

Tractor Safety Tips

Spot the Hazard

Regularly check for hazards relating to tractors, attached implements and field conditions. Hazardous areas could include mechanical parts, operator training, other people, work procedures, unsafe jacking, climatic conditions, chemicals used, uneven terrain, and any other potential causes of an injury or a hazardous incident.

Make the Changes

Ways to improve tractor operator safety include:

- Reading and following safety procedures in the manufacturer's manual.
- Ensuring an approved cab or roll-over protective structure (ROPS) is fitted.
- Using a seatbelt on all tractors and mowers.
- Making sure the seat has side restraints and a back rest to reduce the risk of back strain.
- Wearing hearing protection.
- Removing starter keys when tractors are not in use.
- Having an up-to-date maintenance schedule.
- Following safe maintenance and jacking procedures.
- Ensuring the operator is properly trained for each type of tractor work.
- Always mounting and dismounting on a tractor's left side in order to avoid the controls.
- Adjusting the seat so all controls are safely and comfortably within reach.
- Keeping all guards in place, including the power take-off (PTO).
- Operating the self-starter from the operator position only.
- Never carrying passengers.

When operating a tractor:

- Drive at speeds slow enough to retain control over unexpected events.
- Reduce speed before turning or applying brakes.
- Watch out for ditches, logs, rocks, depressions, and embankments.
- On steep slopes, without a trailed implement, reverse up for greater safety.
- Engage the clutch gently at all times, especially when going uphill or towing.
- Use as wide a wheel track as possible on hillsides and sloping ground.
- Descend slopes cautiously in low gear, using the motor as a brake.
- Never mount or dismount a moving tractor.
- Ensure the park brake is on and operating effectively before dismounting.
- Take short breaks regularly when working long hours.

When towing implements:

- Fit attachments according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always attach implements to the draw bar or the mounting points provided by the manufacturer.
- Never alter, modify or raise the height of the draw bar, unless provided for by the manufacturer.
- Regularly check safety pins on towed lift-wing implements to ensure they are not worn.
- Ensure all guards on towed implements are in place before operating.
- Never hitch above the center line of the rear axle, around the axle housing, or to the top link pin.
- Never adjust or work on implements while they are in motion.
- Never attach implements unless the PTO shaft is guarded.
- When parking, always lower the three-point linkage and towed implement.

To avoid strain injury:

- Adjust the tractor seat for back support and comfort.
- Check seat height, seat depth, back rest height and angle, fore and aft movement, seat tilt, firm padding, partial pivoting (if you have to spend long periods looking behind you), and vibration-absorbing suspension.
- Dismount every hour or so, and spend 5-10 minutes doing something active.
- Dismount by climbing down - not jumping down - and use each provided foot and hand hold.