

FARM SAFETY FOCUS ON: **TRANSPORT**

This guide highlights key risks involving moving vehicles and provides practical advice on how you can **make your farm a safer place for you, your family, your employees and visitors.**



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THE LAW

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all their employees.

Transport activity is also covered by the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER). They require that equipment must be suitable for the task, properly maintained and guarded and that adequate training and information about the equipment is available for employees.

The Prevention of Accidents to Children in Agriculture Regulations 1998 (PACAR) makes it illegal to allow a child under 13 to ride on or drive agricultural self-propelled machines (such as tractors) and certain other farm machinery.

CASE STUDY

A 23 year old farm worker was working alone, cultivating the land, a task he'd done many times before and was more than capable. For reasons unknown, the worker left his tractor without turning the engine off and was run over and killed by the cultivator.

A passing horse rider sounded the alert after she spotted his tractor by a hedge with the engine still running. His body was found with the spikes from the cultivator embedded in him.

Introduction

Incidents involving moving vehicles are a major cause of workplace deaths and life changing injuries in agriculture. Moving vehicles account for approximately one third of the deaths each year in farming.

The most common types of serious injury involving transport in agriculture are caused by reversing manoeuvres, vehicles overturning and use of ATVs.

Safe vehicle

Many preventable incidents causing death and serious injury occur when drivers leave vehicles without making sure it is fully secured and will not move. Follow the **Safe Stop** procedure every time you leave the driver's seat/operating position and especially, before maintenance is carried out:

1. Handbrake on
2. Controls in neutral
3. Engine off
4. Key out

A simple way to help prevent death and serious injury caused by untrained and inexperienced people is to remove the keys from machinery when vehicles are not in use.

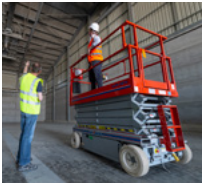


It is your legal duty to ensure that vehicles, machines and handling equipment are inspected regularly and any faults repaired immediately. [The NFU Farm Vehicle Health Check guidance](#) provides more information and checklists to assist with this.

Make sure all loads carried are stable and secure – many people are killed each year from falling objects.

Good cab protection is essential for materials handlers and loaders as they are far more likely to be hit by any falling objects.

Your tractors, trailers and other machinery must have brakes designed for the maximum loads and speeds at which they operate.



Lifting operations

Only use lifting equipment which is fit for the job and operated by a trained and experienced driver.

Under no circumstances use grain buckets, pallets or other makeshift equipment to lift people off the ground.

Safe working loads are marked on lifting equipment. Make sure overload indicators on handling machines are in working order and not ignored. People are regularly injured and killed from using lifting equipment over its capacity.

Lifting equipment must be regularly inspected and tested by a competent person who has the relevant qualifications and experience to identify potential faults. Equipment that is used to lift people must be inspected by a competent person every 6 months under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998.

Talk to your insurer, local agricultural engineer or machinery dealer for specialist assistance.

CASE STUDY

A farmer borrowed a telehandler from a neighbouring farm. Although the vehicle's brakes had recently been serviced, he felt a poor braking response so topped up the brake fluid.

As he drove down a slight hill the brakes failed and the vehicle started to run away. He jumped from the cab but hit his head as he fell and died from his injuries.

The following investigation found that during the recent service, one of the brake pipes had been left unconnected. Two partners in the farming business were prosecuted, fined and ordered to pay costs for the failures.

Sadly this incident is also thought to have contributed to the later suicide of a partner in the farming business who had lent out the vehicle.

CASE STUDY

A farm worker was loading beans into a lorry using a telehandler when the machine overbalanced, fell forward and partially trapped the lorry driver underneath the bucket. The lorry driver had to have both legs amputated.

An investigation found that the telehandler's safe working load indicator was not working, the load chart and extension markers on the boom were missing and the farm employee had not been trained in how to use the machine safely.

Following the accident, the farm owner was prosecuted, fined and ordered to pay costs.

