

MAFES Dawg



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Plain Facts -About Tractor Safety



All the reading and listening that we do continues to emphasize the fact that agriculture ranks among the most hazardous industries. These hazards include the high risk for fatal and non-fatal injuries, work related lung diseases, noise-induced hearing loss, skin diseases, and certain types of cancers associated with chemical use and prolonged exposure. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), in 2005 there were 1,842,000 full-time workers involved in production agriculture. The records show that from 1992 through 2005 that:

- In an average year, 516 workers died doing farm work in the U.S.A.
- 101 of these deaths are directly related to tractor overturns.
- Every day, approximately 243 agricultural workers suffer lost-work time injuries and approximately 5% or 12 of these injuries result in permanent impairment.

PLAIN FACTS -

Farm tractors need and should be equipped with ROPS (Rollover Protective Structures) - On tractors where ROPS are present, it has been reported by facts that approximately 95% of these accidents aren't life threatening. Installing ROPS on "ROP-less" tractors in use should cost approximately \$1,000.00 or more per tractor for a total of \$2.5 million. The value of one life has been rated at approximately \$3 million, which equates to \$33 billion over the next 10 years. These values are based on the Federal Aviation Agency's values of one lost life in an airplane accident. After-market ROPS are available for almost all types of tractors now. ROPS, to be maximum effective, must be used in conjunction with seatbelts.

Farm Tractors should be equipped with BY-PASS STARTER COVERS - There are still many tractors out in the field without bypass starter covers. In many cases, the operator will assume that the tractor is out of gear as he or she attempts to jumpstart it. If it is in gear and lunges forward as it starts, it can run over and kill or permanently injure the operator. A bypass cover would prevent this from happening and save the possibility of loss of a life or a potential disabling injury.

Farm Tractors should be equipped with master shields - Many tractors don't have their original equipment power takeoff master shields. Sometimes the farmer will remove them as he brings the tractor home for the first time or as it gets damaged, he will remove it and not replace it. Without the shields in place, it is "open season" for the potential of an entanglement around the unguarded shaft.

Farm tractors should be equipped with Slow-Moving-Vehicle signs (SMVs) - Tractors to be driven on public roads should have the SMVs installed so they are clear and legible. Also, in the cases of larger farms, where public traffic may travel across the farm's roads, all tractors and other equipment should have the SMVs for added safety. State codes require SMVs on all tractors and implements traveling on public roads at speeds of 25 MPH or less.

Farm tractors should be equipped with emergency lighting - Many tractors and implements don't have functioning hazardous warning lights. All tractors and other types of motorized equipment should have functioning hazardous lighting for their own safety and the advanced safety of other vehicles sharing the road.

Farm equipment should be hitched properly - Farm equipment can become unstable when improper hitching is attempted. Tractor drawbars are designed for towing and taking into account the tractor's crucial center of gravity. Hitching or towing at points other than the drawbar can result in an overturn. According to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), in the state of New York between April 1991 and June 1996, there were 28 incidents of sudden rollovers of tractors documented. 60% or 17 of these incidents were the result of improper hitching or material towing.

Farm tractors should not transport extra passengers - Most farm tractors and other motorized implements are designed for one operator. The policy of one-seat-one operator should be in effect at all times. The only exception to this rule is when there is an implement that is manufactured with a second seat in the cab, which is for training purposes and not a "co-pilot." As Coach "Bear" Bryant used to say, when you pass a football, three things can happen and two of them are bad. With an "extra" rider on the tractor or implement, two things can happen and both are bad.

The person may accidentally fall off the tractor and get run over. This happened with a local citizen and his 6-year old son. The other thing that is prevalent with an extra rider is that the person can very easily divert the operator's attention from the careful handling of the tractor or implement, and this could cause several different, serious types of incidents.

We hope that operators don't get so comfortable with their operation of equipment that their skills seem to become automatic or rote. Experience tells us that this is when accidents or incidents tend to happen. Obviously, we hope that they don't happen and hope that this paper will serve as a "mind opener" that sometimes Murphy's Law comes into play.

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Excerpts: www.cdc/nasd/doc

THINK SAFELY!! ACT SAFELY !!