

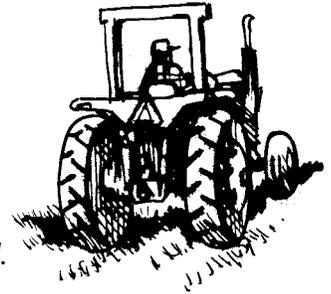
Be Safe When Operating a Tractor

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

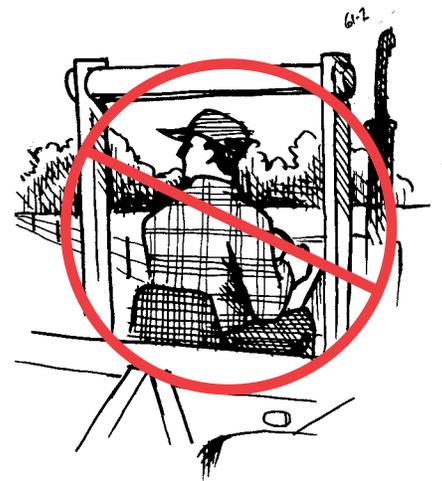
- Be sure your tractor has all of the recommended safety equipment.
- Don't operate a tractor if you are overtired or ill.
- Never allow extra riders – including children.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.



Tractors can injure you or others

- [Tractors](#) are useful pieces of farm machinery, but they can also injure you or others if not used with enough care.
- There are between 250 and 300 tractor-related deaths on farms in the United States each year.
- In addition to these deaths, many serious injuries result from tractor-related accidents. Among the major reasons are:
 - human error, including inattentive driving, poor judgment, or operating a tractor while fatigued or ill
 - failure to have proper, working safety equipment, including an [SMV \(slow-moving vehicle emblem\)](#), PTO driveline guarding, and a ROPS (rollover protective structure) with a seat belt
 - failure to use the tractor's safety equipment or to follow safety rules



Before operating a tractor

1. Never operate a tractor unless you have been trained.
2. Review the operator's manual, including all of the safety rules, safety signs, and safety features for your tractor.
3. Inspect the tractor before you turn it on. Make sure all shields, guards and warning labels are undamaged and in place. Check the condition of the tires, steps, handholds, railings and brakes. Make sure the exhaust systems and hydraulic systems are free of leaks and debris that could catch fire.
4. Check for the presence of important safety equipment, including a properly mounted, unfaded SMV; a PTO master shield; working lights; and a ROPS with a seat belt.
5. Check the hitch connections, including locking devices, if you plan to pull a load. Also, make sure the load is secure, balanced and light enough for your tractor to safely handle.
6. Be sure the tractor contains a fire extinguisher and a first aid kit.
7. Carefully check the area for the presence of animals, children and any other bystanders. Keep them out of the way.



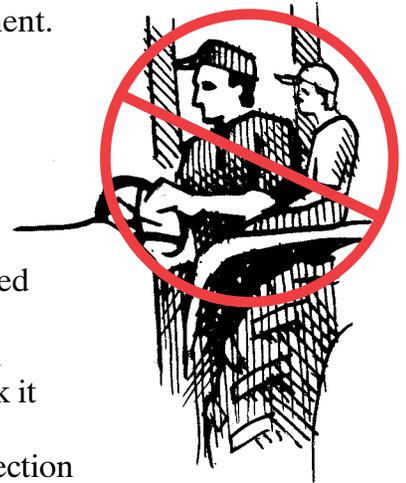
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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

Be Safe When Operating a Tractor

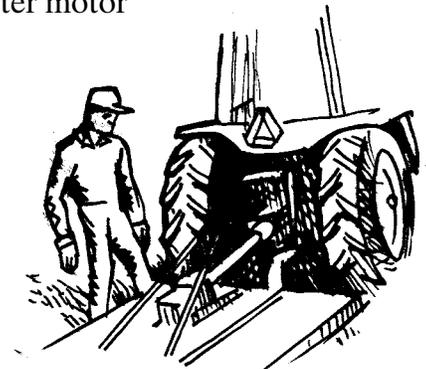
While you are operating a tractor

- Drive slowly, especially when operating a tractor on public roads, when turning, and when driving on a slope.
- Drive defensively. Be on the lookout for potential hazards. These may include other drivers, rough or slippery terrain, or children playing in the area.
- Avoid driving near the edge of a gully, irrigation ditch or steep embankment. Also, avoid driving across steep slopes.
- Use all safety equipment. This includes wearing a seat belt when you are operating a tractor with a ROPS, and keeping the ROPS in the upright position whenever you're out of a low-clearance area.
- Never allow extra riders on the tractor – including children.
- Never climb on or off the tractor while it is still moving.
- Turn off the PTO before getting off a tractor. Be sure the shaft has stopped rotating. Take the key and stop the tractor.
- Dress appropriately. Avoid wearing loose clothing, jewelry, or shirts with drawstrings that could get caught on a PTO shaft. Put up long hair or tuck it under a hat. Wear sunglasses on bright days.
- Use hearing protection when around loud noise. Wear a hat for sun protection when you are in the sun.
- Follow all state and local traffic laws when driving a tractor on public roads.



Other important safety tips

1. Follow all safety rules.
2. Never “bypass start” a tractor by placing a metal object across the starter motor or solenoid terminals or turn the key while standing on the ground.
3. Only hitch to the drawbar or other hitch points recommended by the tractor manufacturer.
4. Drive with a raised load low in a front-end loader. This improves the tractor’s stability and your view of the road.
5. Stay a safe distance away from PTO-powered equipment. Don’t check, adjust, unplug or grease any equipment with the tractor running or while the PTO shaft is rotating.
6. Don’t smoke when refueling a tractor. Shut the tractor off before refueling.



Stay a safe distance away from PTO-powered equipment.

Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees’ questions. Then review the **Tractor Safety Do’s and Don’ts**.

TRACTOR SAFETY DO’S AND DON’TS

DO:

- Inspect your tractor before you operate it. Be sure all guards, shields and warning decals are in place.
- Dress properly and keep hearing protection handy.
- Drive defensively. Be on the alert for hazards and bystanders.

DON’T:

- Ever allow extra riders on a tractor.
- Get too close to a rotating PTO shaft.
- Operate a tractor if you are overtired, ill or have been drinking alcohol.

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