

Safely Working With and Around Tractors: Script

Agsafe, Coalition for Health and Safety in Agriculture¹

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The safety modules may be used by anyone with the understanding that credit be given to AgSafe.

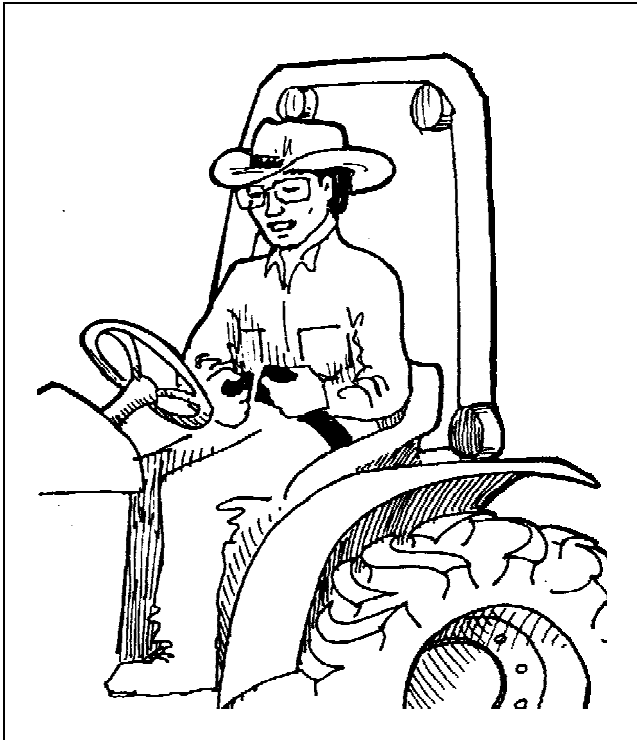


Figure 1. Securely fasten your seat belt even on a tractor with ROPS

SECURELY FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELT IF THE TRACTOR HAS ROPS

Don't rely on the tractor's Rollover Protection System (ROPS) alone for your protection; use your seat belt. (See Figure 1.) Studies show that tractor drivers can still be thrown from an upset tractor and be seriously injured or crushed. The seat belt will help keep you inside the ROPS in the event of a rollover.

REDUCE SPEED WHEN TURNING

When operating a tractor, avoid sharp turns and high speeds. High speeds, coupled with rough ground and narrow wheel settings, increase the chance for a rollover. (See Figure 2.) Make turns slowly and at wide angles.

AVOID OPERATING TRACTORS NEAR DITCHES, EMBANKMENTS AND HOLES

Keep tractors and implements away from irrigation ditches and embankment edges to avoid tractor upsets. Edges may be weak and break from the weight of the equipment. When you are traveling downhill, use low gears. When you must go up a slope, back up to increase your stability. Approaching a steep slope in the forward position will cause the tractor to upset and possibly injure or kill you. (See Figure 3.) Look ahead at your path. Keep your eyes open for large holes, rocks or any slopes, and avoid them.

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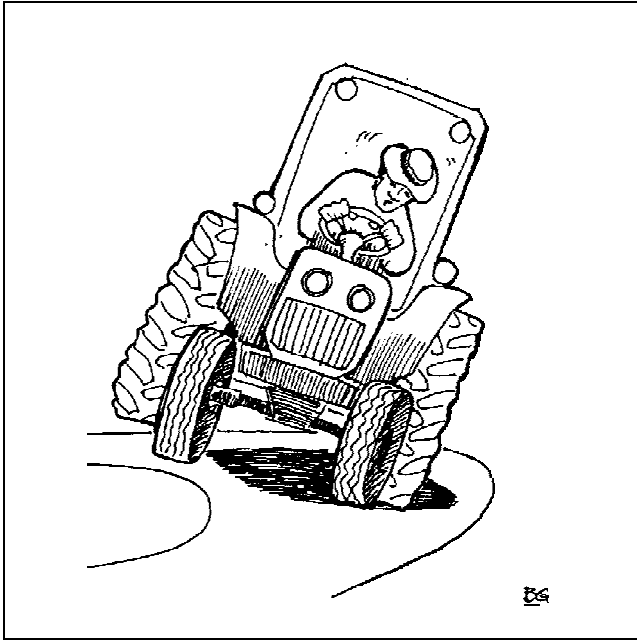


