



Maine Farm Safety Program

by Dawna L. Cyr, farm safety project assistant, and Steven B. Johnson, Ph.D., Extension crops specialist

Working Around Vehicle Problems Safely

Avoiding Overturns and Runovers

Overturns and runovers are the two leading causes of tractor-related deaths. Install a ROPS (Roll-Over Protective Structure) with safety belts on tractors where they can be added. Always wear the safety belt. Allow no extra riders on equipment. Make sure everyone is out of the way before moving. Never bypass start a tractor because it may be in gear. When working on steep areas, widen the wheel base.

Don't Get Caught

Disengage drives and turn off the engine before leaving the driver's seat. Make sure everyone knows how to safely stop all motors, drives and augers. Stay clear of moving parts and keep others away. Wear well-fitted clothing and be cautious with jewelry that may be caught in machinery. Keep protective shielding in place. Stay away

from unshielded moving parts. Always stop the machine before unclogging or tending to mechanical problems.

Freeing Mired Vehicles

Freeing mired vehicles is a dangerous job. Accidents occur when tractors overturn, tow chains and cables break, unattended vehicles roll and crush people between them, vehicles shift and trap people digging under

Working Around Vehicle Problems Safely

- **Install a ROPS with a safety belt on tractors where they can be added.**
- **Disengage drives before leaving the driver's seat.**
- **Properly support equipment when working under it.**

them, and towing vehicles pull out in front of other traffic as the stuck vehicle is freed. Attach tow lines only to drawbars, trailer hitches or tow eyes. Use tow cables with caution. These cables can break and snap wildly. Do not use nylon ropes. They can break violently. Always be alert to traffic on or near a roadway. Do not get between the stuck vehicle and the one towing it out.

Wear well-fitted clothing and be cautious with jewelry that may be caught in machinery.

Working Under Equipment

Working under equipment can be very dangerous. Equipment that is not properly supported can fall and crush

people. Hydraulically supported equipment such as combine headers, loader buckets and hitch-mounted implements are especially vulnerable. If a line breaks, a valve leaks or the control lever is moved, equipment will fall. Make sure all safety supports are in place or that equipment is fully blocked before working under it. Make sure other workers know someone is working underneath the equipment so they do not unknowingly lower it.

Vehicle problems can lead to lost work time and lower productivity. Preventing these problems from happening is the best solution, but not always possible. Knowing how to safely solve them will mean fewer injuries and less lost time.

This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

For the most current Extension publications, see our online catalog at

www.umext.maine.edu

A Member of the University of Maine System

Published and distributed in furtherance of Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Land Grant University of the state of Maine and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Cooperative Extension and other agencies of the U.S.D.A. provide equal opportunities in programs and employment. 10/03