



# Tailgate Safety Training for Landscaping and Horticultural Services

Agricultural Safety Program, 590 Woody Hayes Drive, Columbus, OH 43210

## Safe Use of Tractors and Self-Propelled Equipment

**Objective:** Use safe procedures to operate tractors and self-propelled equipment.

### *How to Use This Module*

Safety is critical in operating tractors and self-propelled equipment. For this module:

- Review the information below on safe operation of tractors and self-propelled equipment.
- While your supervisor observes, practice safe operation. Ask for feedback during practice to ensure that you understand safe operation.
- Discuss your experiences practicing safe operation with other workers and your supervisor.
- Review the important points.
- Take the True/False quiz to check your learning.

**Note:** It is acceptable for a trainer to ride on the tractor with a worker **during training only**.

### Background

Many workers in the green industry use tractors on the job. In addition, workers might use other self-propelled equipment:

- Traveling or watering booms
- Conveyors
- Shipping carts
- Bench transports
- Golf carts
- Utility vehicles

### General Safety Guidelines

Read and follow the operator's safety manual. Keep safety signs in good repair. Replace them as needed. When a part is replaced, transfer the safety equipment to the new part. Replacement safety signs can be bought from a dealer.

Describe how to operate all controls on the equipment. Keep the equipment in good working condition. Do not modify equipment. Do not modify the safety devices. Unauthorized modification can impair the operation and safety of the equipment.

Tractors are powerful machines. They require careful attention to operate and service. New tractors are equipped with safety devices. These devices provide a reasonable amount of protection. Practice good safety habits. Be aware of hazardous situations.

## Safe Operation of Equipment

- Safe operation depends on alert and efficient handling. Most accidents occur when the driver is tired or not alert.
- Only trained workers should operate tractors and self-propelled equipment.
- Wear safety glasses to prevent eye damage due to flying debris. Wear snug-fitting clothing. This lessens the chance of clothing catching on a moving part.
- Do not ride double unless a seat is provided.
- Before you start, check the work area for debris, obstacles, ditches, and holes. They could cause the tractor to overturn.
- Be aware of weather conditions. Control is more difficult in mud, snow, or ice.
- The tractor should be equipped with a rollover protective structure (ROPS). This device will protect the driver in case of an overturn. Fasten the seat belt only if there is a ROPS. (For more details, refer to the Tailgate Safety Training module *Rollovers and Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS)*.)
- A first aid kit should be on or near all major equipment. (For more detail, refer to the Tailgate Safety Training module *First Aid Kits*.)

Machines with mounted equipment need adequate ballast for stability. Hitch loads to the draw bar to prevent turning over backwards when pulling. To avoid overturns, back out of deep ditches, up slopes, and out of mud holes. Slow down and begin turning the wheels before applying the brake. This will help avoid overturns, skidding, and bouncing. Sitting down with the seat belt fastened is always encouraged. It is mandatory when traveling over rough terrain. It lessens the chance of the driver being thrown from the machine.

## Review These Important Points

- Stay alert. Recognize and follow safety procedures.
- No riders (except during training sessions).
- First aid should be readily available.
- Follow recommended guidelines in difficult terrain and weather conditions.
- Read and follow the operator's manual.

## About These Modules

The author team for the training modules in the landscape and horticultural tailgate training series includes Dee Jepsen, Program Director, Agricultural Safety and Health, Ohio State University Extension; Michael Wonacott, Research Specialist, Vocational Education; Peter Ling, Greenhouse Specialist; and Thomas Bean,

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Answer Key: 1 = F, 2 = F, 3 = T, 4 = T, 5 = F.

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*Name* \_\_\_\_\_

### True or False?

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Workers only need to read the operator's manual when equipment malfunctions.        | T | F |
| 2. When driving self-propelled equipment, wear the seat belt even if there is no ROPS. | T | F |
| 3. The tractor is designed for only one person, the driver.                            | T | F |
| 4. Always check the work area for debris, ditches, or other obstacles.                 | T | F |
| 5. Training is not needed to operate self-propelled equipment.                         | T | F |