



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Dangers of Extra Riders on Tractors & Other Equipment

Extra riders on any kind of power equipment is a definite safety hazard. Rarely is any type of tractor, farm equipment or riding lawn mowers equipped for an extra rider. In rare cases a tractor or combine might come from the factory equipped with a “training” seat. Again this is a rare circumstance. Even though the general line of equipment is for one-rider, you always can observe an extra person on a tractor or a parent mowing grass with a small child on his or her “lap” or knee. The attitude seems to be that they will be careful, but an accident can happen so quickly, especially with riding mowers. I know a personal case of a child riding in the cab with his father, who was bush hogging a pasture and hit an unknown depression. The child was thrown out of the tractor cab and under the tractor and was hit by the bush hog.

Tractors and mowers aren’t passenger vehicles! If a piece of equipment has an extra seat, it is for training; or sometimes it is referred to as an instructional seat and is found in tractors with cabs only.

All tractors manufactured since 1976 are designed and equipped with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and seatbelts. If the operator will use the seatbelt with ROPS, it will provide a safe environment for him or her, in case of a rollover. Statistics tell us that 99.9% of tractor operators, if they use the ROPS and seatbelt, will be saved from serious injuries. Extra riders have no such protection! There is also the perception that tractors with cabs offer protection for extra riders. As mentioned above in an example, the cab doesn’t offer protection for a second rider.

REASONS EXTRA RIDERS ARE THROWN FROM TRACTORS-

- ✓ Sudden stops.
- ✓ Driving over holes, stumps, debris or unknown depressions.
- ✓ A sharp turn causes the extra rider to lose his or her footing or to be tossed off the tractor. The tractor doesn’t have to turn over for the extra rider to be thrown off the vehicle.
- Operators tend to think they can respond and stop the tractor in an instant, especially if the tractor is moving very slowly or if only simple work is being performed. The most common reaction from folks involved in tractor turnover is how fast they can happen.

- The only way to prevent extra rider injuries or deaths is to absolutely not allow the rider on the vehicle unless it is for training and there is an instructional seat provided. Strong consideration should be given to never allow an extra rider.
- Decals should be affixed to the equipment that states “NO-RIDERS.” All employees should be informed that the “NO-RIDER” rule is always in effect, unless there is the need for an instructional seat.
- There are other types of equipment on the farm that is just as dangerous as a tractor with an extra rider. The ATVs, skid steer loaders, and riding lawn mowers are all designed for only one person.
- Some combines have the extra seat for training, as we have already mentioned. If a piece of equipment has an extra seat, it should come from the manufacturer. There is no “after-market” seat available for installation.

HELPFUL TIPS FOR ENFORCING THE “NO-RIDER” RULE-

- Discuss the rule with all employees so that everyone is dutiful informed.
- Apply “NO-RIDER” decals to all tractors and other farm equipment.
- Extra precaution of this policy should be extended initially to new employees and visitors that might be using the equipment.
- Use a truck, car or UTV to ferry employees to the fields.

SPECIFIC POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FROM “EXTRA-RIDERS”-

- Interferes with the operator’s vision and ability to maintain control of all the vehicle functions.
- Distracts the operator.
- Increases the rider’s exposure to dust, noise and chemicals.
- Increases the risk of a multiple injury incident.

**BEFORE YOU START-
BE SAFETY SMART!
ONLY FOOLS BREAK THE
SAFETY RULES!!!**