

Dept. of Transportation: Stay safe on the roads this growing season

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Office of Public Affairs
(608) 266-3581, opa.exec@dot.wi.gov

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation urges drivers to take extra caution as agricultural activity increases statewide.

Tractors, trailers, and other farming equipment are recognized as essential agricultural tools and operate on Wisconsin roadways. Because the equipment is heavy and often slow-moving, there are special considerations that both the farming community and the traveling public should keep in mind to prevent crashes.

“We ask drivers to eliminate distractions, slow down and be patient,” said WisDOT Secretary Dave Ross. “The road to every grocery store and farmer’s market starts in Wisconsin’s countryside, and it’s important we give farmers the room they need to work safely.”

According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), there are more than 150,000 jobs statewide in on-farm production, part of the roughly \$88.3 billion Wisconsin agricultural economy.

“While spring is always a busy time on Wisconsin roadways as farmers work around the clock preparing and planting their fields, given the late spring, it will be especially so,” said DATCP Secretary Sheila Harsdorf. “Motorists and farmers need to be particularly aware of each other and their surroundings and understand their responsibilities in sharing the roadways. Let’s make this season a safe one on Wisconsin roads.”

All drivers: Watch out for farm vehicles - Eighteen people have been killed and 607 injured since 2011 in crashes involving agricultural equipment in Wisconsin. Drivers should slow down immediately whenever they see a fluorescent orange slow-moving vehicle emblem on the rear of a tractor or other piece of equipment. Stay alert, focused and patient when passing a slow moving agricultural vehicle in an area where passing is legal. Importantly, [Wisconsin law makes it illegal for motorists to pass slow moving agricultural equipment in a no passing zone.](#)

Farmers: Know the lighting and marking requirements - Lighting and marking requirements draw attention to the size, shape and speed of agricultural vehicles and alert drivers that caution is required. There are [specific requirements](#) for different types of equipment. WisDOT has information and a [short explanatory video](#) published on the web.

Farmers: Know local weight restrictions - Agricultural equipment axle weights are typically heavy and can have a significant impact on our roads and bridges. The [Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection](#) publishes a map with local information about weight limits and, when applicable, local permitting needs. Generally, agricultural weight limits are 23,000 pounds per axle or 92,000 pounds gross vehicle weight, dependent on number of axles and axle spacing, and subject to seasonal or special postings.

More information on weight limits, driving safety permitting and exemptions is published at www.AgVehicles.DOT.wi.gov.