

## SAFETY ALERT

<b>To:</b>	Property Services	<b>Issued:</b> 27/05/2024
		<b>Alert #:</b> 4
<b>Subject:</b>	A tractor has rolled causing fatal crush injuries to operator	
<b>Purpose:</b>	To advise staff on the hazard	

### SAFETY ISSUES

Operating tractors and other items of agricultural mobile plant on uneven ground, slight and steep slopes, edges of depressions, contour banks or water courses presents rollover dangers, as does towing or pulling loads. Slopes that can be negotiated safely in dry conditions may be unsafe in the wet, as the tractor can slide.

### WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL RISK

- the tractor does not have a functioning roll over protection structure
- the operator does not wear a fitted seatbelt
- the equipment is poorly maintained
- working on uneven terrain or rough, slick and muddy surfaces
- towing or pulling objects or loads
- travelling through pastures where high vegetation obscures stumps and/or potholes
- working near dams, ditches, irrigation channels, embankments or over-hanging structures
- travelling at high speeds (e.g. on roads)
- distracted for e.g. music headphones , using phones or other mobile devices while operating the tractor.

### POSSIBLE CONTROL MEASURES TO PREVENT INCIDENTS

- a rollover protective structure (ROPS) must be used correctly and fitted to the tractor in accordance with s.216 Roll-over protection on tractors of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011
- a seat belt also prevents the operator from being ejected during use or a roll-over
- logbooks should be maintained to record scheduled maintenance and repairs and any modifications which might affect the safe operation of the tractor
- conducting inspections as well as servicing and maintenance in line with the manufacturer's recommendations
- the business must also provide adequate training to all tractor operators, including the development of safe work procedures in line with the manufacturer's instructions for the operation of a tractor.
- assess the environment the tractor will be operating in for potential hazards such as gradient and terrain and determine if the plant is appropriate for the task

- driving tractors at speeds slow enough to keep control over unexpected hazards
- operators should watch out for ditches, embankments, and depressions – unstable banks can cause overturns.
- not driving on gradients in wet conditions where there is high risk of overturning caused by the tractor sliding or its wheels sinking into the ground
- only towing a load using the designated tow point that is lower than the rear axle height. (Using a tow point higher than the rear axle height can cause the tractor to backflip)
- reducing speed before turning or applying turning brakes. Where a differential lock and turning brakes are fitted, ensure the differential lock is disengaged, and the turning brakes are locked together before travelling from one work site to another
- descending slopes cautiously with the tractor in low gear
- when a tractor is bogged in mud or in a ditch, drive out in reverse gear. Logs and planks should only be used behind the rear wheels to increase traction, as using logs and planks in front of the rear wheels increases the chance of the wheels locking which can cause the tractor to backflip
- when operating a tractor at night or in low light conditions ensure the tractor is fitted with effective lighting (e.g., headlights, work lights at the rear of the tractor, etc).
- if the tractor is fitted with a front-end load or any other implement ensure they are lowered as low as possible while travelling over rough or sloping terrain.
- If you are working in a remote area or working alone, always let someone know where you are going and when you are expected back. Also, make sure good communications are in place – for example, assessing mobile phone coverage and using two-way radios.

## ACTIONS

- Ensure ROPS are fitted to all equipment
- Review of work practices: consider the location where the work is being done. For example, think about environmental conditions like gradient and terrain and determine if the plant is appropriate for the task
- Consider not driving in wet conditions
- Ensure regular maintenance and inspections are completed
- Talking to your workers —talk to your workers to get their ideas about potential risks and hazards at work. Also think about ways to include workers who are less likely to speak up in a group meeting or who might have language or reading and writing barriers
- Considering the worker and any individual factors, like their experience and training
- Limit night time driving
- Have Safe work instructions for equipment and consider if equipment becomes bogged

Further information: [Workcover QLD](#)