

Reduce Your Risk of a Tractor Overturn

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are available in Spanish at gemplers.com.

Key Points:

- It takes just a split second for a tractor to overturn.
- A rollover protective structure (ROPS) with a seat belt greatly reduces the risk of injury from an overturn.
- Always be on the alert for rocks, stumps and other hazards.

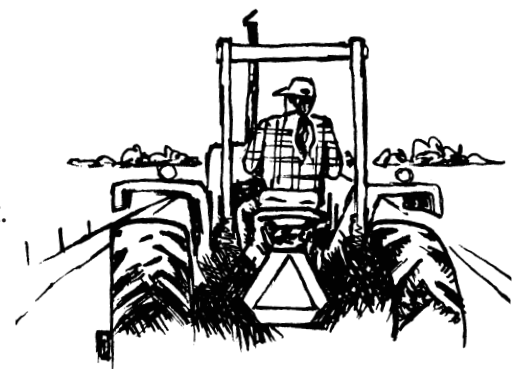
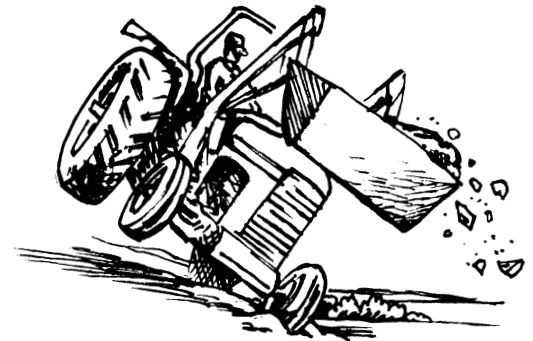
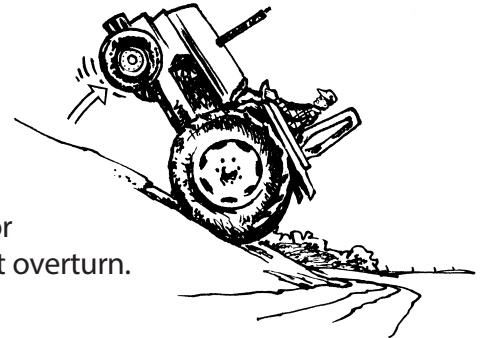
Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.

What causes tractors to overturn?

- Each year, hundreds of people in the United States are killed in tractor accidents. The majority of these deaths occur because of tractors that overturn.
- Sometimes a tractor tips over on its side. Other times, it tips over backward.
- These overturns occur very quickly – often in a second or two. Unfortunately, that doesn't leave enough time for the operator to escape.
- Some of the major causes of tractor overturns are:
 - driving too fast for conditions
 - running into obstructions, such as rocks, stumps, ditches or holes
 - turning corners too sharply, especially with a narrow front end tractor
 - driving or turning too quickly on steep slopes
 - hitching above the normal drawbar height
 - operating with a heavy or shifting load in a front-end loader raised too high

Rollover protective structures

- Your chances of surviving a tractor overturn without serious injury are very good if the tractor has a rollover protective structure – or ROPS – and you are wearing a seat belt.
- A ROPS is a cab or frame that is specially designed to keep you within a protective zone if your tractor overturns. It's important to wear the seat belt so you aren't thrown from the tractor, then crushed by the overturning tractor.
- If your tractor is equipped with a folding ROPS, make sure it is in the upright position whenever you are outside the low clearance application.



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Warning: Don't wear a seat belt when you are driving a tractor without a ROPS or with a ROPS folded down. If the tractor overturns, your best chance for survival is to be thrown clear from the tractor.

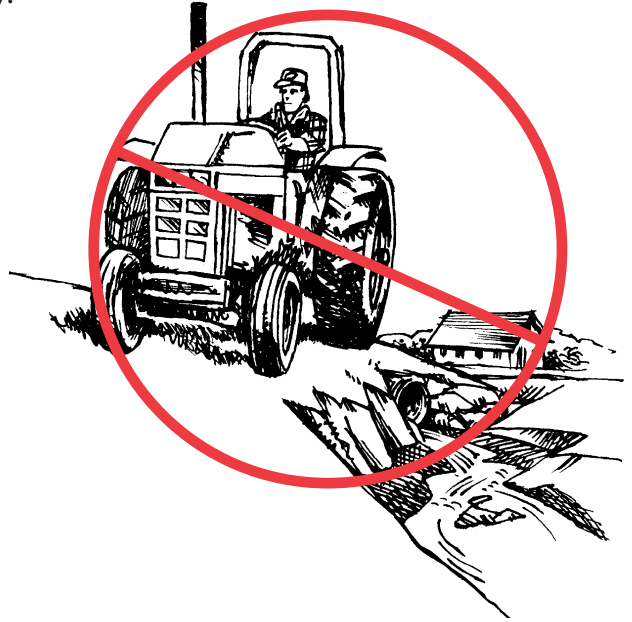
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Tips to help prevent overturns

1. Always be on the alert for potential hazards. These may include rocks, stumps, slippery surfaces, steep slopes or rough terrain. Drive slowly.
2. Slow down when turning corners.
3. Stay as far away as possible from ditches and holes.
4. Don't drive near the edge of a gully, irrigation ditch or steep embankment. The ground could give way.
5. Avoid driving on steep slopes if possible. If you must:
 - Back the tractor up the hill to help keep weight on the front wheels.
 - Drive smoothly. Don't stop or shift gears.
 - Drive forward down the hill, keeping the tractor in low gear.
6. Don't hitch above the normal drawbar height. This increases the chances of a backward rollover.
7. Only hitch to the drawbar or other hitch points recommended by the tractor manufacturer. If you aren't certain where to hitch, ask your supervisor.
8. Keep the front-end loader as low as possible when carrying a load. Driving with a raised load in a front-end loader reduces the tractor's stability.



A few more safety tips

- Don't drive a tractor if you are overtired or ill.
- Familiarize yourself with any new terrain.
- Check around the tractor before moving and look around before turning or changing direction.
- Never allow passengers on a tractor.
- Always turn the tractor off after it has stopped. Use the parking brake or shift to the "park" position. Then remove the key.



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:

- Always wear the seat belt if your tractor is equipped with a rollover protective structure in the upright position.
- Go slowly when turning and when driving on slippery, steep or rough terrain.
- Keep the front-end loader as low as possible when carrying a load.

DON'T:

- Pull a load that's heavier than your tractor can safely handle. Be especially careful on hilly ground.
- Drive forward up a hill. Back the tractor up the hill instead.
- Take your eyes off of the terrain ahead of you. Always look where you are going.

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