

Technical Working Group Summary: Non-Legislative Recommendations

Recommendations to Improve Farm and Ranch Workers Health and Safety

Consultation to Date

The Government of Alberta is committed to consulting with the agricultural community to draft common-sense rules that reflect the unique nature of farms and ranches.

To fulfill that commitment, the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry and Labour established six Technical Working Groups (TWGs) to make recommendations for the application of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Code, *Employment Standards Code* and *Labour Relations Code* as well as OHS best practices and training. The TWGs included members from the agricultural sector, labour groups and technical experts.

TWG 3 provided advice and recommendations regarding the application of health-related requirements in the OHS Code, and TWG 4 provided advice and recommendations on the safety-related requirements in the OHS Code.

The 48 consensus recommendations summarized below do not directly relate to the application of the technical standards of the OHS Code. Most recommendations were made by TWG 5 and 6 but some were joint recommendations from TWG 3 and 4.

Get Involved

The Government of Alberta invites all Albertans to engage with the recommendations made by the TWGs. Your feedback will be used in conjunction with the TWG recommendations to inform any changes made to regulations. The full TWG reports are available at <https://www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch.aspx>.

We invite feedback in writing by February 26, 2018. Written comments can be sent to:

Farm and Ranch TWG recommendations feedback
Occupational Health and Safety branch
Alberta Labour
8th Floor Labour Building
10808-99 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0G5

FarmandRanch@gov.ab.ca

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TWG Report & Page Reference	TWG Recommendation for OHS Best Practices and Training
3-8	Work with the proposed farm and ranch safety association to create standards and guidelines related to chemical and biological hazards and harmful substances (Part 4).
3-9	Government of Alberta to provide education and training materials related to confined spaces (Part 5).
3-11	Best practices and educational material developed for farming and ranching to address hazards resulting from lifting and handling loads (Part 14).
3-12	Promote education regarding the effectiveness of personal protective equipment for farm and ranch applications (Part 18).
3-14	Clarify exemptions applying to farms and ranches, create a strong farm and ranch safety culture, support a level playing field between operations and ensure farmer and rancher interests are considered.
3-14	Members of the TWG to review government's response to recommendations prior to further consultations with industry stakeholders.
3-45	Government provide GST and WCB rebates, OHS grants, rebates for implementing best practices, encourage industry to provide discounts and support peer review/buddying initiatives.
3-14	Combine OHS Code and Explanation Guide into one document..
3-14	Safety education to be open to family farms without paid workers.
5-7	Revise the current FarmSafe Alberta program to ensure that it meets legislated requirements of the OHS Code.
5-7	Recommend that all farms, ranches and other agricultural operations employing workers develop a health and safety management system.
5-14	Recommend that the FarmSafe manual and training programs are posted and available in multiple formats (posters, visual aids, etc.) as well as additional languages to increase comprehension among foreign workers.
5-14	Recommend that the document, <i>Roles And Responsibilities of Supervisors</i> , include the following training techniques: explain the job, demonstrate the job, have worker demonstrate competency of the job to provide confirmation of understanding.
5-15	Recommend that the agricultural sector is provided technical and financial support to develop a system similar to B.C.'s AgSafe (an independent association, governed by a Board of Directors whose members represent BC farm employer and worker organizations).
5-16	Recommend the development of a plan to promote and distribute health and safety information for the farm and ranch industry (e.g. social media, radio/TV ads, billboards, posters, pamphlets, etc.).
5-17	Recommend that Government of Alberta, in partnership with farm and ranch associations, facilitate awareness of the North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks.
5-18	Recommend that a best practice on fatigue be developed by investigating the Saskatchewan program <i>Sleepless in Saskatchewan</i> or similar programs.

