

Tips for “Homemade ROPS – Should You Make Your Own?”

Contents

This group discussion activity explores why farmers choose to make their own Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) for farm tractors and some of the possible consequences of that decision. Because homemade ROPS have not been tested, they cannot be depended upon to protect the operator in case of an overturn. Failure of a ROPS can lead to serious injuries, deaths and possibly costly lawsuits.

Objectives

This exercise can help farmers and other community leaders become more aware of

- ⇒ Why some farmers may choose to make their own ROPS rather than purchase a commercial ROPS
- ⇒ The increased danger for a person operating a tractor with a homemade ROPS
- ⇒ The possible financial risk should a homemade ROPS fail during an overturn

Intended Audience

- ⇒ Young and adult farm men and women
- ⇒ Vocational agricultural students and 4-H youth
- ⇒ People who provide advice and services to farmers and farm family members

How to Use These Materials

- Review the discussion questions, memo, and fact sheet
- Decide if the exercise is useful to you and others with whom you work
- Use the materials in any of the following ways:
 - ⇒ As an activity for a meeting or class
 - ⇒ As an individual activity for a person to complete at their convenience
 - ⇒ In school or community projects about the safety of homemade ROPS. Ask the students or adults to read through the exercise and discuss it with the others in the group; or to make a short presentation about the dangers of homemade ROPS and the added risk of lawsuits.

Materials Needed

- Discussion questions for “Homemade ROPS – Should You Make Your Own?”
- Homemade ROPS Fact Sheet
- University of Kentucky memorandum “Concerns Regarding the Use of Homemade ROPS”
- Tractor manufacturers’ color flier about ROPS, “Here’s something these tractor companies agree on: The value of rollover protection and a seat belt”
- The “Pause for Thought: Should You Install a ROPS Yourself? Lessons Learned” story included in the “Activities” section of the notebook. (This story helps to explain why homemade ROPS are problematic. It also describes the difficulties farmers encounter when they install ROPS themselves rather than have equipment dealers do so.)

Discussion Questions and Teaching Points

1. Do you know anyone who has a homemade ROPS?
2. Have you heard of anyone who has overturned a tractor with a homemade ROPS?
3. Is the risk of possible serious injury or death and perhaps a legal action worth the few hundred dollars saved by having a homemade ROPS installed on a tractor?

Ideas, Notes, and Comments

Use this space to write down your ideas and plans for using these materials.