

# TRACTOR SAFETY



**WorkCover**  
TASMANIA



## INTRODUCTION

### Farming can be a dangerous business

The farm is a unique workplace, because it is often a family home, too. The tragedy of any farm accident is that the victim is often a family member working on the property, or a child using the workplace as their backyard and playground.

Each year people are killed or injured in tractor accidents. Tractors are safe when handled properly, but dangerous if operated incorrectly.

### Preventing accidents

You must manage the health and safety of workers, contractors and visitors to your workplace, as well as your family who live there.

This guide focuses on tractor safety, but a lot of the information can also apply to other farm machinery and equipment. It covers:

- operating and stopping
- hitching
- protective frames
- power take-offs
- operators, passengers and children
- maintaining the tractor.

This guide is aimed at employers as well as workers who operate a tractor.

**Glen Huon woman crushed by tractor**

A 43 year old Glen Huon woman received serious spinal injuries when she was run over by a tractor at a Huonville apple orchard yesterday.

The accident happened when the woman fell off a trailer behind the tractor and was crushed as the tractor rolled backwards.

## Tractor death finding given

A Latrobe man died from head injuries after being run over by the tractor he had been operating, a Latrobe Coroner found this week. The coroner found that the man had suffered multiple skull frac-

tures and cerebral lacerations sustained in the tractor-irrigator mishap while working on the property at Mersey-lea. He also found that the equipment was in good, safe, mechanical

order and that the man was an experienced and careful operator of farm machinery. He was laying a flexible irrigation hose at the time of the accident.

## PLEASE NOTE

This information is for guidance only and is not to be taken as an expression of the law. It should be read in conjunction with the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*, the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1998* and any other relevant legislation. Copies of the legislation can be purchased from the Printing Authority of Tasmania Bookshop: call (03) 6233 3289 or freecall 1800 030 940. It is also available on the Internet at [www.thelaw.tas.gov.au](http://www.thelaw.tas.gov.au)

This guide was produced by staff from WorkCover Tasmania and Workplace Standards Tasmania.

We welcome your feedback on this guide. Send to: [wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au](mailto:wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au)

## GETTING STARTED: TRACTOR AND MACHINERY HAZARD CHECKLIST

Is it safe to use the tractors and machinery on your farm? Ask yourself the following questions: if you answer “no” to any question, there is the potential of an injury or death happening — and you will need to take urgent action.

- Are all moving parts of machinery guarded so that fingers, clothing or long hair can't get tangled?
- Are the tractors and machinery that aren't currently in use, correctly parked or stored?
- Are instructions on the safe way to use tractors and machinery easily understood and readily available?
- Are tractors and machinery securely isolated from where children play?
- Are tractors correctly ballasted or weighted, and set up for the job they are doing?
- Have roll-over protection structures been installed? Are seatbelts fitted, and worn?
- Have the safe operating procedures for tractors and machinery been explained to everyone who works on the farm?
- Is appropriate emergency information and equipment readily available?
- Is it impossible for the children to turn on or move machinery?
- Is there a falling object protective structure on the front-end loader attachment?
- Is there danger from overhead or underground power lines on your property?

### *Tractor kills baby boy*

Police expect to release today the name of a toddler killed in a tractor accident on the West Tamar on Saturday.

The 18 month old boy was standing behind an unattended tractor when it rolled back and crushed him.

## GENERAL SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR TRACTORS

### **The tractor**

Adjust the seat so all controls can be operated according to the manufacturer's specifications.

Avoid running the tractor in a poorly ventilated area; exhaust fumes can kill.

Before starting, make sure the tractor is in neutral and the brake is on.

Keep all guards in place.

Never leave a tractor unattended with the motor running.

Only operate the self-starter when you are sitting in the seat.

Only start the tractor when you are sitting in the seat.

Read and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.

### **You the operator**

Always ride on the seat.

Make sure you are properly trained and have the skills needed to drive the tractor and perform the tasks required.

Take a rest if you are tired. Tired drivers have more accidents.

Wear close-fitting clothing.

### **Other people**

Keep children away.

Make sure no one is standing behind or in front of the tractor when you start it.

Do not allow anyone to ride as a passenger on a tractor unless they have their own safe and secure seat, and adequate and convenient footrests and hand holds.

## TRAVELLING, OPERATING, STOPPING

### Slopes

Descend any slope cautiously. Keep the tractor in low gear and allow the motor compression to act as a brake.

On very steep slopes, if you have no trailing implements, back up for greater safety.

Set the tractor wheels to the widest possible setting when working on hill sides and sloping ground, to increase stability.

### Speed

Drive at speeds slow enough to retain control over the unexpected. Your speed should not exceed 12 kilometres an hour, except on a good level road surface.

Reduce speed by using engine compression before turning or applying brakes; speed may cause the tractor to overturn.

### Stopping

Don't dismount from a moving tractor.

If you need to dismount from a tractor while the engine is running, make sure the parking brake is on and the gear lever is in the neutral position; where possible, isolate the controls according to the manufacturer's specifications.

Don't park on a steep slope.

When not using the tractor, remove the starting keys.

### Other

Engage the clutch gently when going up hill or towing.

If you get stuck in mud, back out. If that doesn't work, get help.

Watch out for ditches, drains, embankments, crumbling or slippery banks, depressions, pipes, rabbit holes, stumps and other features or objects that make the terrain less than ideal. These can cause you to overturn.

