



Silo Safety

Silos are an iconic site in rural America and a vital structure for the working farms. Silos and their shorter, fatter cousin, the grain bin, are used for bulk storage of grains, corn, feed, food products, etc. Because silos can store hundreds or even thousands of pounds of food and material, safety needs to be a top priority when working on or with them. Every year hundreds of people are killed or injured from accidents involving silos. These accidents can include engulfment, electrocution, falling, silo gas inhalation, among others.

It is very important to note that some silos will qualify as a “Confined Space” per the Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s (OSHA) definition. It is your responsibility to understand if your silos meet that definition and to provide your employees with the proper safety equipment and protocols to protect them while working.

The below guidelines are intended to be general safety reminders. It is imperative that you understand the risks and regulations associated with your employees and your working environment.

- Always keep your silos locked and barricaded to prevent unauthorized entry.
- Never enter a silo unless it’s absolutely necessary.
- All ladders up the side of the silo should be at least 7 feet off the ground and kept in good condition.
- Any portable ladders used to access the silo should not be kept in the immediate area.
- Never allow people to be inside or near the silo when it is being loaded or unloaded.
- Always have at least 3 people involved when entering a silo. One person to perform work inside the silo, one person to monitor the worker, and another that can call for help if needed.
- If going into an empty silo, use an oxygen-supplying respirator. Fermented feeds can create nitrogen and carbon dioxides which can displace any oxygen.
- Use a rope and harness, don’t just rely on the ladders inside of the silo.
- If you do find yourself trapped in the silo, always keep moving and try to “swim” to the edges to get to a ladder.

For More Information: