

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Prevent Injuries  
with ROPS



Tractor overturns are the leading cause of occupational agricultural deaths in the United States. Between 1992 and 2005, 1,412 workers on farms died from tractor overturns. Another source states that tractor overturns account for 50 percent of all tractor-related deaths in the U.S.A.

According to the Journal of Safety Research the southern and western areas of the U.S. have the most tractors equipped with **ROPS** (52 percent). The north and east areas have less (40 percent). **The ROPS** do not prevent rollovers, but they are 99.9 percent effective in preventing death and serious injuries, when used in conjunction with seat belts. Distractions, speed, and rough, uneven terrains are the major causes of tractor rollovers.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires **ROPS and SEATBELTS** to be installed on all tractors over 20 HP.

## ROPS FACTS-

- ✓ Rollover Protective Structures (**ROPS**) became available in the mid-1960s.
- ✓ ROPS were not available all on new tractors until the mid-1970s.
- ✓ ROPS weren't standard equipment on new tractors until 1985.
- ✓ The American Society of Agriculture & Biological engineers (1985) encouraged all the major manufacturers of tractors to install **ROPS and SEATBELTS** on all new agricultural tractors sold in the U.S. as standard equipment.

## REASONS THAT FARMERS REJECTED ROPS ORIGINALLY-

- Too tall to allow tractors to enter farm buildings or interfere with farm operations where low clearances are an issue.
- The belief, particularly from older farmers, is that they know how to control a tractor making **ROPs** unnecessary.
- The perception that this is an inconvenience and time and money wasted to pay and have **the ROPs** installed.

## 3 TYPES OF ROLLOVER PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES-

- **Rollover Protective Frame** - two or four post frames are securely mounted to the main body of the tractor. Use the provided seat belt to keep the operator within the protected area.
- **Folding ROPS** - The top of the **ROPs** will fold down so as to reduce the overall clearance height. This allows for low-clearance areas, like orchards or low overhead doors.
- **Rollover Protective Enclosure** - A rollover protective enclosure utilizes the protective frame but totally encloses the frame with metal and glass. Seatbelts are provided and must be used to contain the operator within the protected areas. Additionally, the cab provides protection from weather elements, dust, chemicals, noise and vibration.

Cabs on the older tractors were designed with comfort in mind, not **for ROPS** protection. Cabs with **ROPS** furnish adequate protection in the event of a tractor rollover. Check inside the cab on the ROPS for a certification label, contact the manufacturer, or check for the presence of a manufacturer-installed seatbelt.

Professional agriculture-related associations emphasize that aftermarket **ROPS kits** are available for most models of tractors. If they aren't available, then the tractor should not be operated. Seatbelts ensure that the operator will stay within the zone of protection offered by the **ROPS**, in case of an accident. Seatbelts should not be used on tractors without **ROPS**.

## TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SIDE ROLLOVERS-

- Set wheels apart as far as possible.
- Lock the brake pedals together before high-speed travel.
- Match your speed to operating conditions and loads. Don't allow the front wheels to bounce.
- Slow down before making turns.
- Use engine brakes when going downhill.
- Avoid crossing steep slopes. Watch for depressions on the downhill side and bumps on the uphill side. If stability becomes a problem turn downhill, not uphill.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from ditches and steep slopes. Slow down to maintain control. Stay at least 10 feet from river or creek banks. Banks may be steep. Slow down to maintain control.
- If you have a front-end loader bucket, keep it as low as possible when moving.
- If the right tire slips off the road into a ditch, turn downward or hold steady and slowly recover. Do not attempt to turn sharply back onto the roadway.

## TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF REAR OVERTURN -

- ❖ Always hitch loads at the drawbar.
- ❖ Use front weights to increase tractor stability.
- ❖ Start forward motion slowly and change speed gradually.
- ❖ If possible, avoid backing downhill.
- ❖ Drive around ditches.
- ❖ Back or be towed out of ditches or mud.

Some western states have passed laws enforcing the use of **ROPs and Seatbelts**. Mississippi hasn't passed any laws as yet regarding seatbelt use.

Ted Gordon – Risk Mgmt. / Loss Control Mgr.  
MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201  
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