

■ WASHINGTON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT OF 1973

TERMS: In general, most employers in Washington are required to protect their workers against on-the-job hazards that could cause death or serious injury, and to comply with any state safety and health regulations that apply to their operations.

More specifically, the state labor and industries director has adopted numerous standards that apply specifically to agricultural employers, workers and workplaces, as summarized below.

Accident Prevention Program — Agricultural employers are required to develop a written accident prevention program that includes, among other elements, (1) how, when and where to report injuries and illnesses, (2) how to report unsafe conditions and practices, (3) the use and care of personal protective equipment, (4) emergency procedures, and (5) identification of hazardous materials and how to use them safely.

Safety Training — Employers must provide their workers with instruction in safe work practices at the beginning of their employment, and at least once a month employers must inspect job sites, materials, equipment, and operating procedures. A representative chosen by the workers must be invited and allowed to accompany the employer on the inspection.

First Aid — In the absence of a nearby clinic or hospital to treat injured workers, a person must be adequately trained to provide first aid. Appropriate first aid supplies must be on hand and easily accessible to all workers.

Hand Tools — The use of hoes with handles less than 4 feet long, or any hand tool used for weeding or thinning crops in a stooped position, is prohibited.

Orchard Ladders — At the beginning of employment, employers who require workers to use ladders for tree maintenance or harvesting must provide the workers with training on their proper use, including how to set them up and how to climb down with a full load. Ladders used for orchard harvesting must be checked regularly for defects, must be maintained in good condition at all times, and must be properly stored. Ladders longer than 16 feet are prohibited.

Vehicles and Field Equipment — Tractors and other motor vehicles used on farms and nearby highways must have prescribed lights, reflectors and safety signs, and must be equipped with guards and other safety features described in the regulations. Only qualified drivers who have a current motor vehicle operator's license may drive farm vehicles.

Rollover Protective Structures for Tractors — Farm tractors manufactured after 1976 generally must be equipped with protective structures intended to prevent worker injuries in the event of a rollover. Each such tractor is also required to have a seat belt, and drivers are required to use it. Tractor operators must be trained in proper operating practices at the time of their initial assignment and at least once a year thereafter.

ENFORCEMENT: *Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, Olympia, Washington 98504 (360-902-5494; toll-free 800-423-7233).*

SPECIAL NOTE: An employer may not fire, discipline or discriminate against a worker because the worker has filed a complaint or made use of any other right granted by this law. Retaliation should be reported to the Department of Labor and Industries within 30 days after the violation occurs.