

Safety Meeting Ideas

Washington Growers League

June 2009

► *This Month's Theme:* *Tractors, PTO's & ROPS*

Tractors certainly do an enormous amount of work but they are also the number one cause of fatalities on the farm. This large and versatile piece of equipment is especially vulnerable to rollover, it can catch clothing and body parts in the fast spinning PTO shaft, and it can run over drivers and passengers who fall beneath its wheels. This month's *Safety Meeting Ideas* covers some of the ways in which you can protect yourself and your crew from these hazards.

► *Manager's Meeting*

You are required to provide tractor training "at the time of initial assignment and at least annually thereafter," and to provide a specific list of operating instructions (see page 5.7.17:3 in the *Ag Employers Handbook*.) In addition to these instructions, you need to include information on the terrain in which the tractor will be operated and training on how to avoid rollovers.

Rollover Protection Structures (ROPS)

All employee operated tractors, regardless of their age, are required to have ROPS unless they are exempt. Tractors are exempt from ROPS if they are:

1. Low profile and used in farm buildings, greenhouses, orchards, vineyards or hop yards where vertical clearance is limited, or
2. While using mounted equipment which is incompatible with ROPS.

Power Take Off (PTO's)

One of the most hazardous areas on the tractor is the power take-off shaft. By law (WAC 296-307-30006), master and PTO driveline shields must be in place. Maintenance and replacement of damaged shields should be a priority.

Finally, conduct a walk around safety inspection using the list on page 2.



► *Tractor Driver's Talk*

Tractor drivers may claim to have heard it all before when it comes to safety, however, all it takes is one moment of carelessness. Remind drivers of the following hazardous driving situations:

- Most tractors have a high center of gravity that makes them unstable on slopes. Travel up and down rather than across the slope or hill.
- When driving on wet grass or leaves in orchards or vineyards, be especially careful when driving on steep slopes because of poor traction.
- Driving down a hill hauling a load can push the tractor beyond braking capability. Haul heavy loads uphill.
- A tractor that is driven too close to the edge of a ditch, embankment or hole can have the bank give way. Stay as far away from the edge of a ditch as it is deep. Also beware of holes, rocks and wash-outs around ditches.
- A load that is hitched above the drawbar by chain can unbalance the tractor and cause it to rollover backwards.
- Operate a tractor smoothly with no sudden turns, starts, or stops. These types of quick maneuvers can cause rollovers and sudden stops can cause fish tailing or jack knifing.
- A front-end loader that is raised too high while moving can overbalance and tip over. Keep the

**Walk-Around
Safety Inspection**

Tractors, PTO's & ROPS:

- Are all master and PTO shaft shields in place and in good condition?
- Is the tractor's operating manual available for training?
- Has regular maintenance been performed?
- Are all ROPS and seat belts in good condition and installed properly if required?
- Is the SMV emblem highly visible?
- Are keys removed from the tractor to prevent unauthorized use?
- Is hearing protection available for those who request it?
- Are crew members instructed to never ride as passengers?
- Are all guards in good condition and in place?
- Are the steps slip resistant and clear of debris?

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bucket and speed low to maintain balance and watch for holes and rocks.

- Never carry people in the front loader bucket, even at low speed.

The following is a list of safety reminders for tractor drivers:

- Before operating, do you conduct a walk around inspection checking tires, brakes, guards, oil and coolant levels, etc.?
- Do you always wear seatbelts with ROPS?
- Do you refuse to carry passengers?
- When pulling implements, do you use proper hitch pins that will not fall out?
- Are steps free of mud, tools or debris that could cause a fall?
- When traveling on the public road, do you check your SMV sign, warning lights and lock your brakes together?
- Do you always lower mounted equipment before leaving the tractor?
- Are all shields and guards in

place on the PTO shaft?

- Is the master shield in place where the PTO meets the tractor?
- Do you always avoid stepping over the rotating PTO shaft?
- Do you wear snug fitting clothing to avoid it getting caught in a spinning PTO shaft? (NOTE: Shoe laces, nylon jackets, and hooded sweat shirts with drawstrings can also get caught.)
- Before leaving the tractor, is the PTO disengaged, engine shut off and keys removed?

► Shop Safety

Remind your mechanics about the following:

- Replace all shields and guards when repairs are completed.
- Never try to repair a PTO shaft while it is running.
- Use lockout/tagout procedures to prevent unauthorized start ups.
- Take time for safety, do not try to take shortcuts.

Take a Minute for Minutes

Date: _____

Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Employees present:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Topics covered:
Tractors, PTO's and ROPS

Notes:

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