

Safe Rural Roads



Each year too many farm equipment and vehicle collisions take place, often during spring planting or fall harvest seasons. Tractors pulling large implements can take up much of narrow rural roads. Other vehicle drivers often get impatient with the slow moving machinery.

Collisions between farm implements and other vehicles can result in large costs in equipment and vehicle loss. Tragically, they also result in the loss of life, usually to the vehicle driver and occupants. Rural roads result in more deaths per mile than urban roads.

RURAL ROAD HAZARDS

- ▶ Hilly, steep, and/or curvy roads making it difficult to see
- ▶ Road surfaces which may be rough, gravel, and/or dirt
- ▶ No or narrow shoulders
- ▶ Narrow width
- ▶ Livestock and wildlife present
- ▶ Limited or inadequate signage
- ▶ Farm equipment and other vehicles sharing the same road

MACHINERY HAZARDS

- ▶ Large farm implements may cross the middle of the road
- ▶ Moves at a slower pace than regular traffic
- ▶ Heavy weight creates a problem if a tire goes over the road's edge and begins to roll
- ▶ Loud machinery can hinder the ability of the operator to hear oncoming traffic

STANDARD VEHICLE HAZARDS

- ▶ Faster speeds make it difficult to react when coming upon slower equipment
- ▶ Smaller in size, weight, and height makes them more difficult to see by equipment operators
- ▶ If the vehicle operator is not familiar with farm equipment, they may not know how to pass safely.

Preventing Rural Road Incidents



TIPS FOR FARMERS OPERATING MACHINERY

- ▶ Keep Slow-Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblems maintained, bright, and clean
- ▶ Make sure equipment lighting is working
- ▶ Signal with lights before making any turns, especially when pulling right to make a wide left hand turn
- ▶ Drive at a reasonable speed, especially when making turns
- ▶ Use lower speeds when driving on slopes to prevent rollovers
- ▶ Watch your mirrors so you are aware of ditches, the center of the road, and other vehicles
- ▶ Check and double check your hitch pins if hauling implements
- ▶ Travel on less busy roads
- ▶ Avoid travel during dusk and dawn when visibility is reduced
- ▶ Do not allow passengers on farm equipment. Not only are they at risk, but can also distract the driver putting them at risk
- ▶ If the farm equipment is especially wide and/or high, have a pilot car escort you

TIPS FOR STANDARD VEHICLE DRIVERS

Take special caution during peak farming seasons, usually spring and fall

- ▶ Never pass farm equipment while in no-passing zones
- ▶ Slow down and be patient
- ▶ When passing slower large farm equipment, use turn signals to let the equipment driver know you are passing

Farm children often begin operating farm tractors and equipment at a young age. Teach them how to be safe while operating farm equipment or as a vehicle driver on rural roads. The life you save may be your son's or daughter's.

Whether a farm equipment operator or a standard vehicle driver, know your state laws and regulations. Follow these rules so neither is putting the other at risk when sharing rural roads.

Find additional information at:

<http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icash/resources/rural-roadway-safety/>