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## PROTECTING WORKERS FROM TRACTOR HAZARDS

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Tractors are an integral item of agricultural farms, green keeping, gardening, landscaping and other activities. Being versatile in nature, tractors can have numerous functions not only on the farm but throughout industry. Tractors are usually quite safe when operated properly, however they become dangerous if used incorrectly.

If a tractor is used for tree felling or in situations which create a risk to the operator of falling objects, then the tractor should be designed and fitted with a falling object protective structure.

An owner, self-employed person or person in control of a workplace should ensure the safe operation of the tractor through instruction, training and constant supervision of the operator while the operator is gaining experience in tractor operation or if operating the tractor themselves, should be trained and supervised.

Tractor incidents are the leading cause of death and injury on farms. Workers are especially at risk from rollovers, tipping and highway incidents. Employers and supervisors should take steps to ensure a safe work environment by providing: safe and adequately maintained equipment; proper supervision and training; an emergency action plan (i.e., each vehicle with a first-aid kit and fire extinguisher).

Implementation of organizational and technical measures will help to reduce the level of traumatism and occupational diseases of agricultural machine operators.

To prevent injuries, train workers to:

- inspect farm vehicles for safety guards, seat belts and rollover protection structure before driving;
- check that the slow moving vehicle emblem is clean, visible and not faded;
- avoid travelling at night and during bad weather or low visibility;
- watch traffic patterns, obey speed limits and avoid highways during busy travel times;
- use the tractor's platform to enter and exit;
- be aware of overhead power lines, people, and uneven ground;
- carry passengers only when there is appropriate seating with seat belts;
- take extra precautions when driving on steep slopes and downhill;
- always shut down the tractor before climbing down.

Safe work practices include: on highways, farm vehicles should display flashing lights and reflectors, or consider escort vehicles; provide workers with emergency phone numbers and the address of the closest hospital.

### References

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