Figure 2. Reduce speed when turning

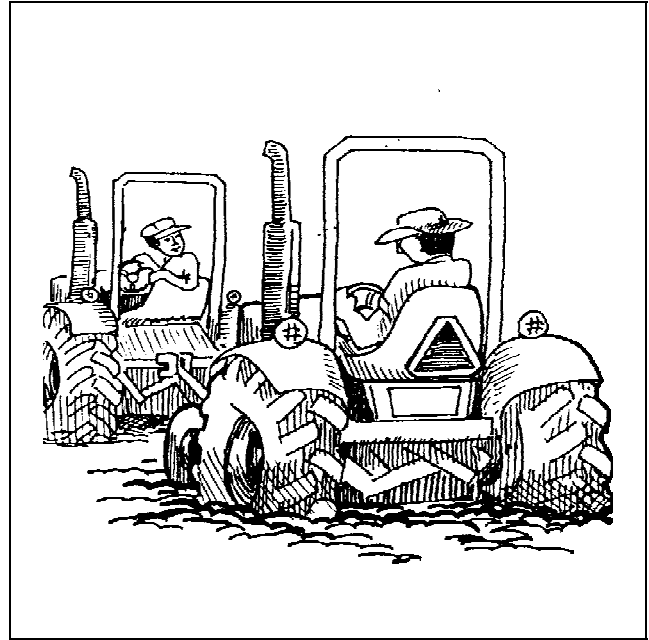


Figure 4. If you get stuck, get help from another tractor

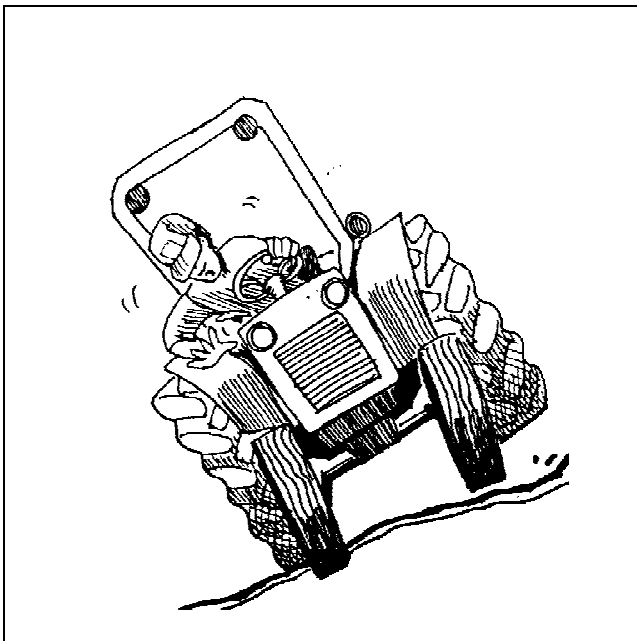


Figure 3. Avoid operating tractors on slopes

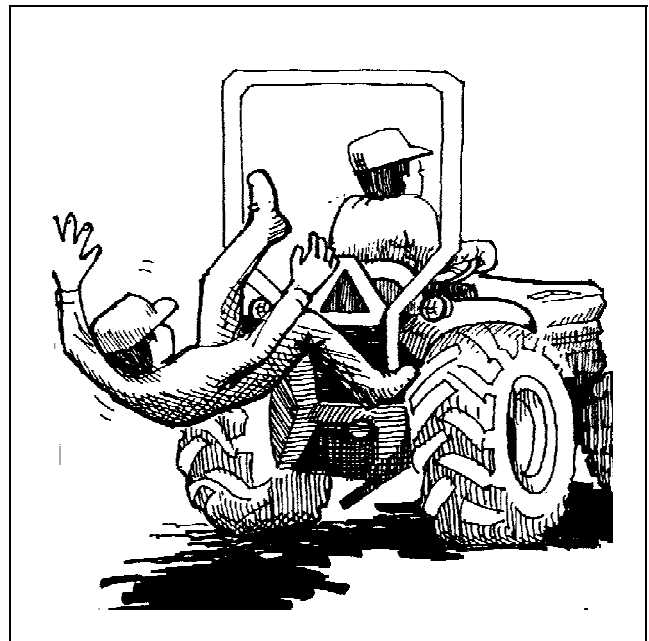


Figure 5. Permit no riders

IF YOU GET STUCK, GET HELP FROM ANOTHER TRACTOR

If you get stuck, do not tie a fence post or any other object to the tire for traction; it may tip the tractor over as it tries to overcome the hump, or the post may be thrown up behind the tractor, hitting the driver. The best solution is to have another tractor pull you out. (See Figure 4.)

DO NOT PERMIT OTHERS TO RIDE

Many unnecessary injuries occur because riders fall unintentionally from the tractor. (See Figure 5.) An unexpected jolt or stop can cause a rider to lose balance and