OSHA Regulations

The Alabama Farm Safety Management Plan can help aquaculture businesses reduce injuries and fatalities, reduce liability, and comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations.

The Benefits:

1. Protects employees by reducing the risk of on-the-job injuries
2. Prevents, reduces, or limits OSHA fines
3. Saves money by reducing the number of on-the-job injuries, reducing the company's liability, and providing a framework for employee training

Companies must meet the following requirements:

1. Minimize workplace hazards
2. Warn employees of potential hazards
3. Provide safe tools and equipment
4. Teach the proper use of personal protective equipment

OSHA's four-point plan to help businesses develop their own safety program:

1. Provide for management leadership and employee involvement
2. Workplace safety analysis
3. Hazard prevention and control
4. Safety and health training documentation (keeping records)

It is easier to comply with OSHA law when you practice and perform the Aquaculture Management Plan for Fish Farmers.

Prepared By

Jesse LaPrade, Farm Safety Coordinator and Specialist IV,
Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Auburn University

Gregory N. Whitis, Extension Aqaculturist, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama Fish Farming Center, Greensboro, Ala.

Melvin Myers, Aquaculture Researcher, Southeast Center
for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention, University
of Kentucky

MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY

Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention

Director: Robert McKnight, MPH, ScD, University of Kentucky

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Auburn University

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY

Catfish Farmers of America

National Aquaculture Association

Southeast Center for Agricultural Health and Injury Prevention via NIOSH grant # 2U54OH007547

This brochure on fish farm workers safety may not cover all serious injury warnings. Be sure you consult www.aces.edu/farmsafety for more details on safety issues in aquaculture, general farming, and the green industry and how to comply with OSHA regulations.

SAFETY for Fish Farm Workers

Farming is the most hazardous occupation nationwide, and fish farming is the most hazardous of any farming activity.

There are four sections of safety training in this brochure:

1. **Electrical safety**
2. **Tractor safety**
3. **Harvesting safety**
4. **Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) compliance**

For details on the Aquaculture Safety Management Plan, go to www.aces.edu /farm safety. The Safety Management Plan has reduced serious injuries and fatalities on farming operations and will help you comply with OSHA regulations.

Electrical Safety

Keep all equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines (top right). Be aware that power from these lines can arc without equipment actually coming in contact.

If power lines arc or are contacted by grounded equipment, such as a boom truck, stay in the vehicle until the power is turned off. If a person comes in contact with the boom truck and the ground, he or she will be seriously injured or killed. If the occupants on the boom truck must evacuate, they need to jump clear of the vehicle as far as possible.

Only properly trained persons should work on electrical panels for aerators. Rubber gloves and boots will not prevent a deadly electrical shock in the event an energized contact is touched.

Be sure electrical power to aerators is turned off before servicing. Aerators may be operated with timers or monitored relay switches and can automatically switch on during servicing, resulting in severe injury or death. Use a "lock-out-tag-out" policy to make sure no one turns on the power while servicing. Lock-out-tag-out procedures actually lock the panel box and tag it notifying other workers, "Service being preformed. Do not enter!" Verbal warnings to other workers should also be used when necessary.

Tractor Safety

Tractor rollovers are the most frequent farming fatalities. Tractors should have roll-over protective structures (ROPS). Always use a safety belt when operating a tractor with ROPS. By keeping you secure in the seat, the ROPS will greatly decrease your odds of getting crushed. Be extra careful working on pond embankments. Getting pinned by an overturned tractor underwater greatly reduces your chance of survival.

Stay away from shielded and unshielded power take-offs (PTO). Never attempt to step over a rotating power take-off.

More on tractor safety including tractor and implement road transport can be found in two publications, ANR-1262, "Hazards of the PTO on Farm Tractors" and ANR-1260, "Safe Tractor Operations." These can be found at www.aces.edu/farmsafety.

Harvest Safety

Harvest workers should wear OSHA-approved life jackets and hard hats when loading fish into boom truck baskets. A hard hat could prevent a catfish spine from impaling the face and head of an employee. Also cornerless round lift baskets are safer than squared ones.

Channel, blue, and hybrid catfish have three sharp fins that contain nonpoisonous, serrated barbs. Impalements into human flesh are always painful and will require at a minimum topical, antibiotic ointment and a bandage.

Seine reels pose unique safety issues for fish farm workers. The weight of the spinning drum or reel and the typical unguarded chain drive mechanism can cause severe injuries. Never attempt to stop a rotating drum with your hands. Also be aware that hydraulic lines can leak and cause painful, limb-threatening, injection injuries. The area between the tractor and the pivoting seine reel is a dangerous pinch point. The seine reel operator could move the reel without knowing that a person is attempting to pass between the tractor and the reel, possibly resulting in a crushing injury.