sure it is turned off with the keys removed, all moving parts are stopped and safety locks are in place.**
- **Make sure there is plenty of lighting. If your shop is heated, make sure the heaters are free of dust and the area is properly ventilated. Accumulated dust on heaters can start a fire.**
- **Always wear protective equipment. This includes face shields, safety glasses, ear plugs, hard hats, respirators, leather gloves, chemical-resistant gloves (when needed), steel-toed boots and protective apron and face shield when welding.**
- **Make sure electrical wiring is in good condition with outlets grounded with ground fault interrupters (GFIs).**
- **Use tools only for their intended purpose.**
- **Keep all guards and shield in place on all equipment, even when not in use.**