



## 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.

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