

Tractor Safety: Road Collisions

Tractors and off-road equipment sometimes needs to be driven on a road. Whether you're in a car, truck, or a large, slow-moving tractor, remember that good visibility and a dry road surface isn't enough to overcome poor driving behavior. Head-on collisions cause 42% of all fatal accidents each year. Most crashes are caused by distracted drivers. They are more likely to happen in daylight than at night, and when the weather is clear.

Remember the National Safety Council collision prevention formula that applies to all over-the-road vehicle operation, including tractors and off-road equipment:

1. Recognize the hazard.
2. Understand the defense.
3. Act in time.

Move your eyes continuously. This may give you an extra second to react. Don't just look at approaching traffic. Watch cross traffic: are other drivers going to stop? Are they picking up speed to race through a yellow light or beat someone to an intersection?

Look for distracted drivers. Are they weaving as they approach? This can help give you more time to plan a defense and react.

Look for people passing in front or from behind. Do they have enough room? If not, be prepared to react.

Look for vehicles sitting at stop signs or unregulated intersections. Are they starting to pull into your lane?

Stay alert when approaching a traffic signal or intersection. Be prepared to stop and keep your foot near the brake pedal when going through intersections. This decreases brake activation time if someone runs a red light or stop sign.

To avoid rear-end collisions, maintain proper following distance, add space for poor weather or limited visibility, and look ahead to slowing traffic.

Avoid distractions. The human mind can only process a certain number of activities at one time, even on slower equipment like tractors. This can keep you from noticing a smaller object like a motorcycle or other vehicle.