



Tractor Safety

Farm tractor accidents are the major cause of farm work-related deaths. Nationally, it is estimated that between 500 and 600 people are killed each year in tractor accidents; and, for every person killed, at least 40 others are injured. The information in this handout will help protect you and others from tractor-related injuries or fatalities. Check out the Tractor Safety video on the Monsanto Off-the-Job Safety YouTube Channel for more safety tips.



TEN TIPS FOR TRACTOR SAFETY

Know your tractor

Always look at the operator's manual before operating an unfamiliar machine. Know the location of each control.

Roll Over Protective Structures (ROPS)

Most tractor fatalities are the result of an overturn. The use of ROPS in conjunction with a seat belt saves lives. ROPS works by limiting the roll to 90 degrees, and protecting the operator's station from being crushed under the weight of the machine.

Drive safely

Avoid operating a tractor near ditches, holes, and embankments. If you must do so, then allow a six-foot clearance between the edge and the machine.

Never start a tractor inside a closed structure

Always open the doors before starting the tractor, or other internal combustion engines. A closed space can quickly fill with deadly Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Power Take Off (PTO) shields

Your tractor's PTO is a serious hazard. A PTO running at 1000 rpm, will pull in clothing at a rate of 8 feet per second. If your PTO has a damaged or missing shield, replace it before operating the tractor.

Hitches and Drawbars

Always hitch towed loads to the drawbar. This is the only safe place to attach a load. Hitching to the seat bracket or the axle, or anything else higher than the drawbar, can cause the tractor to back flip in less than a second.

Never leave a running tractor unattended

Always shut down your equipment if you are going to leave the work area. The risks of fire or unauthorized or unintended operation far outweigh any possible benefit. If you have children on your farm, take the keys with you.



Fuel when cool

Never refuel a tractor when it is running, or when the engine is hot. This is of special importance on older gasoline-powered equipment. Gasoline is not only highly flammable, it can be explosive in vapor form.

NO RIDERS!

If your tractor is equipped with a ROPS, it is not designed to protect anyone outside the operator's station. No one other than the operator has any business riding on a tractor, or worse yet, an implement being towed by a tractor. **DON'T RIDE ON A TRACTOR AND DON'T ALLOW OTHERS TO RIDE!!!**

Speed and carelessness kill

Never rush while operating a tractor. There is only one acceptable speed for tractor operation – “safe speed.” Allow plenty of time to get to and from the work area. An overly fatigued operator is liable to make mistakes, or become inattentive. Operating a tractor and implement in the field is both mentally taxing and monotonous. Get off the machine and stretch every so often; it really helps.

**Source – The Ten Commandments of Tractor Safety from the Utah State University Cooperative Extension*



Daily Equipment Checks

1. Check fuel tank (is there enough fuel to complete the task).
2. Check coolant level in the radiator, or inspect cooling fins on air-cooled models.
3. Check tire pressure (refer to owner's manual for the proper inflation for each job).
4. Check the condition of the tires. Look for cuts, cracks and checking.
5. Check the battery, cables and terminals.
6. Check the transmission and hydraulic oil levels.
7. Check air filter elements, or the oil level in an oil bath air cleaner.
8. Check the guards and shields to see that they are correctly installed and in good condition.
9. Check operator's station. Be sure it is clear of spilled fuel, oil, grease, crop residue or loose objects.
10. Check the lighting system and “Slow Moving Vehicle” placard.
11. Do a walk-around check of the tractor and implement. Look for loose or worn parts (king pins & lug nuts, for example). Check to see if the attached implement is hitched correctly, and that electric, mechanical and hydraulic connections are secure.
12. Check owner's manual for other checks particular to your tractor and implements.

Quick attendance to problems discovered during the daily checks will keep your tractor safe and serviceable over a longer period of time.

**Source – Utah State University Cooperative Extension*

