

HIRING YOUTH FARMWORKERS UNDER THE AGE OF 16



University of Nebraska
Medical Center

Are you considering hiring a teenager to work on your farm or agribusiness? If so, make sure you know the laws and regulations of employing youth.

I WANT TO HIRE A TEENAGER, WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Several operations in ag are identified by the Federal Government as being hazardous for children under 16 years of age, including:

- Operating tractors larger than 20 horsepower
- Connecting and disconnecting implements to tractors
- Operating large farm implements (such as combines, balers, and mixers)

Youth under 16 years of age must complete the National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program (NSTMOP) and receive certification in order to legally perform these tasks as an employee, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Hazardous Occupations Order in Agriculture.

HOW CAN A TEENAGER GET THE NSTMOP CERTIFICATION?


Each summer, we partner with the University of Nebraska Extension to offer the NSTMOP certification. Certification is earned by completing a two-day certification course, which includes a written test and a driving exam. Successful completion grants NSTMOP certification, allowing them to operate tractors and certain mechanized equipment on farms and ranches, and obtain a Farm Husbandry Permit. The course is open to anyone 14 and older at a low cost.



Learn more:

Scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit go.unmc.edu/tractor-safety-training to learn more about this course and find upcoming dates.



402-552-3394
go.unmc.edu/cs-cash/cs-cash-contact
 go.unmc.edu/cs-cash

UNMC College of Public Health
984388 Nebraska Medical Center
Omaha, NE 68198-4388



@unmccscash

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DOES MY OWN CHILD NEED A CERTIFICATION TO WORK ON OUR FAMILY FARM?

In Nebraska, there are no legal requirements for a child working on a farm owned solely by their parent or legal guardian. However, we highly recommend that youth working on any farm get the NSTMOP certification so they have a strong understanding of safe tractor operation and other safety practices on the farm.



NSTMOP CERTIFICATION IN NEBRASKA

Annual tractor and equipment safety training courses are scheduled every year across Nebraska in May and June. This certification course is designed to train students how to avoid common tractor and equipment related hazards. Certification is earned by completing a two-day certification course, which includes a written test and a driving exam. Successful completion grants NSTMOP certification, allowing them to operate tractors and certain mechanized equipment on farms and ranches, and obtain a husbandry permit.


Those attending a location that only offers Day 2 must complete Day 1 at another location, OR complete the virtual module. Those attending a location that offers both days, but live 50 miles or more from the location, may complete the online module for Day 1. Day 1 (or online module) MUST be completed, with written exam, before attending Day 2.

The onsite driving training and exam will include a driving test and equipment operation and ATV safety lessons. Students must demonstrate competence in hitching and unhitching equipment and driving a tractor and trailer through a standardized course. Instructors will also offer education about safe behaviors and laws for ATVs, utility-task vehicles (UTVs), and other off-road vehicles (ORVs).

Teens 14 or 15 years of age who work on farms, or others who are interested in learning about safe farming practices, are encouraged to register for the certification course. Youth under 14 years of age can attend Day 1 if accompanied by an adult but cannot drive equipment, attend Day 2, or become certified.

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