

## Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Information guide – Rural industry

## 4. Tractors

The following tips on tractor safety can help avoid incidents.

### Following general safety precautions

- Read and follow all of the manufacturer's operating instructions.
- A rollover protective structure (ROPS) must be fitted to the tractor in accordance with *Part 16 – Roll-over protective structures for wheeled tractors of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997* (see fact sheet 'Wheeled tractors – rollover protective structures' for further information).
- ROPS must comply with the design and testing requirements specified in *AS1636, Tractors-Roll-over protective structures-Criteria and tests*.
- Wear hearing protection when driving tractors without cabins.
- Keep children away from tractors and machinery.
- Wear comfortable close-fitting clothing and boots, not thongs.
- Keep an up-to-date maintenance schedule.
- Ensure tractor drivers receive specialised training for the particular farm needs.
- Take regular short breaks when working long hours (see Fatigue Management Guide).

- Adjust the seat so all controls can be operated comfortably and safely. Wear a seat belt where fitted, but only if a ROPS is present.
- Keep all guards in place, including power take off (PTO) and master shield guards.
- Start the tractor only from the driving position and not from the ground.
- Do not carry passengers unless there is a designated seat and seat belt within the protective zone of the ROPS.

### Hitching implements

- Fit attachments according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- When attaching equipment, always use the mounting points or draw bar provided by the manufacturer. Do not use improvised methods.
- Do not alter, modify, or raise the height of the draw bar outside of those adjustments made by the manufacturer.
- When a power implement is attached to the tractor ensure all guards are in place before operating.
- Never hitch above the centre-line of the rear axle, around the axle housing or to the top link pin.
- Do not attempt to adjust or work on implements while they are in motion.
- Do not use or attach implements unless the power shaft or PTO shaft is guarded.

## Stopping tractors correctly

- Do not dismount from a moving tractor.
- Ensure the park brake is on and operating effectively before dismounting.
- Do not park a tractor on a steep slope.
- Remove the starting key when the tractor is not in use.

## Operating

- Drive at speeds slow enough to retain control over the unexpected.
- Reduce speed before turning or applying brakes.
- Watch out for ditches, embankments and depressions. Crumbling and slippery banks can cause overturns.
- When stuck in soft ground, back out. If unsuccessful, get help.
- On very steep slopes, if you have no trailing implements, reverse up the slope for greater safety.
- Use as wide a wheel track as possible when working on hillsides and sloping ground. Descend slopes cautiously. Keep the tractor in low gear and allow the motor compression to act as a brake.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for adding ballast to improve tractor stability.

## Providing regular maintenance

- Service your tractor regularly.
- Check ROPS regularly, particularly after an incident.
- Do not remove or replace belts while the pulleys are under power.
- Stop the engine before servicing or greasing.
- Keep steps and working platforms free of grease and oil to avoid slips and falls.
- If the engine overheats, allow time for it to cool before removing the radiator cap.
- Change wheels on flat surfaces only. Before removing any wheel, check the other wheels. Avoid improvised lifting arrangements. Use a wide-based jack of adequate lifting capacity. When the tractor is jacked up, block it up evenly for additional support.

- Ensure all the air pressure has been released before removing a tyre from the rim. Use correct procedures. Split rims can cause serious injuries. Tyres should be inflated in a cage for safety (see fact sheet '7. Single-piece and multi-piece rim wheels' for further information).

## Protecting your back

- Adjust the seat for yourself accordingly. Consider the type of seating when buying your next tractor.
- A tractor with a seat that has vibration absorbing suspension is highly recommended. Prolonged exposure to vibration may cause back damage.
- Ensure there are adequate mirrors to provide all-round visibility.
- Never jump down from the tractor. Wear footwear that provides a firm grip when mounting or dismounting the tractor, or operating foot pedals.

## Reducing the risk of tractor incidents

Ensure you train all operators on the safe use of tractors.

## More information

Further information is available from [www.worksafe.qld.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au) or by calling the WHS Infoline on 1300 369 915.

© The State of Queensland (Department of Justice and Attorney-General) 2010

Copyright protects this document. The State of Queensland has no objection to this material being reproduced, but asserts its right to be recognised as author of the original material and the right to have the material unaltered.

The material presented in this publication is distributed by the Queensland Government as an information source only. The State of Queensland makes no statements, representations, or warranties about the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and the reader should not rely on it. The Queensland Government disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including, without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages and costs you might incur as a result of the information being inaccurate or incomplete in any way, and for any reason.