

## Operating Farm Equipment on Public Roads

Operation of farm equipment on public roadways results in about 23,000 accidents each year. Thousands are injured in these accidents, many operators lose their lives, and property damage is considerable. The combination of slow moving vehicles sharing space on country roads with high speed passenger vehicles is often a deadly combination. Poor visibility and/or inadequate lighting on farm equipment is frequently a contributing factor. Yet almost half of the accidents are single vehicle accidents resulting from running off the roadway, overturning, striking fixed objects, or persons falling from equipment.

The tragedy is that many of these accidents can be prevented by following a few simple precautions.

### Precautions

1. Allow only licensed and fully experienced drivers to take equipment onto public roadways.
2. Instruct operators to drive defensively. They should keep to the right, be prepared to pull onto the shoulder of the road to make way for other traffic, and be alert for driving errors of others.
3. Full stops should be made prior to entering roadways from driveways and before crossing RR tracks.
4. Special care should be given to intersections. A slow moving tractor trailer combination can take 10 seconds to clear an intersection. In that time, other vehicles approaching the intersection at 55MPH will travel 800 feet.
5. Passengers should be discouraged. No one should be allowed to ride on drawbars, fenders, or other hazardous areas where falls are likely to occur.
6. When necessary to leave the roadway for any reason, be alert to soft shoulders, deep ditches and culverts that could cause a turnover.

### Equipment

1. Maintain equipment in safe operating condition. Assure that all lights and reflectors are kept clean and in working order. Brakes must function properly, and in the case of dual pedal equipment, pedals should be locked together to prevent uneven braking.
2. Keep windshields and cab glass clean. Operators must be able to see and be seen.
3. Check tires for proper inflation. Low pressures can result in poor handling on roadways.
4. Check loads to make sure they are stable, properly balanced and secure.
5. Use hitch pins with positive locking devices. When possible, supplement with safety chains/cables.
6. Be sure that slow moving vehicle emblems are clearly visible at the rear of all farm equipment operated on public roads.

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*The listed tips are key points in operating farm equipment safely on public roadways. Contact your local Great American Loss Prevention Specialist for additional information.*

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