

Penn State Extension

OSHA ROPS and Operator Instruction Requirements

Agricultural and Biological Engineering

extension.psu.edu

Dennis J. Murphy, Professor, Agricultural and Biological Engineering

E 9

In 1976 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), issued a standard requiring rollover protective structures (ROPS) for agricultural tractors. In addition to ROPS requirements, the standard includes certain instructions for employees who operate the tractors. Although OSHA requirements are enforced only on farms where there are eleven or more employees, the safety features are applicable to all operators and are intended to reduce injury incidents. Smaller farms can still be cited under OSHA's General Duty Clause should an employee be injured or killed on the job.

ROPS Requirements

OSHA requires that all agricultural tractors* manufactured after October 25, 1976 meet the following requirements:

- A ROPS must be provided on each tractor operated by an employee.
- Where ROPS are required, each tractor must be equipped with a seatbelt.
- The employer must insure that each employee tightens the seatbelt sufficiently to confine the employee to the protected area provided by the ROPS while the tractor is moving.
- Batteries, fuel tanks, oil reservoirs, and coolant systems must be constructed and located or sealed to assure that spillage will not contact the operator in the event of an upset.
- All sharp edges and corners at the operator's station must be designed to minimize injury in case of an upset.

*Agricultural tractors are two or four-wheel drive type vehicle or track vehicle of more than 20 engine horsepower, designed to furnish power to pull, carry, propel, or drive implements that are designed for agriculture. All self-propelled implements are excluded.

Exemptions to the Standard

The tractors used in the following scenarios are exempt from the standard:

- Low profile tractors while used in orchards, vineyards, or hop yards where the vertical clearance requirements would substantially interfere with normal operations; and
- Low profile tractors used inside a farm building or greenhouse where vertical clearance is insufficient to allow a ROPS equipped tractor to operate
- Tractors while used with mounted equipment that is incompatible with ROPS (e.g., corn picker, vegetable harvester, etc.).

Operating Instructions

OSHA standards state that, every employee who operates *any* agricultural tractor must be informed of the nine operating practices shown below and any other practices necessary to maintain a safe working environment. Such information must be provided at the initial assignment and at least once a year thereafter. Include the following information in your training:

1. Securely fasten your seatbelt if the tractor has a ROPS.



2. Where possible, avoid operating the tractor near ditches, embankments, and holes.



3. Reduce speed when turning, crossing slopes, and on rough, slick, or muddy surfaces.



4. Stay off slopes too steep for safe operation.



5. Watch where you are going, especially at row ends, on roads, and around trees.



6. Operate the tractor smoothly-no jerky turns, starts, or stops.



7. Hitch only to the drawbar and hitch points recommended by tractor manufacturers



8. When tractor is stopped, set brakes securely and use park lock if available.



9. Do not permit others to ride.



09/2013

An OUTREACH program of the
College of Agricultural Sciences

This publication is available in alternative media on request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, genetic information, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status and retaliation due to the reporting of discrimination or harassment. Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 328 Boucke Building, University Park, PA 16802-5901; Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-0471/TTY.

Contact Information

Agricultural Safety and Health
246 Agricultural Engineering Bldg.
University Park, PA 16802
814-865-7685
agsafety.psu.edu