

Road safety during harvest

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – August 22, 2019 – As combines and other large farm equipment set out for harvest, motorists and farmers alike must safely share public roads. According to Manitoba Public Insurance, there are an average of 20 collisions each year involving agricultural equipment and passenger vehicles in Manitoba.

What are some of the factors that lead to collisions? Consider the following:

Reduced visibility

It is good practice to try and make eye contact with other drivers prior to passing one another. Combines are very wide vehicles, meaning there are larger blind spots and parts obstructing a driver's view. Always clean the windows and mirrors on your equipment before leaving the yard. In dry conditions, road dust is also a factor, so ensure that you are not passing or turning until dust clouds have settled.

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, meaning combines and grain trucks are travelling greater distances on public roads. Never become complacent about the rules or your surroundings.

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 that could be considered common sense. Expansion of individual operations means fewer 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 drivers who have been following behind for a long distance and may have diverted attention away from 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 attempt an unsafe pass so doing this provides 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 your machine toward the center line before making the swinging turn.

Know traffic patterns

If you are required to travel on major highways/roads, be aware of the local traffic patterns to avoid peak busy times if possible. Pull over for drivers following too close even when they have ample time to pass. Drivers following too closely only frustrate other traffic which can instigate dangerous situations. However, do not wave followers past - let them make the decision when it is safe to pass.

As a farm equipment operator it always helps to acknowledge motorists who do slow down or give way for them with a nod or a wave. This goes a long way in keeping motorists feeling better about sharing the road with farmers.

farm equipment operators acknowledge those motorists who do slow down or give way for them, etc. A quick smile, nod of head or a wave goes a long way in keeping motorists feeling better about farmers being on the road and holding them up!

The Manitoba Farm Safety Program (FSP) has developed three fact sheets to help farmers safely transport and operate equipment on public roads:

- [License and Age Requirements for Operating Farm Equipment](#)
- [Allowable Dimensions for Road Travel and Permit Requirements](#)
- [Slow-Moving Vehicles: Light and Signage Requirements](#)

The FSP was established in 2016 to provide workplace safety and health advisory services and training to producers. FSP is hosted by Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP), however safety services are available to all farmers whether or not they are KAP members, and regardless of size and commodity.