

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grain Handling Safety Coalition

## Coalition urges prevention focused grain safety training

CHAMPAIGN, IL – Tragedy is seconds away when working inside grain bins and other grain storage structures. In less than 30 seconds, a person can become permanently injured or fatally engulfed when safety strategies are ignored. Every year we hear of tragic deaths, horrific injuries and heroic rescues resulting from someone getting trapped in a grain storage structure or transport vehicle whether at the family farm or the commercial grain elevator. Just this year, a quick news search shows at least 10 people have died in grain storage structures including a father and his young teenage son; one person had a leg amputated and one person was successfully rescued.

In every one of these incidents, recognized safety practices were missing. Entering under hazardous bridging or avalanching conditions occurred. Procedures such as Lock out/Tag out of unloading systems before entry or the use of a lifeline during entry were not followed. Having an observer present during entry was missing in many of the cases. Untrained and inexperienced workers were making decisions they were ill-prepared to make.

As we mourn and reflect on these deaths and injuries, and give thanks to successful rescues, it is also time to examine our conversation and approach to safety. We need to consistently recognize and affirm these deaths, injuries and rescues are, in fact, **preventable**. As businesses, educators, regulators, employers, owners, workers, and families we need to work together to strengthen and enforce our commitment to prevention through the daily use of safe work practices. We must acknowledge the vital role rescue plays, but understand and emphasize it is not a solution or replacement for preventive measures.

OSHA's investigative findings, released July 30<sup>th</sup> concerning the January 2<sup>nd</sup> death of two workers in a commercial grain facility emphasizes the continued need to vigorously stress prevention training and consistent daily use of safe work practices in both the commercial grain and farm sectors.

The Grain Handling Safety Coalition (GHSC) brings together a diverse group with vested interests in grain handling and storage safety to promote the exchange of information and ideas; cooperation between stakeholders; and the formation of new relationships in the industry. It provides a forum and a unified voice to spread a consistent message of prevention, safety, and best practices across the grain industry spectrum through education, training, awareness, and resources. The GHSC participants have worked together to develop numerous free, prevention focused training and educational resources, including bi-lingual presentations, for employers, farmers, workers, young workers, and educators available at [grainsafety.org](http://grainsafety.org). Additionally, the GHSC partners with several others (including the Grain and Feed Association of Illinois, Asmark Agricenter, University of Illinois-Chicago, Grainnet, and AgriSafe) to offer a variety of training options including on-site, hands-on training; on-line training; webinar training; and participation in community awareness events. The GHSC has logged over 11,000 training hours in 20 states and brought awareness of the hazards associated with grain handling and storage to thousands more. We encourage individuals, small employers businesses, organizations and communities to use the free resources and reach out to the GHSC ([info@grainsafety.org](mailto:info@grainsafety.org)) to schedule training with us or one of our partners.

Together, we can change the conversation and change the outcome. We cannot afford to lose another life.

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