fall beneath the trailing equipment or tractor tires. Unless a seat is specifically designed for an additional person, never permit anyone to ride.

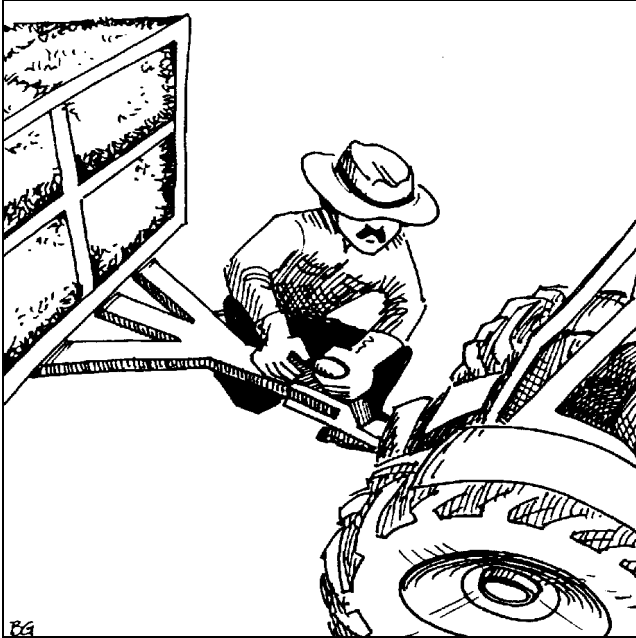


Figure 6. Hitch only to the drawbar and hitch points



Figure 7. Never engage in stunt driving or horseplay

HITCH ONLY TO THE DRAWBAR AND HITCH POINTS

Tractors are designed to tow loads from the rear hitch only. (See Figure 6.) Never hitch a load to the axle or seat as this will cause the tractor to upset backwards. Always match your load to the tractor. Tractors that are too small for the load will have problems stopping once the load has begun to move. If the tractor needs extra weight for balance, add front weights as necessary. Balance the weight of the load on the trailing implement in order to minimize the stress at the hitch point.

