

SPRAYER SAFETY ON PUBLIC ROADS

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – June 19, 2018 – On average there are approximately 20 collisions each year in Manitoba involving agricultural equipment and passenger vehicles, according to Manitoba Public Insurance. As a producer you know that modern sprayers are larger than they used to be, thus driving these machines on public roads poses several new challenges that impact yours and others' safety.

Reduced visibility

It is good practice to try and make eye contact with other drivers prior to passing one another. Because modern sprayers are larger, wider and have more bells and whistles, it means there are more blind spots and parts obstructing a driver's view. Always clean the windows and mirrors on your equipment before leaving the yard.

More time is being spent on the road

Take the opportunity to talk to non-farmers, young teenagers and workers about road safety. Producers now travel farther as their farmland is more spread out and farm more acres overall. Therefore sprayers are travelling on public roads more making education around this topic important. Never become complacent yourself.

Less experienced operators

If you employ workers that have little or no farming background you must ensure they are trained thoroughly covering even the information you consider common sense. Expansion of individual operations means less people are growing up on farms, and many of those who do are opting for off-farm careers requiring producers to hire non-family workers.

Turning

Leading up to a left turn shut off your hazards briefly to get the attention of any followers, then turn on the left signal. This helps if someone has been following you for a long time and has become numb to your flashing hazard lights. Move over to straddle the centre line, only if there is no oncoming traffic, to make your intention clear. Impatient drivers following slow moving equipment can try to make hasty passes so doing this gives them less space to go around.

When a situation requires you to swing out wide for a right turn, again shut off your hazards then turn on the right turn signal. Double check all mirrors and slowly move the sprayer toward the center line before making the swinging turn.

Other reminders

- If you are required to travel on major highways/roads, be aware of the local traffic patterns to avoid peak busy times if possible.
- *Always* wait for the dust to settle from a passing vehicle on gravel roads before proceeding or changing your position.
- As the bigger machine you must yield to oncoming traffic -- drivers are not legally obliged to pull over for you, but some do out of courtesy.
- Pull over for tailgaters who follow even when they have ample time to pass. Tailgaters only frustrate other traffic which can instigate dangerous situations.
- Yield at all railroad crossings.
- LED lights are much brighter than traditional lights. When purchasing new equipment, ask dealers for LED lights, or consider retrofitting existing equipment with LEDs.