

11 simple steps that could be lifesavers

There is no safety tip more useful than one from another farmer – after all, who knows the realities of the job better? That’s why, over the past few months, *Farmers Weekly* has joined forces with Buckler Boots to encourage more farmers to share their near-misses and advice. Here’s a selection – take a look and send in your own

Take the keys out of the ignition

1 I learned my health and safety tip from a neighbouring farmer when doing my training. I was sent into the bowels of the combine to clean it out and my boss said to take the key with me, so that no one could start it up. This applies to every piece of machinery – from a combine to a mixer wagon – and now I pass it on to any student coming on to my farm. So if you are working on a machine, and are somewhere you might not be seen, always put the ignition key in your pocket to avoid anyone starting the machine without realising you are inside. It is easy to do and costs you nothing, but it could save your life.

Robert Davies – mixed farmer from near Ross-on-Wye in Herefordshire

Reflective tape on gateposts

2 Buy a cheap roll of reflective sticky tape which can be wrapped around gateposts, uprights and doors to make them more visible in the dark. It occurred to me that we are working longer hours and often in the dark, but things aren’t always

visible when you are reversing around corners. One roll of tape costs £5 and will probably do every upright in the yard. It is especially helpful for night-time harvest movements.

John Prior – dairy, beef and arable farmer from Castle Combe in Wiltshire

Radio silence

3 When reversing a trailer round the yard or into a building, turn off the radio and open the rear window so you can hear any shouted warnings. Many years ago I saw my boss’ pickup truck shunted across the yard by the harvest student. He was oblivious to our shouts to stop as he had the stereo going full bore. No one was hurt, but it could have been serious if anyone had been in the rear truck at the time.

Ben Machen – manages a sheep and arable farm near Andover in Hampshire

Take time to stop and think

4 My tip is to stop and stand back and think for a minute – can I do this any better or safer? For example, should I stack bales under that roof before going on top of it? Don’t just rush headlong

into the cattle shed as you have for years – stop and quietly assess the animals first. Look at every situation and assess the suitability of machines for the job.

Tim Ransome – mixed farmer from near Grantham in Lincolnshire

Make a call before starting a job

5 A call to alert family members or co-workers before undertaking any task in isolation should be a first step in task planning on farms. Then, if you get into trouble, you simply have to press one key to dial the last number called.

Many farming jobs are hazardous and are usually undertaken alone. In these situations, having a mobile phone handy in the event of an accident could save your life. I was once caught by an over-protective ram while checking our ewes. He came at me several times before giving me a hefty butt, knocking me over and then hitting me again. I eventually managed to grab him by the head and roll him over, giving me a chance to catch my breath and call the house to get my daughter to come out on the quad to help me. If the ram had been a bull – well, say no more.

Charles Hurst – sheep farmer from Worcestershire



Clockwise from above: Don't leave the keys in the ignition (1); Call family or colleagues before starting a job (5); Put a piece of pipe in the weights to aid visibility (6); Choose the right tool for the job (7); Turn off the radio when reversing – you need to hear someone if they tell you to stop (3).



Some jobs need scissors, not a penknife

7 A couple of years ago, I was cutting the liners out from large 600kg fertiliser bags to separate them for recycling. The penknife I was using slipped and my left hand got in the way. I severed one tendon and damaged another, which landed me in hospital for 24 hours and made my left hand next to useless for six weeks.

The surgeon did a great job repairing it and the damage is barely noticeable. My hand was fully functional 10 weeks later – a great credit to the NHS. However, I do advise against using knives for such activities. I now use a sharp

pair of scissors instead – and keep my hand well out of the way.

David Street – works on his father's arable farm near Salisbury, Wiltshire

Tennis balls protect electrics

8 When towing a trailer, the hooks on the end of the tractor's lift arms often get hold of the brake pipe and lights cable, fraying them and sometimes pulling them away, leaving the trailer with no light signals or brakes. I put tennis balls on to the hook ends of the arms, preventing them from grabbing the pipes.

Keith Harrop – farms near Bakewell in Derbyshire

Switch controls

9 I was towing an artic trailer behind the telehandler and I hadn't checked the safety hook on the rear hitch was in place. I knocked the release lever as I was driving along and the trailer dropped off. I was lucky I was on the flat: it could have been disastrous.

When using a telehandler with an implement on the front, it is important to switch the controls over from the end to the rear hitch, so that if the release lever is knocked the implement will not fall off the telehandler.

Graeme Moon – pig and beef farmer from near Glastonbury in Somerset

Check linchpin strength

10 When attaching implements to three-point linkages, make sure you use only linchpins that snap shut strongly. It's so basic, yet I have seen so many mishaps over the years because this is ignored. When working in tall crops, linchpins on lower links can be partly opened by vegetation and if they don't then snap shut they can be flicked out – or they can simply fall out. Oil them regularly and replace stiff or weak ones. In extreme conditions, fix them shut with cable ties.

Roger Bell – arable farmer from near King's Lynn in Norfolk

Wear the right kit

11 When cutting wood or using an axe, always wear steel-toecap footwear. My dad had gone to chop wood for the logburner, and decided to wear hiking boots as his feet hurt after a long day's work. As he brought down the axe, he fell slightly off balance.

The axe came down, it glanced off the wood and went directly into his right big toe, nearly chopping it in half. When I go on farm or use equipment such as an axe, I always make sure I've got my steel-toecap boots on.

Charles Griffiths – farmworker from Baschurch, north Shropshire

SEND US YOUR SAFETY SUGGESTIONS

* Have you got a farm safety tip or story to share that might help raise awareness of the dangers of working in agriculture?

Farmers Weekly has teamed up with Buckler Boots to offer a pair of boots to the person who sends in the best contribution each month. To be in with a chance of winning, simply send



us a short tip or an account of what happened to you (or to someone that you know) and each month we will pick out the best one to publish.

The winning entrant will receive a pair of Buckler Boots.

Entrants must supply their contact details to *Farmers Weekly*, but we will print contributions anonymously if requested.

Entries can be emailed direct to safetytips@rbi.co.uk – alternatively, look out for the in-store "Safety Tip" cards in any of the 500 Buckler Boots stockists.

Alkathene pipe can help to judge distance

6 When I was learning to drive the tractor, gauging how far forward the weights reached was difficult. As tractors generally get bigger, visibility in front of the bonnet is reduced, therefore my farm safety tip is to put a piece of alkathene pipe in the weights to see where the front is. Hopefully this helps people avoid hitting walls, vehicles or people, especially when turning round in tight spaces.

Dewi Davies – sheep farmer's son from Ceredigion, Wales