



For farm equipment, it's one driver. No riders.

Many farm vehicles do not have safe spaces or safety restraints for passengers. Bumps, ditches, and uneven terrain can knock a passenger from a tractor. Passengers, especially young ones, can distract drivers and interfere with the safe operation of a farm vehicle.

Research from the National Agricultural Tractor Safety Initiative shows that using both tractor roll bars and seatbelts are 98 percent effective in preventing tractor-related injuries and deaths, but these safety features are intended for the tractor driver, not passengers.

"Everyone thinks it doesn't happen to them and it won't happen to them. It only takes one time," said Vicky Hartgers, farm claims manager at Grinnell Mutual. "Accidents happen, no matter how careful you try to be."

Tractor drivers often overestimate their ability to respond to runovers, rollovers, or other imminent tractor accidents. They think they can stop the tractor, especially if it is moving very slowly or no difficult tasks are being performed. According to the Iowa State University Extension, the most common comment from people involved in tractor runovers is how quickly they happen.

Creating a "No Riders" policy

So, how many riders should be allowed on farm vehicles? The best policy is a no riders policy. Grinnell Mutual recommends saying 'no thanks' to family, friends, and children who want to ride along.

- **Drop a hint.** Place NO RIDERS decals on farm equipment, reminding operators and potential passengers of the dangers.
- **Plan ahead.** Keep transportation in mind for farm workers and arrange for suitable transportation (i.e., cars and trucks) to and from work sites.
- **Find a sitter.** Do not let farm equipment serve as a baby-sitting service.
- **Just say no.** Refuse to allow your friends and family to ride with you, no matter how nicely they ask.
- **Teach your children well.** Instruct youth old enough to operate tractors that tractors are for work, not transportation.

Kids and farm equipment

"Kids are pretty persuasive," said Hartgers. "Safety still comes first, but there are things you can do to fulfill that wish for them to have a little bit of a ride."

The Iowa State University Extension says explaining what can happen to tractor riders may be a beneficial way to

help children understand the no riders policy. Very young children may understand the fact that they aren't allowed to ride other heavy equipment, such as road graders or construction vehicles.

Instead, offer children rides on farm vehicles designed for passengers, such as farm trucks or four-wheel drive vehicles. Another way to satisfy their curiosity is letting them sit in the operator's seat while the engine is turned off and the key is removed.

For more information

This article is part of a series of articles for **National Farm Safety & Health Week**, "Safety Counts: Protecting What Matters." Read the other articles in the series.

- Rural Roadway Safety: **Three ways for farmers and drivers to share rural roads.**
- Health: **Stay healthy during harvest with rest breaks.**
- Children: An **interview with Farm Safety For Just Kids Education Director Shari Burgus** about making safety count for children on the farm.
- Confined Spaces in Agriculture: **The habits of highly effective grain handlers.**
- Tractor Safety: **For farm equipment, it's one driver. No riders.**

[Resource Center](#) | [Careers](#) | [Claims](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Manage My Account](#) | [Salvage Classifieds](#) | [Home](#)

©2009 - 2016 Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company. All Rights Reserved. [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Connect     