



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Use Tractors with ROPS
To Save Lives



A farm without a tractor is like a man without a country.

“Ain’t” no way to make either work. However, with tractors they are the major cause of death in agriculture today.

The National Safety Council (NSC) states that:

- ✓ Tractors are linked to more than ½ of farm-related deaths nationwide.
- ✓ 1998- An estimate of more than 317 people were killed while operating a tractor.
- ✓ Approximately 52% of the above deaths were the result of tractor rollovers.
- ✓ Since 1970, tractor rollover has been the leading cause of farm operator deaths.
- ✓ In the past 20 years - 5 people are killed each year for every 100,000 tractors in operation.
- ✓ One article stated that over 95% of lives could be saved if all agriculture tractors were equipped with ROPS and seatbelts and they were used.

What is ROPS?

For the benefit of newer employees that might not be as familiar with **ROPS** as older and more experienced ones, we shall take a couple of lines to identify what they are and how to use them.

ROPS or rollover protective structure is a frame or cab that provides a safe environment for the tractor operator in case of a rollover. In some areas of our country they are referred as anti-roll bars or **ROPS** cabs. All of them are designed to prevent death and minimize injuries. The first **ROPS** device was not marketed until 1965. Today many older tractors aren’t equipped with them.

I read one statistic that stated that over 50% of tractors in operation today still don’t have them. In 1985, tractor manufacturers adopted a voluntary standard to sell all tractors with **ROPS** in place. All new tractors are equipped with **ROPS** at the factory. The **ROPS** may be a part of the cab and may not be visible, but it is there. Older tractors can be retrofitted with **ROPS**. Check with your local dealer or your cooperative extension office for help. The extension offices have access to a list of manufacturer, models, and approximate costs of retrofitting them. The cost of the **ROPS** for older tractors may be more than the value of the tractor. Obviously, the true cost is the lives that may be saved.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS-

Our university isn’t required to follow OSHA standards; however, we do in most cases because of the obvious reasons. If we follow as close as possible, we should be in compliance:

- A **ROPS** must be provided on each tractor operated by an employee.
- Where **ROPS** are required, a seatbelt must be provided for that tractor.

- Employers must insure that the seat belts are tight enough on the operator to confine him/her in the protected area provided by the **ROPS** while the tractor is moving.
- The batteries, fuel tanks, oil reservoirs, and coolant systems must be constructed and located so that spillage won’t reach the operator in the event of an upset.
- All sharp edges and corners at the operator’s station must be designed to minimize injury in case of an upset.

EXEMPTIONS-

- Low profile tractors, while being used in orchards, vineyards, farm buildings or greenhouses where their vertical height would interfere with their normal operation.
- Tractors while used with mounted equipment that is incompatible with **ROPS** such as corn pickers.

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS-

Every employee who operates an agricultural tractor must be informed of the operating practices below and to any other practices that will insure or maintain a safe working environment. This information should be provided at their initial assignment and reviewed at least once a year. This rule was enacted effective June 1, 1975. Following are the instructions:

- Securely fasten the seatbelt if the tractor is equipped with a **ROPS**.
- When possible, avoid operating the tractor near ditches, embankments, and holes.
- Reducing speed when crossing slopes, and on rough, slick surfaces.
- Stay off slopes too steep for safe operation.
- Watch where you are going, especially on row ends, roads, and around trees.
- Do not permit others to ride. “One seat-One Rider” is the policy.
- Operate the tractor smoothly-no jerky turns, starts, or stops.
- Hitch only to the drawbar and hitch points recommended by the manufacturer.
- When tractor is stopped, set the brakes securely and use park lock, if available.

ROPS go through a series of extreme crush and static tests to insure that they will protect the operator in the designed protective zone in an overturn. These tests are so extensive that they destroy the **ROPS**.

During an overturn, the operator of a tractor with ROPS could be thrown from the protected area and crushed by the tractor or the ROPS itself if the operator isn’t wearing their seat belt.

**DON'T LEARN SAFETY BY
ACCIDENT!
<>OBEY THE RULES<>
Lead the Way <><>Be Safe
Today!**