

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Ten Commandments of
Tractor Safety*

Harvest season is almost upon us. We'll soon be getting tractors, combines, and ourselves in high gear. We endeavor that the "high gear" will also include staying safe and protecting our equipment and ourselves from injuries.

Between 1992 and 2009, there were 9,003 farmers and farm workers who died in work-related injuries. The leading cause of those deaths were tractor overturns, accounting for over 90 deaths annually. The most effective way to prevent tractor overturns is with the help of Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS).

Rollover Protective Structures were first introduced on tractors in the 1960s, and more became available in the 1970s. Since 1985, ROPS are standard equipment on all tractors and, coupled with seatbelts, have proven to be a life-saver. Research has proven that when ROPS and seatbelts are used, they are 99.9% effective in preventing death and serious injury.

The seatbelt, when fastened, will help to keep the operator completely in the "safe zone." Seatbelts should not be used without ROPS - for obvious reasons.

The Kubota Corp. has edited a paper called the "**Ten Commandments of Safety.**" If used and practiced, these commandments will help in reducing the potential for injuries, making the tasks involving tractors more enjoyable and safer.

Below we shall discuss each of these commandments:

- ✓ **Know your tractor, its implements, and how they work-**
Read and get familiar with the manufacturer's instruction manual.
- ✓ **Use ROPS and seatbelt whenever and wherever applicable-**
If your tractor has a foldable ROPS, fold it down only when it is necessary, and fold it back up and lock it as soon as possible. Do not wear the seatbelt when the ROPS is folded. Take special notes from above regarding the use of ROPS. 99.9% of lives can be saved by using ROPS and seatbelt.

- ✓ **Be totally familiar with the terrain and work area. Walk the area first to be sure and drive safely-**
Use special caution on slopes, slow down for all turns, and stay off the highways as much as possible. Also, be sure that bystanders and animals are clear of the area.
- ✓ **Never start an engine inside any type of enclosed building-**
Exhaust gas contains carbon monoxide, which is colorless, odorless, and deadly.
- ✓ **Always keep your PTO shielded-**
Make it a habit to always walk around the tractor and PTO driven implements. Do not ever cross over, through, or between the tractor and the implement, especially if it is running. The PTO rotates with sufficient speed to dismember or even kill you.
- ✓ **Keep your hitches low and always on the drawbar-**
By failing to keep the hitches low and not on the drawbar, the tractor could flip backward.
- ✓ **Never get off of a moving tractor or leave it with the engine running-**
Shut the engine down before dismounting or leaving the seat. Be sure to remove the key and place the gear shift in park. A runaway tractor can be extremely dangerous.
- ✓ **Never refuel with the engine running or when it is hot-**
Also you should never attempt to add coolant to the radiator while the engine is hot. Hot coolant can erupt and scald.
- ✓ **Keep bystanders and animals away from the tractor and implements at all times-**
Always check and recheck to see that bystanders, children, and animals are clear of the machinery. An accident involving one of these will forever be on your mind. The time involved to double check isn't time wasted. It's time to be safe and not sorry!
- ✓ **Never be in a hurry or take chances about anything relating to your tractor or the implements-**
Think safety first- then take your time and do it right.

**AT WORK OR AT PLAY
LET SAFETY LEAD THE
WAY!
DRIVE WITH REASON
DURING THIS HARVEST
SEASON!**