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KEEP IT CLEAN

Some of the best emergency preparation is simple prevention. One way to prevent an emergency is by practicing good housekeeping. Keeping combustibles cleaned up, keeping grain dust accumulation to less than 1/8 inch, and making sure walkways are clear are all ways to prevent an accident from occurring. Insisting on good housekeeping practices is one small step that can have a big impact.

Remember, a clean house is a safe house.

EMERGENCY = A LACK OF PLANNING

Emergencies can happen anytime, anywhere. If you have ever been the first one on the scene of a car accident, have survived a severe weather event, or have been with someone who suffered a traumatic injury, then you know how important it is to know what to do. So often in the heat of the moment, we forget some of the basics. Stress and your desire to help in a hurry can cloud your judgement of the situation. That's why it is so important to not only know what to do, but also regularly practice what to do and have all necessary tools and supplies ready.

It all starts with your emergency response plan. An emergency response plan is a written plan that details all actions that should be taken in case of emergency, necessary supplies, locations of critical items such as emergency shut offs, and a list of responsibilities. Emergency response plans should address such emergencies as fire, severe weather, chemical release, medical emergencies, or any other emergency that you may be exposed to.

The foundation of any great emergency response plan is a simple hazard assessment. Make a list of all of the "reasonably foreseeable" emergencies that could occur. Think about your neighbors and how emergencies at their homes or place of business could affect you. Your local emergency planning commission is a great source of vital information for emergency planning.

Whether creating a plan for home or learning about your emergency response plan at work, consider these questions:

- How do you call for help and who's responsibility is it to summon emergency services?
- Do you know how to evacuate the area and what your safe routes of escape are?
- Is there a way to account for everyone in the event of an emergency evacuation or shelter in place scenario?
- Where are the emergency shut offs for electric, gas, water, and even chemicals and who is responsible to make sure they are shut off if necessary?
- What supplies would you need, and do you have enough supplies such as first aid supplies, fire extinguishers, respirators, personal protective equipment, etc.?
- Who is responsible for rendering first aid or even performing rescues?

Once you have a solid emergency response plan, then it's time for everyone either in your household or at work to be trained on the plan. Emergency drills should be done periodically so people can put what they learned into practice. It is also equally important that you periodically review and evaluate your plan. Make sure your plan is updated whenever changes happen such as new construction or if a member of your household moves elsewhere.

No one wants to think about something bad happening at work or at home but when an emergency happens, you need to be prepared for it. An immediate and educated response is critical to saving lives and potential property losses.

This special edition Stand Up 4 Grain Safety bulletin is a publication by Maplehurst Farms and Fehr-Graham. Suggestions for content are welcome. Please send all questions or suggestions to safety@maplehurstfarms.com.