Egg and Poultry Workers Safety Meetin Kit



Billions of eggs are produced every year. Many of these eggs come from mechanized poultry and egg farms where automated systems feed, water, remove waste, and collect eggs. While the eggs go from hen to market without a human touch, egg and poultry workers must treat safety with a hands-on approach.

COMMON INJURIES IN POULTRY PROCESSING PLANTS. Harsh working conditions have long contributed to a higher-than-average injury rate in the meat and poultry processing industry.

Common types of injuries include:

Injuries due to repetitive motion. According to OSHA, the incidence of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome in poultry processing is more than seven times the national average. In addition to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, workers may develop painful conditions, including tendinitis, epicondylitis, and trigger finger.

Diseases from biological hazards. Poultry workers in particular are at risk for contracting additional illnesses, including avian influenza, salmonella, psittacosis, and Campylobacter. The incidence of contracting a work-related disease among poultry workers is more than six times the average for other industries, according to OSHA.

Medical conditions caused by chemical exposure. Ammonia is often used as a refrigerant in poultry processing plants. Breathing ammonia vapors can cause lung damage. Peracetic acid, an irritating chemical, is commonly sprayed on poultry and meat during processing to kill bacteria. Workers often develop eye, nose, and throat irritation when exposed to peracetic acid, resulting in coughing, bleeding, and other symptoms.

Hearing impairment. Heavy machinery in meat and poultry processing plants produces constant noise, putting workers at risk for permanent hearing loss, tinnitus, and related conditions.

ZOONOTIC INFECTIONS AND PREVENTIVE STEPS. Zoonotic diseases are transmitted from animals to humans and include bacterial, viral, fungal, and parasitic diseases. Salmonellosis, campylobacteriosis, chlamydiosis, tuberculosis, Newcastle Disease, and avian influenza are amongst the most common zoonotic diseases transmitted from poultry to humans. Poultry workers are at a greater risk of being affected by these diseases. To prevent exposure:

- Learn about the potential diseases that could affect pullets and hen flocks so you can monitor them for signs and symptoms.

- Remove sick animals and dispose of dead animals promptly.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as coveralls, gloves, and hair coverings.
- Work in well ventilated and filtered areas.
- Wear an approved respirator if there is exposure to dusts and airborne contaminants from the animals or their wastes.

EGG AND POULTRY SAFE WORK PRACTICES

In egg production areas there are breakers to crack and separate 18,000 to 500,000 eggs. In this frenetic process, the safety protocol must be followed.

Lockout/tagout procedures must be written and followed for all equipment to prevent accidental shock, injury, amputation, or death. In addition, pay attention to painted lines on walking areas to keep clear of moving equipment. Caged areas can also provide protections against accidentally getting hit by robotic stacking arms.

Sanitation, Water and Hygiene

Sanitation in egg production facilities uses lots of water and mild detergents for cleaning equipment, totes, trays, conveyors, etc. Ensure that:

- Watch for wet areas, as these could be slip hazards. Post signs and wear sturdy boots with non-slip soles.
- Make use of goggles to protect your eyes from water and detergent splashes.
- Practice good hygiene when handling animals, their wastes, and any contaminated equipment and always throw away disposable PPE properly
- Exit work areas and wash your hands before you eat, drink, smoke, or touch your face or eyes. Wash and/or decontaminate your reusable PPE before you wear it again.

BROOD AND LAYER HOUSE (HEN HOUSE) SAFE WORK PRACTICES

With pumps, conveyors, and augers moving water, food, droppings, and eggs, there is a lot of moving equipment in each hen house. Ensure that:

- Maintain guards on all moving parts to prevent being accidentally caught, crushed, or pinched.
- Keep hair, jewelry, and clothing tied back securely.
- Never reach into moving equipment to clear a jam.
- Properly lockout/tagout equipment before maintenance, repair, or clearing jams.

FINAL WORD

Which came first: the safe work practices, or the healthy egg and poultry worker? Either way one cracks it, attention to safety is the answer.