



## Fall Safety Advice Article

**Header: Safely Move Farm Equipment on Roads this Harvest Season**

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Golden fields of wheat and the sight of trucks full of grain are sure signs that the harvest season is upon us once again. Every harvest season there are collisions between farm equipment and passenger vehicles resulting in expensive repairs, injuries and sadly even deaths. However by taking a small amount of time to discuss how to safely transport agricultural equipment, farmers and their equipment operators can minimize the risk of a collision.

Glen Blahey is a Health and Safety Specialist with CASA. “There are three common types of collisions involving farm equipment and a typical road vehicle: Rear-end, passing and left-turn collisions.”

Farm equipment moves much slower than regular highway vehicles. A typical tractor travels less than 40 kilometers per hour. Farm machinery is long and wide. Motorists can underestimate the length, width and speed of farm machinery, often with disastrous results. Rear-end collisions occur when motorists come up on farm equipment too quickly. Passing collisions often occur because motorists attempt to pass without having a clear view of oncoming traffic. And left-turn collisions happen because motorists often think the equipment operator is pulling over to allow the vehicle to pass but the operator is actually making a wide left turn.

So what can farmers do to prevent these types of collisions? The first step is having a conversation with all equipment operators and truck drivers about how to safely and efficiently move farm machinery on public roadways.

In March, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA) and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture launched “Let’s Talk About It!”, a Canadian Agricultural Safety Week campaign focused on encouraging farmers to talk about farm safety. As a part of “Let’s Talk About It!”, CASA developed the Toolbox Talks, a series of brief, informal talks that help farmers discuss with their workers and their families about safely conducting farm tasks, including the operation of farm equipment on public roadways. “By having a conversation with equipment operators and truck drivers at the beginning of the harvest season, farmers can lay out their expectations and procedures on how to safely move farm equipment,” Blahey says. “CASA’s toolbox talks are an excellent way for farmers to effectively communicate these expectations in clear and comprehensive way.”

Some quick and easy tips to remain safe this harvest season are:

**Be Visible.** If motorists know that slow moving farm machinery is on the road with them and how that machinery is likely to move, the chance for a collision is greatly reduced. All slow moving farm



equipment must be equipped with A Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) Emblem. This emblem is a triangular, bright-orange sign with a red border. It must be placed at the centre or to the left of centre of all slow moving farm vehicles and equipment. Make sure that the SMV emblem is clean and visible. Lighting is also important to make sure that your farming equipment is visible to motorists. Tractors and other self-propelled equipment must have at least two headlamps visible from the front, two red tail lamps visible from the rear and two flashing amber warning lamps visible from both the front and the rear of the machine. Proper turning signals should be available and used at all times so that motorists can anticipate what the farm machinery is going to do. Some provinces have other lighting requirements, check with your provincial department of transportation for these regulations.

**Be Cautious.** When operating farm machinery on a public road, be sure to drive as far to the right as possible to give motorists room to pass, but stay on the road. Travelling on the shoulder presents its own hazards – it may be soft or have obscured hazards like culvert openings or depressions. Equipment operators should never allow extra riders on farm machinery. If something goes wrong, the extra rider is the most likely person to die. And always remember to buckle up your seat belt, even a low speed equipment crash can result in a significant injury.

**Be Alert.** Only properly trained and licensed drivers should ever operate farm machinery. While it goes without saying that no one should ever operate farm machinery under the influence of drugs or alcohol, it's also true that anyone who is overly tired should also avoid driving.

By following these guidelines, farm workers will minimize the chance of a collision or other incident while travelling on public roadways in a farming vehicle. CASA wishes all farmers a safe, healthy and productive harvest season.

For more information on the Toolbox Talks, visit [agsafetyweek.ca/toolbox-talks](http://agsafetyweek.ca/toolbox-talks). Do you have any questions about safety? Contact CASA at [info@casa-asca.ca](mailto:info@casa-asca.ca).

**Photo Cutline: SMV on road**

**With the harvest season in full swing, CASA reminds farm equipment operators to be safe on the roadways.**

