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Stay Alert During Harvest Time

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*Submitted by
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Stoddard County, Missouri - The Missouri State Highway Patrol reminds drivers that this is the time of year when crops are harvested. Thus, drivers should expect heavier farm machinery traffic--especially on rural highways. Farming plays a vital role in Missouri's economy, history, and identity. Safety is important to drivers and farmers sharing the road!

"We encourage everyone traveling in Missouri's farming communities to stay alert and drive courteously," said Colonel Ron Replogle, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. "Farmers and motorists can share the road. Please obey all traffic laws and remain vigilant, no matter what you're driving."

There were a total of 173 Missouri traffic crashes involving farm equipment in 2012. In those crashes one driver was killed and 21 were injured. In addition, two farm tractor passengers were injured.

The following are reminders for safe travel during this busy time of year:

MOTORISTS

- * Stay alert for slow moving farm equipment.
- * When you come up behind a tractor or other farm machinery, please slow down and be patient. Wait to pass until you have a clear view of the

road ahead and there is no oncoming traffic. Never pass on a hill or curve.

- * Collisions commonly occur when a motorist tries to pass a left-turning farm vehicle. A tractor that appears to be pulling to the right side of the road to let motorists pass, instead may be preparing to make a wide left turn. Watch the farmer's hand and light signals closely.

- * Pay close attention to farm equipment entering and leaving the highway from side roads and driveways.

- * Special attention must be paid when traveling at dawn or dusk when the sun makes it difficult for drivers to see.

FARMERS

- * Make sure any farm equipment being driven on Missouri roadways is properly marked with lights and a "slow-moving vehicle" emblem.

- * Drive as far to the right as possible.

- * If traffic accumulates behind you on a road where it is difficult to make a safe pass, you should pull off onto the side of the road in a level area, so the vehicles can pass.

- * If possible, never travel on roadways at dawn or dusk when it is more difficult for drivers of other vehicles to see.

- * Like other motor vehicles, most modern farm tractors have seat belts. Always use a seat belt when operating a tractor equipped with a roll-over protection structure.

- * Often, all-terrain vehicles are used for agricultural purposes. ATVs being used for farming can only travel on highways during daylight hours and must be equipped with lights, a bicycle flag, and "slow-moving vehicle" emblem. The law requires anyone under the age of 18 to wear a safety helmet when operating an ATV; the Patrol, however, recommends all operators to wear a safety helmet regardless of age.

- * Farmers are encouraged to review the regulations that pertain to farm vehicles and the transportation of goods. These regulations include, but are not limited to:

- **When crossing state lines a truck is considered a commercial motor vehicle if it has a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,001 lbs. or more, therefore, it must comply with federal regulations. This applies to farm vehicles.

- **Farm vehicles must display a USDOT number and the farm name.

- **The driver of a farm vehicle must be at least 21 years of age.

- **Those driving a farm vehicle must have a commercial driver license if

the truck's GVWR exceeds 26,000 lbs., if the truck's gross combined weight rating (GCWR) exceeds 26,000 lbs., and the truck is operated more than 150 miles from the farm.

****The farmer may need to have the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) if the truck weighs over 26,000 lbs., or if it is licensed for over 26,000 lbs., or if it has three axles on the power unit. Fuel permits may be purchased from the state you are entering in lieu of the IFTA.**

****The driver must possess a current medical card (DOT physical) when operating a truck with a GVWR of 10,001 or more lbs.**

****Permits must be obtained from MoDOT if you are traveling on an interstate and your vehicle or load is over the normal size and weight requirements.**

****Drivers must carry a log book if they operate a truck more than 100 miles from the farm. If the vehicle stays intrastate, this does not apply to vehicles licensed for 42,000 lbs. or less.**

For a complete list of federal motor vehicle regulations which apply to farm vehicles please visit:

<http://www.modot.mo.gov/mcs/documents/FarmTruckSafety07.pdf>.

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