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6-6	It is recommended that an agriculture health and safety association be created and led by the farm and ranch industry.
6-7	It is recommended that administrative and financial support is provided to the farm and ranch industry to facilitate the creation of the initial board of directors for the agriculture health and safety association.
6-8	It is recommended that the board for the proposed safety association be constituted, and include broad representation across industry stakeholders and that the initial board serves a term of two years.
6-8	It is recommended the Government of Alberta provide sufficient start-up funding to support the proposed safety association, board, and program operations for a minimum of two years.
6-8	It is recommended that in the first two years of operation, the board of the proposed safety association should engage in activities that will establish a firm financial foundation and garner support and credibility within the farm and ranch industry.
6-11	It is recommended that all Government of Alberta agriculture OHS resources be made available in hard copy and online, online resources accessible computer or mobile device, and resources be in printer-friendly formats.
6-11	It is recommended that all Government of Alberta OHS resources for the agriculture industry be made available in large print, audio format, and multiple languages.
6-11	It is recommended that Government of Alberta OHS resources incorporate icons and images easily understood by all users. Images should reflect the diversity of individuals and industries in Alberta (colour, gender, occupation type).
6-12	Recommended that the Government of Alberta consolidate relevant online resources to a single access point that is easy to use and navigate.
6-12	Recommended that a document be developed for workers to report unsafe work conditions.
6-12	Recommended that a “quick start” guide to OHS be developed for the farm and ranch industry.
6-13	Recommended that the current <i>Due Diligence</i> bulletin be redeveloped to focus on how employers can better understand what is “reasonably practicable” for their unique operations in order to ensure they are in compliance with the OHS Act.
6-13	Recommended that the Government of Alberta work with the industry-led farm and ranch health and safety association to update the <i>FarmSafe Alberta</i> manual.
6-14	Recommended that a separate OHS Code Explanation Guide be developed for the farm and ranch industry.
6-15	Alberta <i>OHS Awareness Legislation eLearning Program</i> is an important tool, but should be updated to increase relevance to the farm and ranch community.
6-15	Recommended that agriculture-relevant sections of the <i>Driving for Work: Developing Safe Practices for Employers and Workers</i> be linked to the FarmSafe online resource.
6-15	Recommended that the <i>Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) Guides for Employers and Employees</i> , be updated to reflect changes to the TFW program, with sections added on the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP).

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6-15	Recommended that an education program be developed to help farm and ranch employers during the recruitment and relocation of TFWs and new immigrants.
6-16	Recommended that a one-page guiding document be created to highlight core legislative requirements so that it can be printed and provided to supervisors and workers, or posted at each worksite.
6-16	Recommended that existing OHS resources that are relevant to the farm and ranch sector (e.g. Developing a First Aid Plan, Farm Employer's Guide to Job Orientation and Safety Training, Supervisor Roles and Responsibilities) be updated.
6-16	Where they do not currently exist, evidence based resources should be developed to address high risk activities in the farm and ranch sector, and areas of legal responsibility that arise from the OHS Code.
6-17	Recommended that a resource be developed that identifies issues that may occur when employees live at the workplace.
6-17	Recommended that a training program for owners and lead hands in the farm and ranch sector be developed as soon as possible in order to facilitate uptake and provide guidance for legislative compliance.
6-18	Recommended that FarmSafe advisors partner with Alberta Labour and local champions to coordinate active outreach to agriculture associations and farm communities throughout the province to provide presentations about legal requirements and setting up health and safety systems.
6-18	Recommended that the Government of Alberta develop posters, decals and other takeaway materials that can be distributed at agriculture OHS presentations, and posted at farm and ranch worksites as ongoing reminders. These should include contact information for questions and support.
6-18	Recommended a communication plan that includes print, traditional media (newspaper, radio, television) and social media be developed to raise awareness of tools and resources.
6-19	Recommended that a marketing firm be hired to research and develop an effective communications campaign for the farm and ranch community.
6-19	Recommended that OHS information is distributed through as many avenues as possible, including but not limited to: agriculture service and supply companies, 4H clubs, newcomer and cultural community associations, mail outs included in workers compensation statements, and local agriculture-related social events (e.g. rodeos, breakfasts, picnics).
6-19	Recommended that a non-government toll-free number be created to provide support and answer questions from workers or employers.
6-20	Recommend a list of subject-matter experts be created and available to farm and ranch organizations, educational institutions, and others who may wish to invite a speaker to provide presentations on a particular farm and ranch OHS issue.
6-20	Government of Alberta should maintain statistics to evaluate the success of their initiatives, and maintain ongoing consultations with the agriculture community to identify gaps and areas for improvement or change.

Contact Us

OHS Contact Centre

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

Website

work.alberta.ca/ohs

Get Copies of OHS Act, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

www.qp.gov.ab.ca

Occupational Health and Safety

work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation

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