

IDOA Promotes Grain Bin Safety Week February 16-22, 2020

February 14 2020 10:30 AM

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture reminds all farm workers to stay safe when working in and around grain bins as part of Grain Bin Safety Week. The annual period for awareness runs from February 16 through February 22.

With 2019 crop conditions drawing comparisons to 2009 when crops were stored in relatively wet conditions, this year's safety week takes great importance. The 2009 crop led to a dangerous environment surrounding grain bins in 2010. According to Purdue University, 2010 was the most hazardous year on record for grain bin accidents, with 59 entrapments and 26 deaths nationwide.

“It's easy to become complacent when workers have been in and out of bins for years and never had any problems,” said Joe Small, Illinois Department of Agriculture's Bureau Chief of Warehouses. “People often think they are big enough, strong enough, or fast enough to get out of flowing grain. All too often, problems can snowball out of control quickly. It's important for everyone to be vigilant and keep personal safety front of mind.”

“We tend to see a correlation between grain quality and grain bin entrapments or engulfments,” said Jeff Adkisson, Executive Vice President of the Grain and Feed Association of Illinois. “It's extremely important to turn off all unloading equipment and secure it with a lock or zip-tie (called lock-out) so someone else cannot turn the equipment back on before going into a grain bin.”

“Even one accident, is one too many,” adds Illinois Farm Bureau President, Richard Guebert, Jr. “We want to remind farmers to never enter a grain bin or grain storage facility alone. Our target is zero entry, but unfortunately, with last year's harvest challenges, a lot of wet grain was put into storage, leading to more grain bin entries. If entry is unavoidable, please have an observer stationed outside to get help immediately if needed.”

Several training resources are available:

- The Grain and Feed Association of Illinois at www.gfai.org
- The Grain Handling and Safety Council at www.grainsafety.org
- University of Illinois Extension at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/agsafety/equipment/grainbinsafety.cfm>