

Guidelines for Potato Growing Safety



Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation
Commission of New Brunswick
www.whscc.nb.ca

Potatoes Pommes de terres  New Brunswick
Nouveau Brunswick

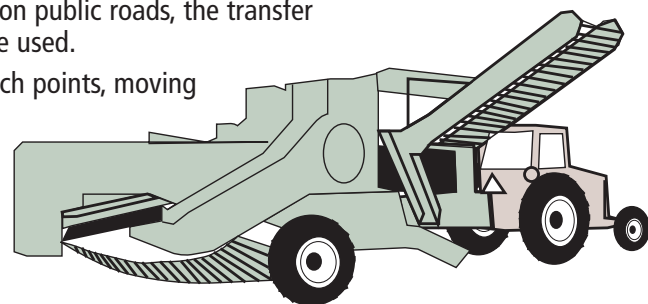
Guidelines for Potato Growing Safety

A centuries-old industry in New Brunswick, potato growing has evolved to become a highly mechanized activity. Still, humans remain necessary to many operations. Which means workers work side by side with machinery, surrounded by all sorts of powered equipment and revolving parts – a dangerous environment for any untrained or complacent worker.

To help you and your co-workers remain safe on the job, the WHSCC and Potatoes NB highly recommend you follow these basic guidelines. **Please note that items marked with an asterisk (*) are legal requirements.**

Powered Equipment

- Only designated operators are responsible for the safe moving of the machinery and its crew.
- All trucks and harvesters are equipped with back-up alarms.*
- Once stopped, the machinery is not moved until the operator, or a person designated by the operator, has ensured that no person is at risk.
- Operators or owners ensure that all machinery is equipped with the proper guarding and that safety devices are functioning.*
- Operators park the harvester in a safe area, turn it off and engage safety devices, before any cleaning, maintenance or repair is done.
- No one ever walks between the harvester and the loading truck while they are moving.
- Besides the operator, no one is allowed to ride on machinery while traveling on public roads.*
- Wait until the equipment comes to a complete stop before embarking or disembarking, and always use three point contact.*
- When traveling on public roads, the transfer position must be used.
- Be aware of pinch points, moving parts or conveyors and keep clear of them.



Employee training

- Owners ensure yearly training and have it documented.*
- Family members working on the operation are trained – as they can be hurt, just like any other worker.
- If you have questions or concerns, speak to your supervisor.

Young workers

- Statistically, young workers (17-25 years old) suffer three times more injuries than experienced workers. Particular attention must be given to their tasks, their understanding of the training and to their supervision.
- Owners notify the Department of Training and Employment Development – Employment Standards Branch, when workers under the age of 16 are hired.

Chemicals



- A wide variety of chemicals are routinely used in potato growing, including fertilizers, pesticides, disinfectants and anti-fungal agents. Know how to handle, use, and dispose of these substances safely.*
- Wear the required personal protective equipment (masks, goggles, gloves,...) when working with chemicals.*
- Read product labels and label anything that is transferred to another container.*
- Know the information on Material Safety Data Sheets (specific technical information concerning chemicals). The MSDSs must be readily available and up-to-date.*
- Clean soiled equipment before it is sent out for repairs.

First Aid



- A first aid kit is available for each crew and another one is kept in the central working area.*
- At least one person trained and certified in first aid is present on-site, at all times.*
- An emergency plan is available.*
- A reliable communication system is in place and phone numbers (911) are known.*

Personal Protective Equipment



- Wear safety footwear (CSA approved) and proper clothing for the job being performed.*
- Do not wear loose-fitting clothing and ensure long hair is tied back.*
- Use safety glasses when there is a risk of eye injury, and gloves when there is a risk of hand injury.*
- Wear hearing protection whenever you need to raise your voice to be heard.*

Safe Practices

- Illegal drugs, alcohol and horseplay are strictly forbidden.
- Stay alert! Do not use radios, CD or tape players, or electronic devices while working.
- Eat well and make sure you are well rested.
- Towards the end of a long shift, exercise extra caution as fatigue contributes to accidents.
- Whenever possible, operations are carried out during daylight hours. Darkness creates unusual and specific hazards that must be addressed.
- Protect your skin from the sun by using sunscreen, wearing cotton garments and hats, particularly on sunny days.
- If using a cell phone while driving, pull over to the side of the road. When operating equipment, use cell phones only in case of extreme necessity.

Note: This brochure is meant to be used as a guideline and is not exhaustive. The requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its regulations will always prevail.

Ergonomics

- Do not lift immediately after a prolonged period of sitting – as your back is then more prone to injury. It is recommended that you walk for about five minutes before doing any lifting.
- Use proper lifting techniques:
 - Bend at the knees
 - Keep you feet apart at shoulder width
 - Carry the load close to your body
 - Avoid twisting when lifting
- Get help or use mechanical aids for heavy or cumbersome loads.*
- Warm up before working and take a few minutes at break time for stretching.
- Shift your weight from one leg to the other, when standing for prolonged periods of time.

Traffic Control

- A designated area should be assigned to you to park your vehicle.
- At lunch or break times, operators stop harvesters as close to the designated parking area as possible, or bring the crew to that area in a safe manner.
- When unloading, trucks do not begin the “backing-in” process until a designated person is in place to assist and direct the driver. All other employees remain clear of the operation.
- Storage crews stay beyond the loading end of the bin piler.
- No visitors are allowed in the fields beyond the designated parking area.
- “Employees only” signs should be posted in storage areas and fields being worked.
- No children under 14 years old should be allowed in the field or in trucks.
- Inform family members and friends of your workplace policy regarding visitors.

For more information, contact WHSCC
WorkSafe Services at 1 800 222-9775.