

Training Module: Tractors and Highway Safety

Objective: To use safe highway procedures for tractors.

Trainer's Note: Accidents occur because highway safety precautions are not followed. It is difficult to avoid highway travel when going between farm sites. Discuss procedures for traveling on highways with agricultural equipment. Common sense and good judgment should be emphasized. Discuss driving safely on highways.

Background

When hauling a tractor for some distance, it is best to transport it on a truck or trailer.

Safe highway procedures for hauling include:

- Haul tractors and implements on a flatbed.
- Obey the laws for height and width regulation.
- Remove, cover or turn SMV signs when tractors are transported on another vehicle.
- Use the correct flags, lights, and reflectors on the transport vehicle to warn other drivers.

For shorter distances, tractor highway travel is appropriate. For the safety of everyone on the road, some safety provisions should be followed. Only operate machinery in good repair on the highway. Properly hitch implements with adequate safety chains before beginning the journey. Do not use makeshift hitch pins.

Before traveling on public roads remember:

- Lock brake pedals.
- Adjust mirrors for good vision.
- Make sure that all warning flashers, lights, and SMV emblems are in proper operating condition, clean, and easily visible.
- Check tire inflation pressures. Inflate the tires to the maximum recommended pressure for long distance travel.
- Check the wheels to see if the bolts are tight.
- Make sure the tractor is balanced properly.

When pulling onto a public road, use a wide shoulder if available. If the shoulder is not wide enough, stay on the road. Allow extra time to reach full speed. Tractors do not accelerate rapidly, especially when towing equipment.

When traveling on public roads:

- Watch for pot holes or obstacles that could tip tractor.
- Listen for cars. Often vehicles will rapidly approach from the rear at 3 to 4 times the speed of the tractor.
- Stay alert at all times to avoid a serious accident.
- Keep a constant lookout for pedestrians, animals, and road obstacles.
- Slow down for sharp curves.
- Slow down when going down a hill.

Vehicles traveling on public roads at 25 mph or less are legally required to have a slow-moving vehicle sign. Equipment traveling faster than 25 mph is defined as a trailer and is not permitted to display the SMV emblem, but must be equipped with turn signals, brakes, and lights. Lighting regulations for slow-moving vehicles vary. Before installing any warning light system on a tractor, check the regulations. Generally the lighting and marking laws for tractors or self propelled machines are consistent with the recommendations by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) and the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE). Only one vehicle classified as farm machinery may be towed by the licensed motor vehicle.

ASAE recommendations include:

- Two headlights.
- At least one tail lamp, mounted on the left side facing the rear of the tractor.
- At least two amber warning lights, visible from front and rear, mounted at the same level at least 42 inches above ground level.
- At least two red reflectors, visible from the rear and mounted on either side.

Lights and emblems must be clearly visible. If lights or emblems are blocked during towing, attach lights and emblems to the rear of the implements. Most tractors can be equipped with auxiliary connectors allowing implement electrical systems to be plugged into the circuit operating the tractor lights.

Review The Following Points

- Know the Law concerning highway travel for tractors.
- Watch for highway traffic.
- Use common sense and obey traffic patterns when traveling on the highway with a tractor.

True or False Answer Key

1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. T, 5. T

True or False

Name _____

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. When tractors or implements must be transported long distances, it is safest to haul them on a flatbed. | T | F |
| 2. Stay alert at all times to avoid a serious accident. | T | F |
| 3. There is no need to use an SMV sign if traveling only five miles. | T | F |
| 4. Slow the tractor speed down when going through a sharp curve or down a hill. | T | F |
| 5. Make sure that all lights and warning signals are in working order before traveling on the road. | T | F |