**What is a Hazard Datasheet on Occupation?**

This datasheet is one of the International Datasheets on Occupations. It is intended for those professionally concerned with health and safety at work: occupational physicians and nurses, safety engineers, hygienists, education and Information specialists, inspectors, employers' representatives, workers' representatives, safety officers and other competent persons.

This datasheet lists, in a standard format, different hazards to which poultry farm workers may be exposed in the course of their normal work. This datasheet is a source of information rather than advice. With the knowledge of what causes injuries and diseases, is easier to design and implement suitable measures towards prevention.

This datasheet consists of four pages:

- Page 1: Information on the most relevant hazards related to the occupation.
- Page 2: A more detailed and systematized presentation on the different hazards related to the job with indicators for preventive measures (marked ☑ and explained on the third page).
- Page 3: Suggestions for preventive measures for selected hazards.
- Page 4: Specialized information, relevant primarily to occupational safety and health professionals and including information such as a brief job description, a list of tasks, notes and references.

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**Who is a poultry farm worker?**

A worker who works on a farm where domestic fowl are bred and raised for eggs and/or meat.

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**What is dangerous about this job?**

- Poultry Farm Workers may contract, from the fowl in their care, infectious diseases that are common to fowl and man.
- The atmosphere in poultry farms usually contains significant levels of agricultural dust and toxic gases, which put the workers at a health risk.
- Some chemicals used at poultry farms (for disinfection, etc.) may cause harm to workers' health.
- The Poultry Farm Worker's work is often physically difficult and involves handling heavy loads, uncomfortable postures and movements. This may cause traumas (including falls), back, arms and hands pains.

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**Hazards related to this job**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accident hazards</th>
<th>Specific preventive measures can be seen by clicking on the respective ☑ in the third column of the table.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sprains and strains from slips, trips, and falls when carrying heavy loads (bags of feed), working in congested and slippery areas soiled with excreta</strong></td>
<td>☑ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eye and skin irritation from contamination of broken skin or from splashing of irritants, allergens, other hazardous fluids (disinfectants) during vaccinating/medicating (in feed/water), mixing of feed, transporting feed/medicines, or spraying vaccines, disinfectants, and fumigating agents</strong></td>
<td>☑ 2 ☑ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical hazards</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chemical hazards</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Burns from exposures to hot surfaces (e.g. incubators, debeaking tools)</td>
<td>Exposure to high noise levels particularly in confinement systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heat exhaustion, heat-induced dermatosis, sun-induced dermatosis and cold exposure due to variable thermal conditions of year long outdoor work or high temperature/humidity in confined systems</td>
<td>Acute and chronic dermatosis, sun-induced dermatosis and cold exposure due to variable thermal conditions of year long outdoor work or high temperature/humidity in confined systems</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preventive measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Wear safety shoes with non-skid soles</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Wear appropriate eye protection; consult a safety supervisor or a supplier</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Protect hands with chemical-resistant gloves; if impractical, use a barrier cream</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Install effective exhaust ventilation and air conditioning to prevent air contamination and heat or cold stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Wear a respirator to avoid inhalation of dust or aerosols</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Replace formaldehyde as a disinfectant with less harmful substitutes available on the market.

Maintain a high level of personal hygiene. At the end of work, shower and change clothes. Do not take work-soiled clothing home.

Learn and use safe lifting and moving techniques for heavy or awkward loads; use mechanical aids to assist in lifting.

**Specialized information**

### Synonyms
Poultry farm worker (egg or meat): chicken farm worker; turkey farm worker; poultry farm laborer; brooder farm worker; pullet farm worker; duck farm worker.

### Definitions and/or description
Occupation concerned with the breeding, raising, gathering, and caring of domestic fowl and collecting their products. Performs any combinations of the following duties concerned with raising poultry for eggs and meat: Removes chicks from shipping cartons and places them in brooder houses. Cleans and disinfects poultry houses, cages, and nests. Spreads bedding materials. Cleans droppings from floor. Fills feeders and water containers. Vaccinates via drinking water, injection, or dusting of air. Inspects poultry for diseases and removes weak, ill and dead poultry from flock. Sexes livestock. Candles, collects, inspects, and packs eggs; selects, weighs, and crates fryers and pullets; records total packed; and prepares breeding reports. Monitors feed, water, illumination, and ventilation systems. Cleans, adjusts, and replaces systems parts using hand tools. May cut off tips of beaks.

### Related and specific occupations
Agricultural workers; livestock confinement workers; poultry inseminator; caponizer; poultry vaccinator; chicken sexer; poultry debeakers; poultry breeders; poultry hatchery worker; poultry tender; poultry abattoirs.

### Tasks
Administering (vaccines, medicines); assisting; breeding (animals); carrying; cleaning; collecting (eggs); disposing (waste); documenting; feeding; handling (animals); inspecting lifting; loading; maintaining; monitoring; packing; pulling/pushing; repairing; restraining (animals); sorting; spreading (bedding); storing; transporting; watering.

### Primary equipment used
Crates; nebulizers (for vaccinating); fumigators; automatic feeding/watering devices; layer nests; conveyors (feed/animals); hand tools (for repairing); heated trimmers (debeaking); incubators.

### Workplaces where the occupation is common
Poultry farms.

### Notes
1. Potential synergistic effects on the respiratory system from exposures to gases, dust, and smoking.

2. In general, farmers had significantly elevated risks for several cancers, including lip, stomach, pancreas, nasal sinus, prostate, leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Hodgkin's disease, and multiple myeloma. Exposure to poultry has been shown to be a risk factor for leukemia.

3. The workplace and the residence are often co-located. Thus, hazards that affect the worker also affect the non-working family, including children. Often, sanitary conditions are unsatisfactory in these co-located dwellings.

4. Many undocumented migrant farm workers are less able to protect themselves from
occupational hazards due to language barriers, substandard education, seasonal work, poor hygiene, and lack of contact with authorities.

References


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