CASE STUDY

A partner in a farming business was fined and ordered to pay prosecution costs when a tractor towing a trailer load of bales went out of control on a steep track and overturned. A bale was thrown through a hedge onto a public road causing a road traffic accident.

The trailer had been constructed at the farm without a suitable braking system, i.e. it was foreseeable that it would not impart any weight transfer onto the braking wheels of the tractor.

On the road

Specific legislation applies to vehicles travelling on public highways. However, as more farming transport accidents occur off-road than on, the HSE apply the same standards and principles for off-road travel as DVSA and the police do for on-road travel.

Points to consider:

- The maximum legal road speed for a tractor (with an unsprung rear axle) is 40 km/h (approx. 25 mph). Only high specification tractors are legally able to travel over 40 km/h.
- The maximum weight of a laden tractor-trailer combination on the road is 31 tonnes and in that combination of 31 tonnes a laden trailer can be no more than 18.29t.
- All trailers over 750kg require brakes. If towed above 40 km/h they should have high speed (commercial) brakes with a mechanism to apply the trailer brakes in the event the trailer accidentally detaches.
- You must protect and mark all sharp or dangerous edges and cover or remove attachments on material handlers for road use.

The NFU Trailer Buying Guide provides tips on how to purchase or hire a trailer that's safe and legal to use. Remember, trailer brakes are only as good as the maintenance they receive – they need adjustment to keep performing well.

Safe driver

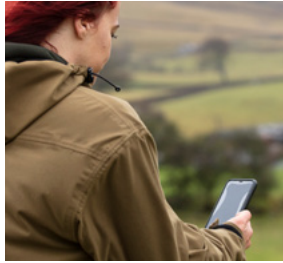
It is your legal responsibility to ensure that your employees are adequately trained and competent to use machinery. Lantra offer a wide range of training courses focused on efficient and safe operation of machinery and equipment.

It is illegal to allow a child under 13 to ride on or drive any agricultural vehicle. Passengers should only ride in cabs if they can sit in a safe position on a seat which doesn't interfere with the operation of the machine.

To avoid overturns always turn uphill and if spreading things like fertiliser remember that as the load gets lighter there will be less grip on the rear wheels.

Make the most of your mobile phone

Keep your mobile phone in reach at all times in case of emergency but do not use whilst driving.



- Emergency SOS and voice activated features can be invaluable in contacting the emergency services quickly in dangerous and life-threatening situations, as well as automatically alerting pre-selected contacts.
- Set these features up straightaway and learn how to use them – the NFU guide [Phone hacks that could save your life](#) can help you. Contact your mobile provider for help to do this if it's not straightforward.
- If you work alone, make sure someone knows where you will be working and when you are expected back. It's good practice for all staff to report in at the end of the day.
- Consider using live location sharing apps such as Friend Finder (iOS), Google Maps (iOS and Android) or WhatsApp (iOS and Android) if you or your employees are lone workers and working across a large geographical area.

To reduce the risk of injury if you overturn:

- Wear your seatbelt; this is a legal requirement where there is a risk of overturning and mandatory when driving on road.
- Stay in the cab and do not try to jump clear, this is one of the most common causes of death.
- Keep the cab tidy and make sure there are no large or loose items in the cab.
- Do not remove windows or doors from a safety cab and regularly inspect the structure to make sure it is in a good condition.

CASE STUDY

A 21 year old farmer's son was working alone spreading fertiliser. When loading the fertiliser he left the spreader tractor parked with its engine off and brought the loader tractor up to the spreader. He then got out leaving the engine running without putting the handbrake on properly.

As he went between the machines to slit the fertiliser bag, the loader tractor, which was on a slope, gathered speed and pinned him between the tractor and the spreader. His mobile was in the spreader tractor cab and he could not summon help.

When he failed to return home at the expected time and did not answer his phone, his father and sister went to look for him. They found him dead in the yard crushed between the two tractors.

