

While driving on a rural road, you may encounter farm equipment. This equipment comes in a variety of shapes and sizes. Sometimes you will see a single vehicle, such as a tractor or combine. Other times the equipment will consist of a tractor with an implement in tow.

Farm equipment is designed to be used primarily in a field and is not designed to travel at typical highway speeds. Most farm equipment is designed to travel at speeds of 15-25 miles per hour. Farm equipment may be wider than other vehicles, and perhaps even wider than the lane of travel. However, farm equipment must be operated on highways in order to travel between a farm and a field or field to field.

Just as motorists are entitled to operate their vehicles on public roadways, farmers are legally allowed to operate farm equipment on these same roadways. Caution, courtesy and special attention to the following safety tips will help ensure the safety of motorists, passengers, and operators of slow-moving farm equipment.

If you're driving 55 mph and come upon a tractor that's moving 15 miles per hour, it only takes five seconds to close a gap the length of a football field between you and the tractor.

Recognize the Slow Moving Vehicle Emblem- Brake Immediately!

When you see the slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem, you should immediately slow down. SMV emblems must be visible at least 500 feet away from the vehicle, but because it may be difficult for you to judge the speed at which you are closing in on a vehicle, you should slow down immediately. Think of the slow moving vehicle emblem as a warning to adjust your speed.

Be Patient

A farmer understands that your trip is being delayed, so he or she will pull off the road at the first available safe location to allow you to pass. Don't assume that the farmer can move aside to let you pass. Shoulders may be soft, wet, or steep, and this can cause the farm vehicle to tip, or they may not be able to support a heavy farm vehicle.

Even if you have to slow down to 20 mph and follow a tractor for two miles, it takes only six minutes of your time, which is approximately equivalent to waiting for two stoplights.

Yield to Wide Vehicles

Some farm equipment may be wider than the lane of travel. If you approach a piece of wide farm equipment traveling in the opposite direction and you cannot pass safely, stop. Then pull off the road or safely turn around or back-up to a location that will allow the equipment to pass you.

Don't Assume that the Farmer Knows You're There

Most operators of farm equipment will regularly check to see if there is traffic behind them. However, the farmer must spend most of the time looking ahead to keep the equipment safely on the road, and to watch for oncoming traffic. Also, most farm equipment is very loud, and the farmer will probably not be able to hear your vehicle. Therefore, do not assume that the farmer knows where your vehicle is located. Before you attempt to pass, use your car's horn to signal to the farmer that you are there.

*In 2009, there were 81 accidents in Pennsylvania involving farm equipment and other vehicles. No deaths involved farm equipment.**

*Statistics from PennDOT

Pass with Caution

If a farmer has pulled off the road to allow you to pass, or if the farmer cannot pull off the road and you feel you must pass, do so with caution.

- Be watchful of vehicles behind you that may also try to pass.
- If you must enter the oncoming lane of traffic, do not pass unless you can see clearly ahead of both you and the vehicle you will pass.
- If there are any curves or hills ahead that may block your view or the view of oncoming vehicles, do not pass.
- Do not pass if you are in a designated "No Passing Zone" or within 100 feet of any intersection, railroad grade crossing, bridge, elevated structure or tunnel.
- Do not assume that a farm vehicle that pulls to the right side of the road is going to turn right or is letting you pass. Due to the size of some farm implements, the farmer must execute wide lefthand turns. If you are unsure, check the operator's hand signals and check the left side of the road for gates, driveways or any place a farm vehicle might turn.



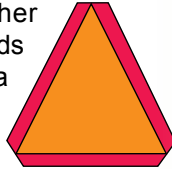
By being aware of farm equipment during your travels on rural roads, you can help make the trip safe for both you and Pennsylvania's farmers.

For more information, call 717-761-2740 or email: GovCom@pfb.com

Do You Recognize these Symbols?

Less than 30% of drivers know what these symbols mean.* But it's a matter of life and death for drivers of automobiles, farm equipment, and animal-drawn vehicles on rural roads.

This is a daytime view of the slow moving vehicle emblem. It is to be displayed on animal-drawn vehicles and on other vehicles designed to travel at speeds of 25 mph or less. It is not simply a reflector- it is a warning to slow down.



Occasionally you may encounter slow moving vehicles traveling at night. The SMV emblem's red border is designed for nighttime visibility. Your car's headlights will reflect off the red border of the SMV emblem, and appear to you to be a glowing red triangle floating in the darkness. It is extremely important to slow down immediately because reduced lighting will make it difficult to judge how rapidly you are closing in on a slow moving vehicle, or what the dimensions of the slow moving vehicle may be.



**According to findings of Penn State researcher Philip M. Garvey, author of "Motorist Comprehension of the Slow-Moving Vehicle Emblem."*

It is illegal for any resident of Pennsylvania to display the slow moving vehicle emblem on permanent, stationary objects such as mail box posts, driveway entrances and fences.

Tips for Farmers

Farmers have a role in rural road safety too. Here are some tips to alleviate some hazards when taking wide equipment onto the road:

- ▲ Pennsylvania law requires you to place a slow moving vehicle reflector on any machine that travels the road slower than 25 mph. Always point the triangle up, keep the SMV emblem clean to maximize reflectivity, and replace the emblem when it fades, normally every 2-3 years.
- ▲ Mark the edges of tractors and machines with reflective tape and reflectors. Consider installing retrofit lighting on older machinery to increase visibility.
- ▲ Turn on your lights, but turn off rear spotlights when going onto the road. From a distance they can be mistaken for headlights.
- ▲ Avoid the highway during rush hours and bad weather. Don't drive before sunrise or after sunset.
- ▲ Use pilot cars, one in front and one in back if you are going a considerable distance. Hang an orange flag out the window of these pilot vehicles.
- ▲ Consider installing mirrors on equipment to enable you to be aware of motorists around you.



Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

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