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## G76-284 Hand Signals for Agriculture

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## Hand Signals for Agriculture

**This NebGuide contains hand signals useful for communicating around noisy equipment and from a distance.**

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- [Hand Signals for Use in Agriculture](#)

Throughout history, man has devised methods of contacting others who were out of voice range or who could not be heard because of excess noise. The Indians were skilled at using smoke signals or by imitating some form of wildlife such as the owl or coyote.

The early explorers used other signs to guide them. The slashing of bark on trees or sticks pointed in a certain direction were keys for keeping the persons from getting lost or for others to follow.

The railroad used a system of lantern signals to make contact between the trainman and the engineer. The Navy used semaphore or a system of flags to communicate between ships at sea. In fact, the Jolly Roger was really a signal to other ships that they were in for trouble.

Think of some of the devices used for signaling. They include alarm, beacon, bell, buzzer, fire, flag, gong, gun, hand, lamp, lantern, light, mast, post, rocket, shot, siren, whistle, and others.

The need for a set of hand signals for agriculture was the idea of a group of farmers and farm wives. The farmers knew that they did have trouble in communicating with other persons when they were around noisy equipment. They also knew that they needed some kind of distance contact when they were out in the field. For example, a farmer might be combining while his hauler would be at some distance away. The *come to me signal* was included for this reason.

Farm wives have the fear of members of their family being injured in equipment accidents. Even though the hand signals are not the total answer, they can serve as part of the warning system. A system of radio contact or some other type of visual contact, such as flags, may have to be included for a total warning system.

The committee that developed the hand signals for agriculture took the signals used by a number of different groups. This included the army signal corps, water skiers, airline ground personnel, and others.

Even though hand signals had been used by farmers, there was no systematic approach. Therefore, some type of uniform system was needed.

The eleven signals that you see on the inside are the result of selection for agriculture use. Notice that ten of the eleven signals are with only one hand. The single two-hand signal is for distance. There is a reason for using mostly one-hand signals. First, because of farm accidents, many farmers may have only hand left. Secondly, if a man is caught by the hand in a piece of equipment, he has only one hand to signal with.

When using the signals, make sure they are distinct. This means stretching the arms or bending the elbows as shown in the illustration.

There is a film entitled Hand Signals for Agriculture and a set of slides by the same title. These are available from the Agricultural Engineering Department at the University of Nebraska.

### Hand Signals for Use in Agriculture



FIG. 1--THIS FAR TO GO--Place palms at ear level facing head and move laterally inward to indicate remaining distance to go.



FIG. 2--COME TO ME--Raise the arm vertically overhead, palm to the front, and rotate in large horizontal circles.

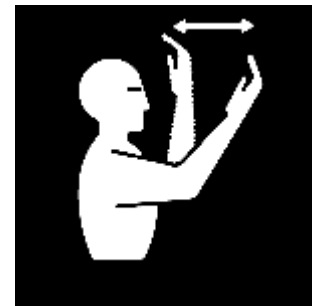


FIG. 3--MOVE TOWARD ME--FOLLOW ME--Point toward person(s), vehicle(s), or unit(s); beckon by holding the arm horizontally to the front, palm up, and motioning toward the body.

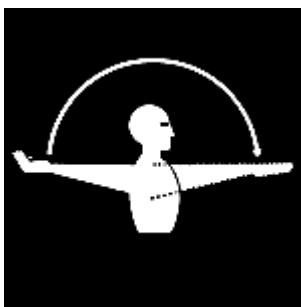


FIG. 4--MOVE OUT--TAKE OFF--Face the desired direction of movement; hold the arm extended to the rear; then swing it overhead and forward in the direction of desired movement until it is horizontal, palm down.



FIG. 5--STOP--Raise the hand upward to the full extent of the arm, palm to the front. Hold that position until the signal is understood.



FIG. 6--SPEED IT UP--INCREASE SPEED--Raise the hand to the shoulder, fist closed; thrust the fist upward to the full extent of the arm and back to the shoulder rapidly several times.

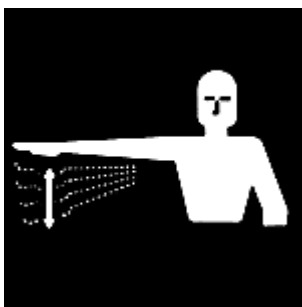


FIG. 7--SLOW IT DOWN--DECREASE SPEED--Extend the arm horizontally sideward, palm down, and wave arm downward forty-five degrees minimum several times, keeping the arm straight. Do not move arm above horizontal.



FIG. 8--START THE ENGINE--Simulate cranking of vehicles by moving arm in a circular motion at waist level.

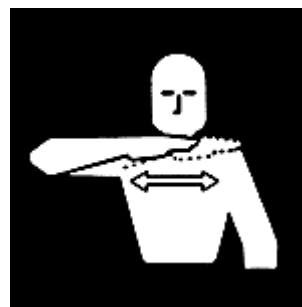


FIG. 9--STOP THE ENGINE--Draw right hand, palm down, across the neck in a "throat cutting" motion from left to right.

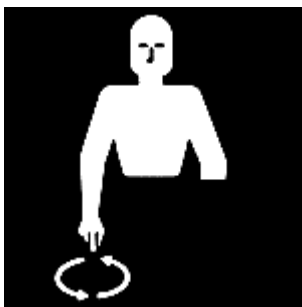


FIG. 10--LOWER EQUIPMENT--Make circular motion with either hand pointing to the ground.



FIG. 11--RAISE EQUIPMENT--Make circular motion with either hand at head level.

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