CASE STUDY

In Swansea, a worker was crushed to death between a truck and a reversing JCB. The employer had asked the driver of the JCB to reverse the vehicle into a workshop, but he did not assist with the backing up of the machine, despite being in a position to do so.

The company was prosecuted, fined and ordered to pay costs for not having a safe system of work for reversing machinery into the workshop.

CASE STUDY

An employee was unloading pallets when he was hit by a moving forklift truck. The worker received extensive internal injuries including damage to his spleen, which had to be surgically removed.

The company was prosecuted, fined and required to pay costs for not having a safe system of work to control vehicle movements on site.

One of the directors of the company was given a further fine for failing to provide an adequate health and safety system.

Safe site

Every year people die from being run over in farm yards. Many of these accidents involve older people and semi-retired farmers who fall and cannot move out of the way quickly enough and tragically children, who may not anticipate what a vehicle will do next.



Children are naturally curious and farms are an inviting place to play and explore. They do not understand the potential dangers in farm yards. With modern cabs, you may not be aware they are there until it is too late. Keep children away from the work place. Young children should enjoy outdoor space in a secure fenced area.

Make sure everyone working on the farm stops operations if children appear and ensures they are relocated to a safe, secure area. Children should only enter the farm workplace for education or experience purposes when under close supervision of an adult not engaged in work activities.

Prevent accidents with pedestrians by creating separate routes for pedestrians and vehicles. This is particularly important for delivery drivers and sales reps that may not be familiar with your machinery movements.

Improve visibility on the farm by using reversing cameras and request that all workers and visitors to the farm wear hi-vis clothing at all times.

Think about general site visibility and how you can improve safety with lights and signs.

Visiting drivers should be made aware of things like where to park and if there are one-way systems in operation. Signs can help with this, as well as issuing clear delivery instructions when ordering products.

Safe ATVs

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) such as quad bikes have been involved in many serious incidents.

Head injuries are the most common cause of death. Everyone riding a quad bike should wear a suitable helmet.

Helmets designed for farm operations without obstructing vision or hearing are very reasonably priced.

It is a legal requirement under PUWER that anyone using an ATV should be trained in how to do so safely and how to maintain the machine. Details of suitable training courses are available from Lantra, franchised ATV dealers, manufacturers' websites and agricultural colleges. Several brands offer free or heavily subsidised training when a new machine is purchased.



ATVs are one of the most used farm vehicles and should be given the same level of maintenance and safeguards as bigger machines such as tractors and combine harvesters.

Safety checks and maintenance should be carried out in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. One of the most vital checks on an ATV is tyre pressure, which is important for off-road stability. Pressures are low (2-7 psi) and a special pressure gauge may be needed (usually supplied by the manufacturer when new) as conventional gauges may not give an accurate enough reading.

CASE STUDY

A 53-year old stand-in gamekeeper on a Scottish Borders estate was killed after suffering serious injuries to his pelvis when the quad bike he was driving overturned on a slope. He had no means of raising the alarm although there was a mobile phone signal in the area and the normal gamekeeper had been issued with a phone. He was found 52 hours later, some 200 yards away from the scene of the accident, in a separate field.

The trustees were prosecuted and fined for breaching health and safety regulations by failing to provide a means of communication or carrying out a risk assessment for a lone worker to report in at the end of a shift.



MEMBER BENEFIT: SPADA

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The NFU and Spada have partnered to offer a **25% discount** on helmets and across the entire Spada range to help NFU members stay safe and stay legal.

- Discounts on everything from Spada
- High quality and affordable
- FREE delivery for NFU members

nfuonline.com/spada

FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the Health, Safety and Wellbeing area on our website for further information and guides on all aspects of farm safety

<https://www.nfuonline.com/cross-sector/farm-business/health-safety-and-wellbeing/>

HSE can be contacted for specific health and safety information at www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture

NFU CallFirst:

0370 845 8458 can also provide guidance on health and safety matters.

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