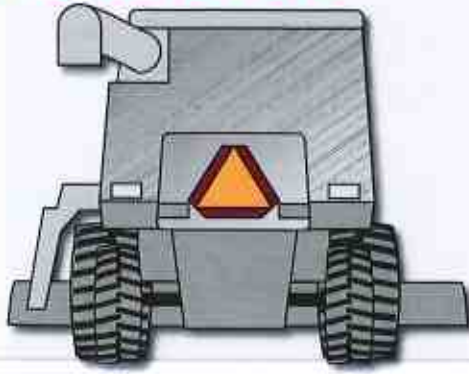


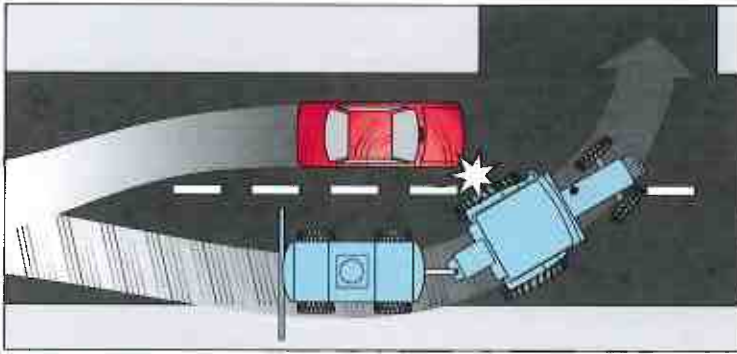
SAFELY SHARING THE ROAD WITH Farm Vehicles



If you've driven on Iowa's rural roads, you know how your spine tingles when you pop over a hill and come upon a slow-moving tractor. A split-second reaction can save you from a collision.

Each year, Iowa farmers move nearly two billion bushels of grain and millions of livestock from production to market, much of it on the county and state highway system. Because all Iowans share the same roads, it helps to know what to look for. This brochure reviews three common ways farm vehicles are involved in traffic collisions. Defensive driving tips are given for each situation.

At least half of all deaths from unintentional injuries are caused by motor vehicles. According to the National Safety Council, this represents about 40,000 deaths per year on average. It is also known that collisions with farm equipment are some of the most likely collisions to end in a fatality. It is important to be aware of the common types of collisions and how to take preventative action to avoid them. It is a shared responsibility of all vehicle operators to make Iowa roads safe.



Left-turn collision

THE SCENARIO

The left-turn collision is the most common type of farm vehicle incident on public roads. It happens when the farm vehicle is about to make a left turn; meanwhile, the motorist behind the farm vehicle decides to pass. About one in five farm vehicle collisions are when a farm vehicle is turning left.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Like semi-truck drivers, operators of large farm vehicles, such as combine or tractor-wagon combinations, sometimes make wide left turns. Farm operators may swing to the right before making a left turn because they need the extra room to line up with a farm gate or driveway. This can be confusing, especially if you think the farm operator is moving over to let you pass.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING TIPS

Is it really turning? Don't assume a farm vehicle that pulls to the right side of the road is going to turn right, or is letting you pass. Check the operator's hand signals.

Is there a turn signal? Look for a tractor turn signal and do not be confused by flashing hazard lights. Slow down when you see a turn signal.

Where could it turn? Check the left side of the road for gates, driveways, or any place a farm vehicle might turn.

THE SCENARIO

The rear-end collision is the second most common type of farm vehicle incident on public roads. About one in five farm vehicle collisions are when a farm vehicle is struck from behind by a fast-moving vehicle.

WHY IT HAPPENS

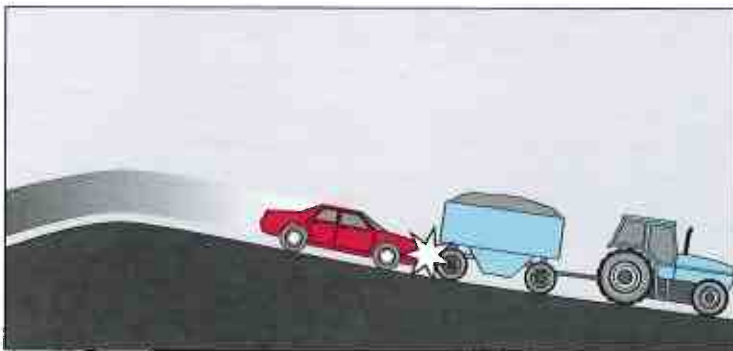
It's easy to misjudge speed when you come upon a slow-moving vehicle. In most cases, you have only a few seconds to react and slow down. For example, if you're driving 55 mph and come upon a tractor that's moving 15 mph, it only takes five seconds to close a gap the length of a football field between you and the tractor.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING TIPS

