

Child Safety – Tractors

Tractors are often one of the first pieces of powered mobile farming equipment that farmers teach their children to operate. However, tractors have accounted for 20 per cent of farm incidents involving working children.

More than half of the incidents had no active supervision by an adult at the time of the incident.

Working children must be able to do/have all of the following to perform drive a tractor safely:

- Reach and operate controls while wearing a seatbelt
- Strength to repeatedly operate controls
- Tall enough for good field of vision when seated on tractor
- Recognize a hazard, problem solve, and respond appropriately
- React quickly to hazards
- Mature enough to consistently do what is expected
- Think through actions and consequences before acting
- Avoid loose clothing, clothes with strings, tie up long hair
- Safely demonstrate the job multiple times
- Maintain a two-way communication link at all times

Eliminate the risk

Is there an adult available that can perform the task without the need for a working child.

Engineering controls

Ensure tractor is mechanically sound and safety features are in place, including Rollover Protective Devices (ROPS) and seatbelts.

Administrative controls

- Thoroughly demonstrate how to safely drive tractor
- Provide appropriate training – do not allow your working child to work alone until you are confident that they are competent and capable of doing so
- Educate working children to mount and dismount the tractor using 3 points of contact – supervise them closely multiple times
- Advise your working children about the risk of jumping off farm machinery
- Ensure that your working children know how to stop the vehicle and to make sure that handbrakes are properly applied, and that the vehicle is properly parked.
- Ensure that your working children know that they should never get off a moving tractor.
- Ensure the work area is free from as many hazards as possible
- Ensure that your children are aware that they cannot drive on public roads – must be over 18 and licensed
- Ensure that your working child does not operate the tractor after the dark or in bad weather
- Train your working children to call an adult if equipment malfunctions and to not take it upon themselves to fix things

Note – a person cannot drive a tractor on a public road unless they hold a motor vehicle drivers licence, probationary license or learner’s certificate.

GET HELP

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