



What is the NEC?

NEC stands for “Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety in Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing”. The mission of the NEC is to enhance the health of agriculture, forestry, and fishing workers by identifying priority health and safety issues and working with communities and stakeholders to develop prevention solutions.

The NEC has an extensive track record of conducting research and developing interventions for a wide variety of occupational health concerns in the farm community. For over 30 years, the NEC and its partner organization NYCAMH (The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health) NYCAMH/NEC researchers have investigated health concerns, provided outreach and education activities, and occupational healthcare (NYCAMH/NEC website-www.nycamh.com). Previously, the NEC has worked with Mainers to improve ergonomic designs of blueberry rakes and apple baskets. They are currently working to improve design of personal floatation devices for lobstermen and fishermen along the coasts of Maine and Massachusetts. The Maine Logger Health and Safety Study will be the NEC’s first major, long-term project in the forestry industry of the Northeast.

Logging leads the national civilian occupational fatality rates¹ and has been recognized consistently as an industry with considerable workplace hazards. Like farming and fishing, loggers labor in outdoor environments where variable terrain, weather extremes, dangerous equipment and long work hours are the rule versus the exception. However, unlike the farming and fishing sectors, *there is relatively little known about worker health, non-traumatic injuries, and hazardous exposures* that can accumulate and impact workers’ health over time, such as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) or hearing loss. This is especially true in the Northeast, an area where little research has been conducted.

The current study is designed to fill in that information gap and to ultimately create the basis for future projects in public health, safety education, and PPE/tool design to improve the health and safety of loggers not just in Maine, but in the greater Northeast region.