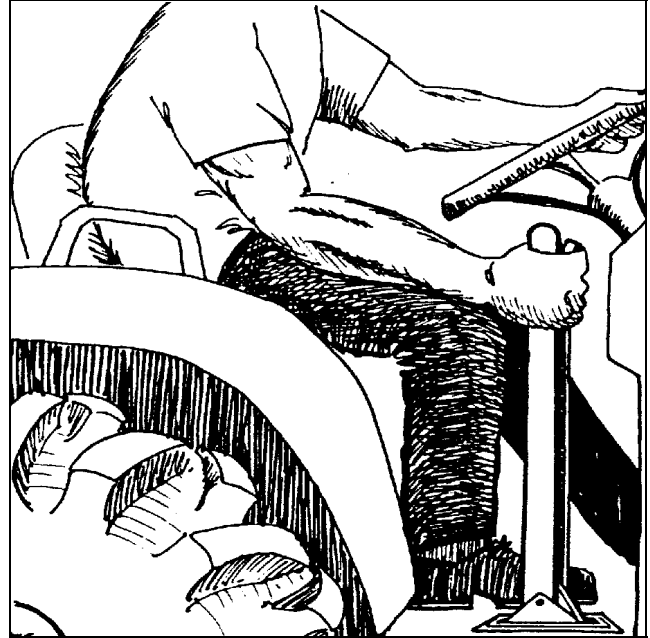


Figure 8. Set the brakes securely when the tractor is stopped

NEVER ENGAGE IN STUNT DRIVING OR HORSEPLAY

Tractors are not designed for high speeds or for quick maneuvers. Due to the location of the tractor's center of gravity, the tractor can very easily tip to the side if not handled properly. Horseplay and stunts are unsafe acts that promote injuries and death and will not be tolerated by your employer. (See Figure 7.)

SET THE BRAKES SECURELY WHEN THE TRACTOR IS STOPPED

When you need to make adjustments to the tractor or to the trailing equipment, put the tractor into neutral, set the brakes (see Figure 8), turn off the engine and remove the key. Be sure to disengage the PTO before working on any trailing equipment. Always replace the PTO shield and other shields after your adjustments.

INSPECT YOUR TRACTOR REGULARLY

Since tractors can be taken on public roads as well as in the field, it is important that tail lights, signals and safety chains are maintained in good condition. Inspect the brake fluid and engine fluid (see Figure 9), and notify your supervisor if any adjustments/repairs need to be made. Make sure your tractor has a Slow Moving Vehicle emblem at the rear, if it is to be driven on public roads.



Figure 9. Inspect your tractor regularly



Figure 11. Use the provided steps and railings when getting on and off a tractor

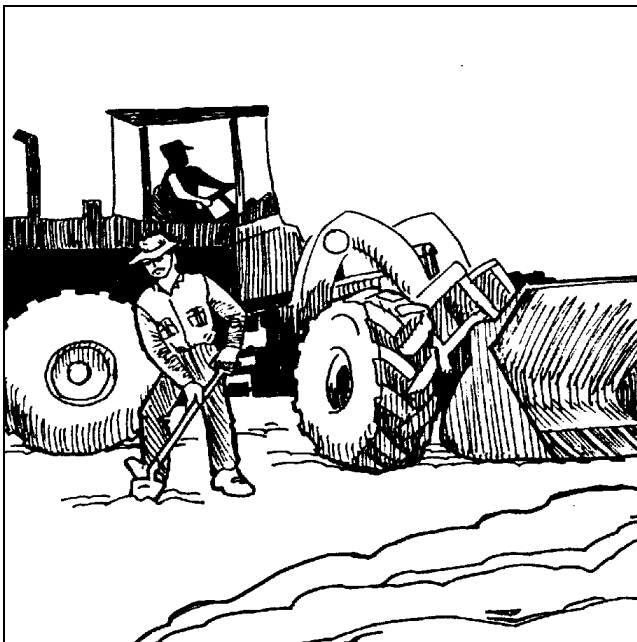


Figure 10. Before starting articulated-frame tractors, make sure bystanders are not nearby

USE SPECIAL CAUTION WITH ARTICULATED-FRAME TRACTORS

Because articulated-frame tractors bend in the middle, it is especially important that you exercise caution when others are nearby. Before starting articulated-frame tractors, make sure bystanders are not nearby. (See Figure 10.) Understand that steering is more difficult with these tractors and any load being pulled will swing wider side to side, so drive slowly. When making turns, stop first and then begin your turn slowly.

USE COMMON SENSE WHEN OPERATING TRACTORS

To prevent unnecessary injuries, don't jump from the tractor but use the provided hand railing and steps. (See Figure 11.) Use safety hand signals to maintain communication with co-workers. Ask your supervisor for a copy of the hand signals used by your company.