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**WASHINGTON COUNTY
OREGON**

Media Release

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Department/Division: Land Use and Transportation, Operations Division

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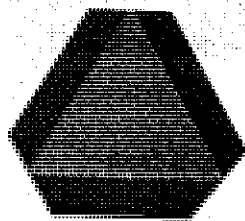
Caution Key To Sharing Road With Farm Equipment

Motorists and farm machinery can share the road safely

Over half of the 1,285 miles of roads maintained by Washington County's Department of Land Use and Transportation are in a rural setting. Scenic two-lane roads wind through farms, forests, nurseries and vineyards. Due to population growth, more high-speed traffic now travels on roads not designed for that kind of traffic.

Motorists traveling Washington County's rural roads may find themselves sharing the road with large, slow-moving farm equipment. Not recognizing slow moving vehicles, or simply not being aware of them until it is too late, is a leading cause of collisions.

"If you do not begin to slow as soon as you see a farm vehicle, you might not have time to avoid a collision."



How can you recognize farm vehicles? According to the Oregon Drivers Manual, farm machinery and equipment that travels at 25 mph or less must display a slow-moving vehicle emblem on the rear when traveling on public roads. As a motorist, you must be prepared to slow down when you see this triangular sign with a red reflectorized border and a fluorescent orange-red center. Some farm vehicles may also

display flashing yellow lights.

The slow-moving vehicle emblem is not just a reflector. It is a warning to slow down.

They're so big and slow, how could you possibly rear-end a farm vehicle? Consider this: A car traveling 55 mph requires about 224 feet to stop on dry pavement, assuming average reaction time and braking. A car traveling 55 mph can close a 300-foot gap (the length of a football field) and overtake a tractor moving at 15 mph in about five seconds. If you do not begin to slow as soon as you see a farm vehicle, you might not have time to avoid a collision.

Department of Land Use & Transportation • Operations & Maintenance Division

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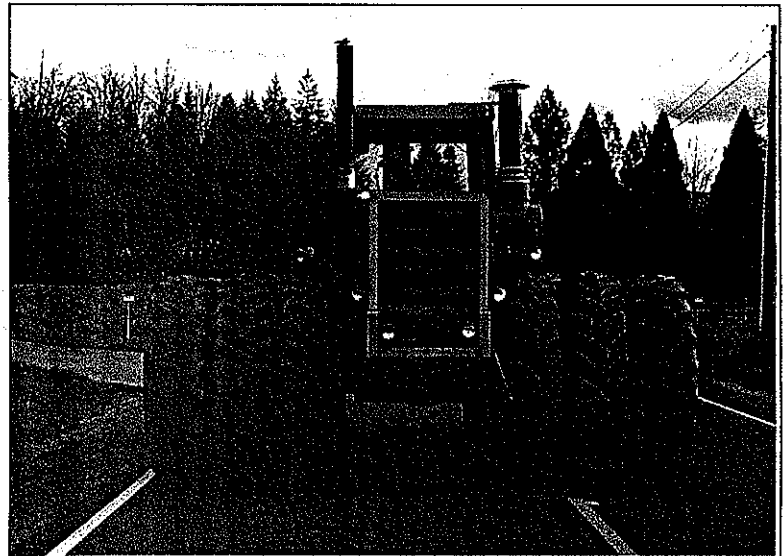
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Sharing the Road With Farm Equipment

The most common accident occurs when a slow-moving farm vehicle is turning left. Although a tractor may appear to be stopping beside the road or turning right, it might actually be turning left. The farmer is swinging wide to line up with a gate or driveway; the driver behind the farmer may think the farmer is pulling over to let the driver pass. Look for gates, driveways or access roads on the left side of the road that may indicate a left turn.

How and when is it safe to pass farm equipment? It is illegal and very dangerous to pass farm equipment in a no passing zone. Pass only when the road ahead is clear and there is either a dotted yellow line on your side of the road or a dotted white line. And when passing, be extra cautious. Tractors and other farm equipment may be wider than they look from behind and may require ample space in both lanes.

ODOT's Crash Analysis and Reporting Unit reports that in the five-year period from 2003 through 2007, Oregon experienced 151 crashes involving farm equipment; 112 people were injured and 10 people died. Eight of those crashes and one death occurred on Washington County's roads. Almost two-thirds of Washington County's crashes were rear-end crashes or crashes during turning movements. Most crashes took place on a weekday, during the day, on dry pavement. The most frequent day of the week for crashes involving farm equipment in Washington County was Wednesday.



The keys to safety when sharing the road with farm equipment are caution and patience. If farm equipment is causing a delay in traffic, the operator should move off the road at the nearest practical location and allow the traffic to pass.

For more information, see the Oregon Farm Bureau's publication "Rural Road Safety" at http://www.oregonfb.org/images/pdf/Road_Safety.pdf.

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Washington County is committed to building and maintaining the best transportation system, ensuring the safety of all roadway users, and to operating the county roadway system in a cost-effective and environmentally responsible manner.

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