

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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*Safety Tips:
Farm Machinery Safety
On Public Roads*

Each year thousands of farm vehicles are involved in accidents on public roads. Motorists are hitting the roads for football games, fall festivals and admiring the changing colors of fall. These motorists will be encountering farm machinery from combines, to trucks hauling the fruits of the harvest, to grain elevators, cotton gins and other harvest collection points.

Road safety becomes more important when the two entities have to share the public roads during the harvest season. During harvest season is generally the time when there is an increase in collisions between farm equipment and other vehicles. These collisions are usually the result of the difference in the speed of conventional road vehicles and the slower-paced farm equipment. In many cases passenger vehicles don't have enough time or don't realize their speed in time to react to the slow-moving farm equipment.

FOR FARMERS-

Farmers can take steps to enhance the visibility of their farm machinery. Before traveling on public roads with the machinery, they should remember to:

- Lock the brake pedals.
- Check all hitch connections, including the locking devices.
- Adjust the mirrors for clear vision.
- Make sure that the warning flashers, lights, and the slow-moving vehicle (SMV) sign are clear, clean, and in good, visible condition. If they are dusty or muddy, stop and take a few minutes to clean them up.
- Check the tire inflation pressures. Inflate the tires to the recommended pressure for long-distance travel.
- Accidents can also happen from the farmers perspective, if they are driving the equipment too fast or if they are turning or pulling a load.
- Beware of crowding the center line which can cause a side-swiping.
- Be sure to caution young, inexperienced operators on all these tips that we have listed.
- Of lesser frequency, but also can occur, beware of stationary objects or trees.
- If you're towing a load, be sure to check the load balance and that the load is secured properly according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- ***Do not allow extra riders on any farm equipment unless there is a manufacturer's designed seat for the unit.***

FARM EQUIPMENT TRAVELING ON PUBLIC ROADS-

- Watch for potholes or other obstacles that could tip the tractor.
- Listen for cars. Often vehicles will approach farm machines at three or four times the speed of farm equipment.

- ✓ Stay alert at all times to avoid a serious accident. Refrain from using the cell phone or two-way radio while you're operating on public roads.
- ✓ Stay alert, looking all around you for animals, pedestrians, mailboxes, steep ditch embankments, soft shoulders, and other obstacles.
- ✓ Slow down for curves and going downhill.
- ✓ Consider having an escort following behind your equipment.
- ✓ Keep in mind high traffic times which usually are in early mornings and late afternoon. When possible, try to schedule moving equipment at times other than these.

OTHER SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS-

- The SMV sign should be mounted point up, four to six feet above the ground and as near the center of the tractor as possible.
- The tractor must have:
 - Two headlights and one taillight mounted on the left side facing the rear of the tractor.
 - Two amber lights visible from the front and the rear, mounted at least 42 inches from the ground.
 - Two red reflectors visible from the rear and mounted on either side.
 - A speed identification system (SIS) on high speed tractors and equipment.

SAFETY TIPS FOR MOTORISTS-

- ✓ Farm machinery has the same legal right as other motor vehicles.
- ✓ Farm machinery may unexpectedly turn from a driveway or field road on to the public road. We as vehicle drivers should identify this equipment and be prepared to slow down.
- ✓ Farm equipment operators may not be able to see you due to their size or load which may block their view. If you can't see the operator, they can't see you.
- ✓ Slow-moving farm equipment, moving along at 25 miles per hour or less, should display a slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblem on the back of their equipment. This sign is quickly identifiable by approaching motorists.
- ✓ Beware! Farm machinery that is half on the road and half off can quickly move up on the road totally.
- ✓ Extra wide equipment may take up more than half of the road to avoid roadside hazards, like mailboxes or road signs.

SAFETY TIPS-BEFORE PASSING FARM MACHINERY-

- Check to be sure that the equipment is not turning left. Look for signal lights or left hand signals.
- Make sure that the road is wide enough for you to safely pass the machine.
- Look to be sure that there is enough room for you to safely pass and return to your lane.
- Look for obstacles on the side of the road which may result in the machinery having to move to the center of the road.

DON'T DRIVE ALONE
LOOK FOR OTHERS
SAFETY IS OUR GOAL – WHAT'S YOURS?

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Excerpts: <http://www.netwellness.org/healthtopics>

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