

Work environment – Rural safety

15.04.01

Tractor safety >

This bulletin outlines some simple safety guidelines for those working in the rural industry and is one of a series on Rural Industry safety.

Follow general safety precautions

Tractor accidents can be avoided.

- Read and follow all of the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- Ensure an approved Roll-over Protective Structure (ROPS) is fitted to the tractor.
- Wear hearing protection.
- Keep children away from tractors and machinery.
- Wear comfortable close-fitting clothing and boots, not thongs.
- Keep an up-to-date maintenance schedule.
- Ensure correct training for tractor drivers. Training should be specialised for the particular needs of the farm.
- Take short breaks regularly when working long hours.
- Adjust the seat so all controls can be operated comfortably and safely. Wear a seat belt where it is fitted but only if a ROPS is present.
- Keep all guards in place, including PTO.
- Operate self-starter only from the driving position.
- Do not carry passengers.

**Correctly hitch implements**

- Fit attachments according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When attaching equipment, always use the mounting points or draw bar provided by the manufacturer. Do not use improvised methods.
- Do not alter, modify or raise the height of the draw bar outside of those adjustments made possible by the manufacturer.
- When a power implement is attached to the tractor, be sure that all guards are in place before operating.
- Never hitch above the centre-line of the rear axle, around the axle housing or to the top link pin.

putting safety first >



- Do not attempt to adjust, or work on, implements while they are in motion.
- Do not use or attach implements unless the power shaft, or power take off shaft is guarded.

Travel and operate safely

- Fit and use a seat belt on tractors.
- Drive at speeds slow enough to retain control over the unexpected.
- Reduce speed before turning or applying brakes.
- Watch out for ditches, embankments and depressions. Crumbling and slippery banks have caused many overturns.
- When stuck in soft ground, back out. If unsuccessful, get help.
- On very steep slopes, if you have no trailing implements, reverse up the slope for greater safety.
- Use as wide a wheel track as possible when working on hillsides and sloping ground. Descend slopes cautiously. Keep the tractor in low gear and allow the motor compression to act as a brake.

Stop tractors correctly

- Do not dismount from a moving tractor.
- Ensure that the park brake is on and operating effectively before dismounting. Do not park a tractor on a steep slope.
- Remove the starting key when not using the tractor.

Provide regular maintenance

- Regularly service your tractor.
- ROPS should be checked regularly, particularly after an accident.
- Do not remove or replace belts while the pulleys are under power.
- Stop the engine before servicing or greasing.
- Keep steps and working platforms free of grease and oil to avoid slips and falls.
- If engine overheats, allow time for it to cool off before removing the radiator cap.
- Change wheels on flat surfaces only. Before removing any wheel, chock the other wheels. Avoid improvised lifting arrangements. Use a wide-based jack of adequate lifting capacity. When the tractor is jacked up, block it up evenly for additional support.
- Before removing a tyre from the rim, ensure all the air pressure has been released. Use correct procedures. Split rims can cause serious injuries. Tyres should be inflated in a cage for safety.

Protect your back

- Adjust the seat to meet your needs. When buying your next tractor consider the type of seating.

- Buy your tractor with a seat that has vibration absorbing suspension. Prolonged exposure to vibration may cause back damage.
- Ensure there are adequate mirrors to provide all round visibility.
- Never jump down from the tractor.
- Wear footwear that provides a firm grip when mounting or dismounting the tractor, or operating foot pedals.

Reduce the risk of tractor accidents; train operators in safe practices

Be sure to:

- follow the manufacturer's operating instructions;
- ensure all guards are correctly fitted and in good order;
- fit an approved roll-over protective structure as well as a seat belt;
- service your tractor regularly;
- not allow passengers on tractors;
- train operators in safe practices.

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