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Farm tractors are essential to modern, high output agriculture. Without them, food production would fall far short of meeting our needs. Unfortunately, tractors are generally the farm machinery identified with the most injuries in crop production agriculture.

Maneuvering sometimes difficult terrain can put the tractor in precarious situations. Uneven terrain can cause a tractor to roll, putting the operator in danger.

The rollover protective structure (ROPS) and seat belt, when worn, are the two most important safety devices to protect operators from death during tractor overturns. It is important to remember the ROPS does not prevent tractor overturns. Rather, it keeps the operator from being crushed during a rollover.

When operating a tractor, remember to:

- ▶ Securely fasten your seat belt
- ▶ Avoid ditches, embankments, and holes if at all possible
- ▶ Reduce speed when turning, crossing slopes, and on a questionable surface
- ▶ Stay off slopes too steep for safe operation
- ▶ Do not allow passengers
- ▶ Be sure everyone is a safe distance before moving
- ▶ Operate the tractor as smoothly as possible
- ▶ Hitch only to the drawbar and hitch points recommended by the manufacturer
- ▶ Set brakes securely when tractor is stopped and use park if available

It is critical to train young people to operate tractors properly. Beyond the tasks associated with driving, recognizing and avoiding hazards should be addressed.

Using ROPS and a seatbelt is said to prevent death or serious injury 99 percent of the time.



New tractors are manufactured with ROPS. Older models can be retro-fitted with them as well.