Harvest Safety Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. Harvest is a high-risk time for crashes on public roads. The sun sets earlier each night and slow-moving farm equipment may not be well-marked or visible, sometimes lacking lights and reflective tape. Speed adds to the danger for motorists and farmers.
2. Tractors are most commonly used to haul various pieces of equipment needed during harvest. Various field conditions such as ruts, hills, mud, or the addition of front-end loaders can affect the stability of a tractor.
3. Harvesting forage crops may involve mowers, rakes, balers, stackers, loaders, and other machines. All have moving parts that can easily entangle a person who comes in contact with them.
4. Improper hitching of the implements could cause the tractor to overturn. Improper maintenance may result in loose parts flying off and striking bystanders or workers.
5. Hitting a hole, rut, or stump may cause an overturn, or throw the operator from the platform of the tractor.
6. Going too fast, not having clear sight when turning onto the road, failure to have the proper signs and lights, and not driving defensively all contribute to accidents.
7. Sudden movements by the truck or tractor can throw workers off balance. Workers can fall off the platform and be run over by the machine, or they can lose control of the hay bale causing it to fall off the platform and strike a worker.

STATS

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention, ranks farming as the 6th most dangerous occupation in America. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

(NIOSH), reports 417 farmers and farm worker fatalities.

- NIOSH reports that of the estimated two million full-time workers employed in the production of crops, livestock, and poultry in 2019, approximately 100 agricultural workers will suffer an injury resulting in lost work time on a daily basis.
- Every year, an average of 62 farmworkers are electrocuted in the U.S., and many more are injured by shocks, according to Department of Labor statistics.
- Harvest is the most likely period for farm-related injury accidents and fatalities. Combines and other equipment loaded onto trailers can contact power lines and cause electrocutions, as can raising the bed of a truck to unload. That’s exactly how a 53-year-old Michigan truck driver was tragically killed, when he raised the bed of his semitrailer truck while parked beneath a power line at the edge of a field. Colleagues said he was attempting to clean out the bed, and when he touched the truck bed, he became the path to ground for the electricity.
- 200 incidents of farm equipment and motor vehicle collisions on public roadways have been recorded in the AgInjuryNews.org database, resulting in 240 deaths and 135 non-fatal injuries during harvest time.