

## TRACTOR SAFETY

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(For assistance, please contact EHS at (402) 472-4925, or visit our web site at <http://ehs.unl.edu/>)

Nationwide, tractor-related accidents lead to the greatest number of farming injuries and fatalities. Do not operate a tractor without prior training. Read the operator's manual prior to operating any tractor; keep the manual on file for future reference.

- Ensure the tractor is equipped with a Roll-Over Protection System (ROPS). See the EHS SOP, ***Roll-Over Protective Structures (ROPS) for Tractors***.
- Use the seatbelt when operating a tractor.
- Most tractors are designed for safe operation by one person. Do not allow riders on the tractor unless the tractor is equipped with a passenger seat.
- Prior to getting on a tractor for operation, walk around the tractor and make a pre-operational check and visual inspection. Check the lights, reflectors, visibility, SMV emblem, tires, brakes, etc. Check for bystanders and other objects. Check the terrain of the area where the tractor will be operated for hidden hazards (i.e., logs, washouts, etc.).
- Keep the exhaust system in good condition and leak free.
- Adjust the brakes regularly.
- When getting off the tractor for any reason, lower any mounted equipment and turn the tractor off. Remove the keys when the tractor is not being used.
- When a tractor is stopped, set brakes securely and use a park lock if available.
- Do not use the steering wheel as a grip when getting on the tractor.
- Use hearing protection when operating tractors without a cab.
- Equip the tractor with a first aid kit and fire extinguisher.
- Equip the rear of the tractor with a Slow-Moving-Vehicle (SMV) sign that has good reflective qualities and is kept clean. The sign must be mounted from two to six feet above the roadway. When towing a trailer, install a SMV sign on the trailer.
- Make sure everyone is clear of the tractor and any attached equipment before engaging.
- Keep the tractor steps and floorboard free of mud, tools, or other debris that could interfere with operation of the tractor or pose slip/trip/fall hazards.
- Steer clear of hazardous terrain such as ditches, steep hills, or other areas where the tractor may become unstable.
- Reduce speed when turning, crossing slopes, and on rough, slick or muddy surfaces.

- Do not operate a tractor on slopes that are too steep for safe operation.
- Operate the tractor smoothly – avoid short or quick turns, starts, or stops.
- Pay attention to the direction the tractor is going, especially at row ends, on roads, and around trees.
- Prior to towing an attachment, make sure the draw bar is of sufficient length.
- Hitch towed loads to the drawbar, never higher. Use safety hitch pins and chains. Ensure that the tractor equipment is sized properly for the intended load.
- When towing high loads, always check clearances between the top of the load and overhead power lines.
- Maintenance and repair should be conducted only by qualified and trained personnel and in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations/specifications.
- When using a power take-off or drive line, refer to the EHS SOP, ***Power Take-Offs and Drive Lines***.
- Be careful when driving on a public road. Approaching traffic cannot be heard over the tractor engine noise. This means drivers must rely on vision for approaching traffic. A slow moving tractor may cause other drivers to drive aggressively.
- Stay clear of pinch points between:
  - Hitch components and the tractor, including tires.
  - Hitch and implement.
  - Implement and the ground.
- When using an external switch to raise/lower the 3-point hitch, make sure the transmission is in park and the parking brake set.