

**Canadian  
Agricultural  
Safety Week  
Mar. 9-15, 2005**

# **FACT SHEET #2**

**THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE**

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## **Keeping in touch**

Nearly half of runovers occur in the farm field. This can result in significant delays in injuries being identified and treated, as the victim is likely out of the sight of others or where help is least available. Emergency response units may have difficulty accessing a remote field with their vehicles and equipment. This could lead to further delays in treatment, increasing the severity of the health consequences of the injuries.

About half of farm related fatalities happen while the victim is working alone. The victim frequently dies at the scene of the injury event. Global positioning systems (GPS), two-way radios, and cell phones can help facilitate quicker responses to an injury at an isolated site, as long as the communication device is always kept within reach.

Considering the amount of work that farmers routinely do in isolation, a cell phone or two-way radio can be a valuable safety tool – as long as using it doesn't cause an accident! There are a number of things you can do to maximize your cell phone or two-way radio both as a business tool and a safety tool on your farm.

1. **Selection.** There are many different types of handsets and services for cellular phones and two-way radios. Give your specific needs careful consideration before selecting your package. For example:
  - Check with various service providers to ensure that you are within service range. Not all areas have access to cell phones service.
  - You may need a power point adapter to be installed in your tractor and perhaps an antenna as well to ensure enough power and reception for your cell phone or radio to work properly.
  - Small, lightweight handsets have their advantages - but sometimes larger, sturdy handsets with bigger numbers and easy to push buttons, are what you really need.
2. **Get phone friendly.** Read your manufacturer's operating instructions guide and try out the features of your phone that can make it safer to use. For example, you can pre-program your most frequently called numbers and then use automatic speed dial to avoid dialling every digit. It's also a good idea to pre-program emergency service numbers for quick and easy access.

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3. **Keep it close.** Keep your phone on you. If you are injured, your phone is of no use to you if you can't reach it.
4. **Don't get distracted.** If you are in the middle of hazardous weather conditions or a difficult manoeuvre, don't be distracted by the telephone. Hang up if talking takes your attention away from your task. Or, don't answer the phone - that's what voice mail is for.
5. **You are not an octopus.** Remember, you've only got two hands, so use them to drive – not to flip through phone books. If you know you'll have to make a call while driving, program that phone number ahead of time. If you get a call dealing with important details, ask the caller to phone back and leave a detailed message on your voice mail for you to pick up later.
6. **Just stop.** If you have to place a quick call, do it when you're temporarily parked. If you must dial when driving, dial only a few numbers at a time; ensuring the area ahead, beside and behind is safe. Always remember to tell everyone you speak with that you are driving - some may surprise you and ask to talk later.
7. **Tell someone where you are.** For safety's sake, always tell someone where you will be working. If 911 is called, cellular phones and two-way radios will not give emergency services the callers location the way landlines do. If you are working in a remote field and someone knows where you are, then they can assist in getting help more quickly.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture along with the Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada want to remind Canadian farmers that cell phones and two-way radios can be valuable safety tools when used properly.

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**For more information call:**

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