

Road safety and slow-moving vehicles—staying safe while on the move

Ontario's rural roads are shared every day by farmers moving equipment and motorists travelling at highway speeds. When large farm equipment is on the road with passenger vehicles, the risks increase—especially when time pressures, distractions, and speed come into play.

Every year, too many serious and preventable accidents occur on rural roads.

Road safety is a shared responsibility between farmers and motorists. That means slowing down, staying alert, and taking the time to pass safely—and making sure you're very visible.

Why it matters

Available data highlights why extra caution is essential around farm equipment on the road:

Federal stats show slow-moving vehicles are

3.8 to 4.8 times more likely to be involved in a fatal collision

per kilometre travelled than other motor vehicles.

According to the Ontario Provincial Police, injuries and deaths involving slow-moving farm vehicles most often result from:

Rollovers while entering, exiting, or crossing roadways.

Veering off soft shoulders.

Collisions with passenger vehicles.

Improper passing by motorists is a leading cause of serious collisions:

Eight out of 10 collisions involving farm equipment occur during daylight hours.

Seven out of 10 occur on dry road conditions—not during poor weather.

Tips for farmers when equipment is on the road

Farmers, here are practical steps you can take to reduce risk when moving equipment:

Drive on the roadway: Staying on your side of the road discourages unsafe passing and is safer than relying on soft shoulders.

Circle check: Perform a daily 360-degree inspection before leaving the farm. Ensure brakes, hitches, tires, mirrors, and lights are in good working order.

Avoid distractions: Stay focused on the road—avoid phone use, eating, or other distractions while operating equipment.

Be prepared: Plan ahead for breaks, hydration, and nutrition to maintain alertness.

Keep lights on: Leave equipment lights on at all times, not just during the required sunrise and sunset periods.

Make it visible: Ensure every qualifying piece of equipment displays a clean, clearly visible SMV sign.

Be patient: When entering or crossing a main road, wait until there is enough time and space to do so safely.

Sadly, most incidents happen when visibility and driving conditions are otherwise good, so they **CAN** be prevented.

You can't eliminate every risk, but small, consistent actions go a long way.



Tips for motorists sharing the road

Motorists play an equally important role in keeping rural roads safe:



Know the slow-moving-vehicle sign

The orange triangle indicates a vehicle travelling 40 km/hour or less.



Slow down early

Closing speeds are faster than they appear so reduce speed as soon as you spot farm equipment.



Watch for signals

Farm equipment may need extra space to turn or swing wide.



Pass with care

Only pass when it is legal, safe, and you have a clear line of sight.



Be patient

A short delay is far better than a life-altering collision.



Be respectful

Farmers use public roads because they have to—courtesy goes a long way.

Farmers, motorists, and rural communities all benefit when safety comes first. Taking a few extra seconds—slowing down, waiting to pass, or improving visibility—saves lives.

Together, we can make Ontario's roads safer, our communities stronger, and ensure everyone returns home safe and sound.

Excerpts from recent OFA Viewpoints



Road safety is a big focus for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture us and many others across the province, as is advocating for better roads and transportation infrastructure and regulations that reflect the needs of our modern agriculture industry—one of the biggest pillars of the provincial economy.

Louis Roesch, *Director, May 2025*



We recognize the high-speed pace of today's world, whether it's commuting for work, travelling to and from school, or running around for errands, sports and recreational activities—all of us want to get where we're going quickly. But we also need to get there safely, and road safety is a shared responsibility between both farmers and motorists. We all need to make it a priority to take the extra few seconds or minutes to pass farm equipment safely

Teresa Van Raay, *Director, May 2024*

More information, including Viewpoints, resources and recorded webinars are available at ofa.on.ca/road-safety.

Working together for safer roads