



# HAND SIGNALS

HOSTA Task Sheet 2.9

Core

NATIONAL SAFE TRACTOR AND MACHINERY OPERATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

Perhaps you have experienced the shouting and hand-waving that seems to fit many farm chores. Noise from machinery and/or distance between workers often leads to a communication breakdown. An increased risk for hazardous situations can occur.

This task sheet presents 11 standard hand signals adopted by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers (ASAE) and three signals for public road use.

Memorize and use these hand signals. Teach them to others. You will save time and establish safe communications.

## Hand Signals

### ASAE Figure 1: **This Far To Go**

Place palms at ear level facing head and move inward to show remaining distance to go.



**Example:** Use this signal to assist a tractor operator in backing a loaded wagon or hitching to a wagon.

### ASAE Figure 2: **Come To Me**

Raise the arm vertically overhead, palm to the front, and rotate in large horizontal circles.



**Example:** Someone has opened the gate for the cows to be brought forward: You will signal in this manner.

### ASAE Figure 3: **Move Toward Me—Follow Me**

Point toward person(s), vehicle(s), or unit(s). Signal by holding arm horizontally to the front, palm up, and motioning toward the body.



**Example:** Use this signal to motion an equipment operator to move toward you to position or move equipment in a crowded area where side visibility is poor.



Figure 2.9.a. You are assigned to bale hay today. Someone approaching you on the ground to deliver a message would not be able to shout loud enough for you to hear. What signals could they use?

Hand signals provide standard communication to all workers.

### Learning Goals

- To use the 11 standard hand signals to communicate actions to be taken with the tractor and equipment
- To use standard hand signals for highway use

#### Related Task Sheets:

Tractor Hazards	4.2
Tractor Controls	4.5
Using the Tractor Safely	4.13
Operating the Tractor on Public Roads	4.14

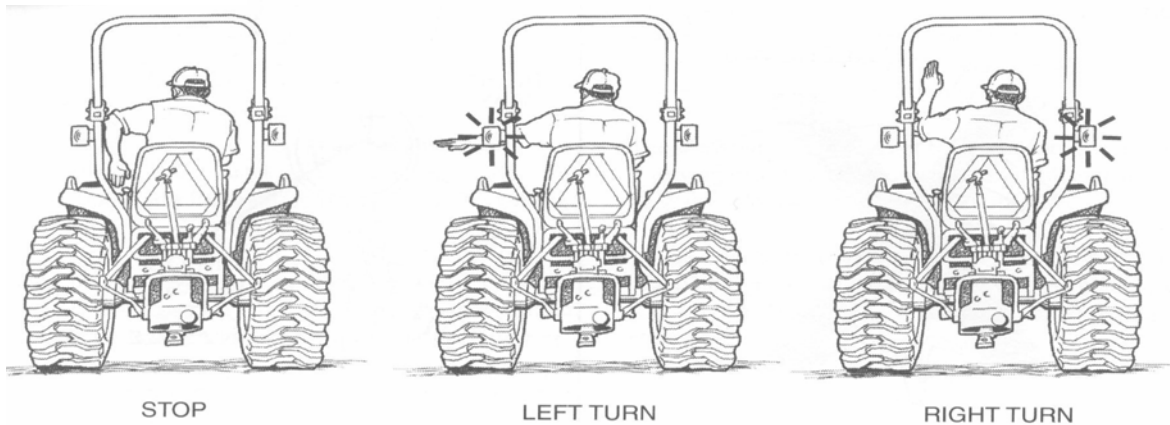


Figure 2.9.b. Public Road Hand Signals. Other hand signals provide means of communicating in traffic situations. Use these signals for public road travel or anywhere others may be following you. These signals are standard highway signals to the general public as well. *Safety Management for Landscapers, Grounds-Care Businesses, and Golf Courses, John Deere Publishing, 2001. Illustrations reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.*

Noisy equipment and distance between workers makes hand signals a necessity. How many of these hand signals do you use?

#### ASAE Figure 4: **Move Out—Take Off**

Face the desired direction of movement; hold the arm extended to the rear; then swing the arm overhead and forward in the direction of desired movement until the arm is horizontal with palm down.