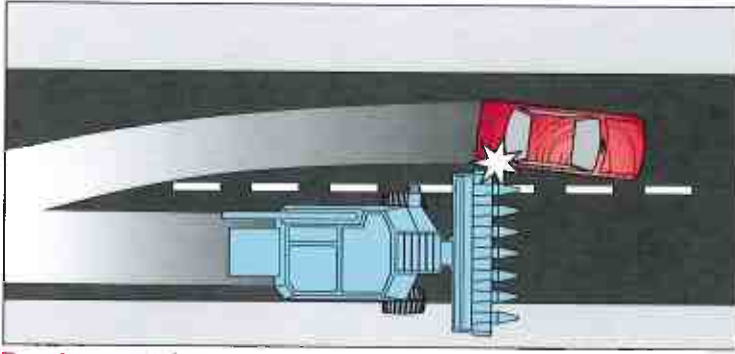
Be alert. Always watch for farm vehicles on rural roads, especially at planting and harvest.

Slow down immediately. As soon as you see a slow-moving vehicle, start to apply brakes like you would when approaching a stoplight.

Keep your distance. Stay a safe distance behind farm vehicles. Most farm equipment is not designed to travel at speeds greater than 25 mph. Even when towed behind a truck, equipment such as sprayers and fuel tanks often travel less than 25 mph.



Rear-end collision



Passing collision

THE SCENARIO

Many collisions also occur when motorists pass farm vehicles. About one in 25 farm vehicle collisions are when a motor vehicle is trying to pass.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Some farm operators haul equipment that is extra wide or long, which motorists don't consider when they plan to pass. Many people assume that collisions happen during bad weather or hazardous conditions. About eight of 10 collisions happen on dry roads.

DEFENSIVE DRIVING TIPS

Be patient. Don't assume the farmer can move aside to let you pass. Shoulders may be soft, wet, or steep, which can cause the farm vehicle to tip, or they may not be able to support a heavy farm vehicle.

Make sure you're clear. When passing, make sure you can see the farm vehicle in your rear-view mirror before you get back in your lane.

Enjoy the drive. Even if you have to slow down to 20 mph and follow a tractor for two miles, it takes only six minutes of your time, about the same as waiting for two stoplights.

Iowa roads can be used safely by everyone. To help you enjoy your time on Iowa roads or make your work commute safer, remember these tips.

Many collisions with farm vehicles happen during fall harvest.

October has nearly twice as many collisions as any other month.

The most common time of day for collisions to occur is from 4–8 p.m.

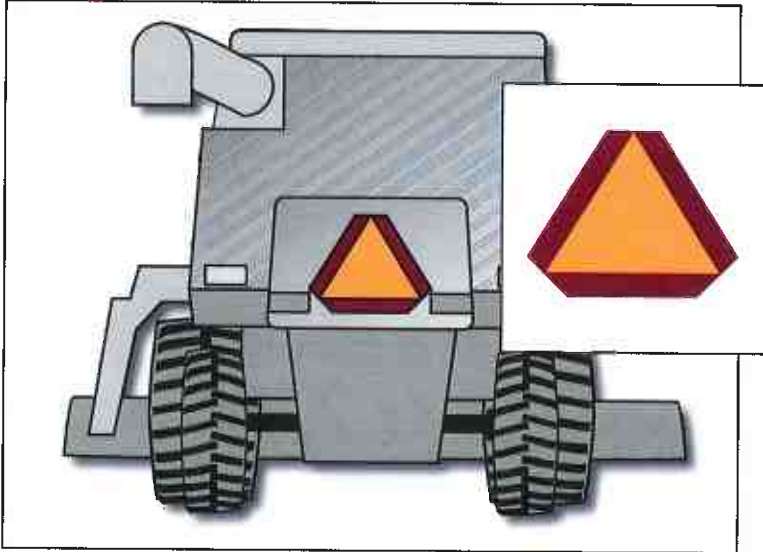
This may be due to the large number of commuters coming home from work, plus farm operators returning from fields.

←Recognize this sign.

It means slow down because the vehicle is traveling less than 35 mph. Slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblems are fluorescent orange outlined in red. You should be able to see them at least 500 feet away.

Stay back at least 50 feet when following farm equipment.

Sharing Iowa Roads with Farm Vehicles



SAFE FARM

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