When working on silage stacks, do not drive too near the edge and always back up the slope.

### Finding on tractor death

A Devonport coroner found yesterday that a tractor involved in an accident, which proved fatal, was below safety standards and out of the control of the driver at the time.

According to the coroner, a woman fell and was run over by a trailer

when a tractor went out of control over a hill.

He said evidence from the Workplace Standards Tasmania Inspector showed that the tractor did not meet the full requirements for working and safety.

## ROLL-OVER PROTECTIVE STRUCTURES

These are a proven way of reducing the risk of injury or death from roll-over accidents. They may also prevent some accidents caused by people falling off the tractor, or objects (such as tree limbs) falling onto the tractor.

You should also make sure seatbelts are fitted, and worn.

## POWER TAKE-OFF GUARDS

Make sure every power take-off (or PTO) and every power input connection has a guard which:

- encloses it entirely to prevent any part of the body or clothing coming into contact with it, from above or either side, while it is in motion
- is of a substantial construction
- is securely mounted
- if it is hinged, is designed to return automatically to the closed position.

## HITCHING IMPLEMENTS

A properly hitched and distributed load helps to keep the front wheels on the ground.

Always use the draw bar or the manufacturer's mounting points for attaching equipment. Do not use makeshift methods.

### TRACTOR MISHAP

A man injured in a tractor accident near Burnie yesterday was last night in a stable condition in the North-Western General Hospital. Police said the front wheels of the tractor became airborne when the man was working on a steep hill. He jumped from the machine and landed under the rear of the tractor.

Do not alter, modify or raise the height of the draw bar.

Do not use or attach implements unless the power take-off and input shaft are properly and adequately guarded.

Fit attachments according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Never hitch around the axle housing or to the top link pin. Hitching

to the axle or seat bracket or top link can cause a backwards overturn. Many operators have been killed because they hitched too high. Hitching the load to the rear axle or attaching to a high draw bar hitch greatly increases the chance of overturning.

When a power implement is attached to the tractor, make sure all guards are in place before operating.

Make sure three-point linkages or front end loaders are never left in a raised position. Make sure three-point linkages are never operated when anyone is standing between the tractor and the implement.

## WORKING IN TIMBER

If you use your tractor for logging or working under timber, it must be fitted with an adequate canopy to protect you from falling objects.

Do not use wheeled tractors for directly pulling trees.

Keep all cables and chains in good condition and when not in use, store them properly.

Watch out for dead limbs on trees — any movement of the tree could bring them down.

When winching logs, do not back the tractor against a tree to gain extra leverage.

Additional information can be found in the *Forest Safety Code (Tasmania) 2007*.

## MAINTAINING THE TRACTOR

### General

Regularly service your tractor and check it for anything faulty or broken. Do this in detail when servicing the tractor, but do a general daily check for any faults every time you use the tractor.

Keep a maintenance book. Use it to record any work done to the tractor, or any faults or defects reported.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

### Faulty equipment

Make sure any fault or defect is reported.

Don't use the tractor or equipment until it is fixed.

### Tractor accident boy critical

A three year old boy who was run over by a tractor was in a critical condition with head injuries in the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Police said that the boy was helping his father feed stock near Scottsdale when the accident happened.

## Specifics

Ensure the tyres, steering and brakes are always in safe working condition.

Make sure steps, platforms and control pedals have skid-resistant surfaces, and are kept clean and free from grease, oil and mud.

Before removing any wheel, chock the other wheels. Don't use improvised lifting arrangements. Use a wide-based jack of adequate lifting capacity. When the tractor is jacked up, block it up for additional support. Before removing a tyre from the rim, ensure all the air pressure has been released.

Do not remove or replace belts while the pulleys are under power.

If the motor overheats, allow the engine to cool off before removing the cap to fill the radiator. When removing the cap, be extremely careful to avoid being scalded by steam which has built up pressure in the radiator.

Stop the engine before re-fuelling, servicing or greasing. If possible, wait until the engine is cold before re-fuelling.

## PASSENGERS

Do not allow anyone to ride as a passenger on a tractor unless they have their own safe and secure seat (that is, of adequate strength, and either fitted with a backrest or shaped to prevent the passenger slipping from the seat), and adequate and convenient footrests and hand holds.

## CHILDREN

Children and tractors do not mix. Keep children away from the tractor and other machinery.

Make it impossible for children to play with or turn on the tractor. Lock it away and always remove the key when not in use.

## MINIMUM DRIVING AGE

You should not allow anyone under 16 years of age to drive the tractor unless you are satisfied they:

- have received adequate driving instruction, or
- are under adequate supervision by someone with thorough knowledge and experience of tractor operation, and
- are physically able to operate all controls in a manner with the manufacturer's specifications.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information about farm safety, call the Workplace Standards Helpline on 1300 366 322 or go to [www.wst.tas.gov.au](http://www.wst.tas.gov.au) for your free copies of:

- *15 minute farm safety checklist (GB128)*
- *Child safety on farms checklist (GB129)*
- *How to use your ATV safely (GB142)*
- *Take control of safety on your farm (GB157).*

## Tractor driver's lucky escape

An Upper Castra man had a lucky escape when a tractor rolled on him yesterday afternoon.

The man was spraying blackberries on the side of a hill on his property when the Ferguson 35 tractor overturned.

He was pinned to the ground by the tractor's carryall.

His father, who was working with him, jacked up the tractor and called an ambulance.

The man's condition last night was described as stable.

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