**Example:** You have hitched the machine for the operator and connected the PTO; signal the person to move out for field work.

#### ASAE Figure 5: **Stop**

Raise the hand upward to the full extent of the arm, palm to the front. Hold that position until the signal is understood.



**Example:** The tractor and forage wagon are now positioned for unloading into the silage blower. You signal the operator to stop.

**ASAE Figure 6: Speed It Up—  
Increase Speed**

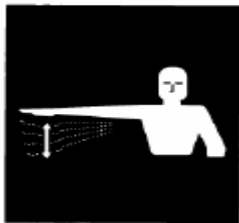
Raise the hand to the shoulder, fist closed; thrust the fist upward to the full extent of the arm and back to the shoulder rapidly several times.



**Example:** Move the unit out now; the way is clear. We need to move on.

**ASAE Figure 7: Slow Down—  
Decrease Speed**

Extend arm horizontally sideward with palm down; wave arm downward at 45 degrees minimum several times. Do not move arm above horizontal.



**Example:** You are going too fast; slow down.

**ASAE Figure 8: Start the Engine**

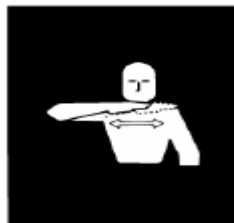
Move arm in circular motion at waist level to simulate cranking engine.



**Example:** You need to signal the operator to start the engine after some adjustment has been made.

**ASAE Figure 9: Stop the Engine**

Draw right hand, palm down, across the neck in a “throat-cutting” motion left to right.



**Example:** You need to have the operator stop the engine for some adjustments to the machinery.

**ASAE Figure 10: Lower Equipment**

Use circular motion with either hand pointing to the ground.



**Example:** Use this signal to have operator lower high lift or machine header.

**ASAE Figure 11: Raise the Equipment**

Make circular motion with either hand at head level.



**Example:** Use this signal to have operator raise high lift or machine header.

Learn the 11 standard hand signals and use them. Then teach them to all your fellow workers. Perhaps even your employer will not know them.

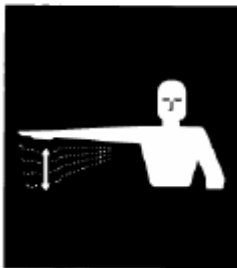
## Safety Activities

1. Identify each hand signal and give examples of when to use each signal.



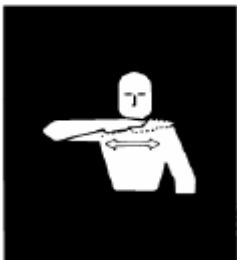
Identifies: \_\_\_\_\_

An example is: \_\_\_\_\_



Identifies: \_\_\_\_\_

An example is: \_\_\_\_\_



Identifies \_\_\_\_\_

An example is: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Demonstrate all 11 hand signals to your leader, teacher, parents, or employer.

3. Demonstrate the hand signals to be used when you are traveling with the transport disk in highway traffic.

- Right Turn
- Left Turn
- Stop



### References

1. [www.asae.org](http://www.asae.org)/Click on Technical Library/Find category-Standards on pull down menu/Type hand signals/Download PDF for ANSI/ASAE S351, Hand Signals for Use in Agriculture, December 2001.
2. Safety Management for Landscapers, Grounds-Care Businesses, and Golf Courses, John Deere Publishing, 2001. Illustrations reproduced by permission. All rights reserved.

### Contact Information

National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program  
 The Pennsylvania State University  
 Agricultural and Biological Engineering Department  
 246 Agricultural Engineering Building  
 University Park, PA 16802  
 Phone: 814-865-7685  
 Fax: 814-863-1031  
 Email: NSTMOP@psu.edu

### Credits

Developed, written and edited by WC Harshman, AM Yoder, JW Hilton and D J Murphy, The Pennsylvania State University. Reviewed by TL Bean and D Jepsen, The Ohio State University and S Steel, National Safety Council. Version 4/2004  
 This material is based upon work supported by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under Agreement No. 2001-41521-01263. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.