

Police have road-safety tips for rural motorists

From the desk of
Inspector Tim Melanson
Caledon OPP

Caledon roads see increased farm equipment traffic in the spring and during harvest, so drivers should be prepared and keep the following safety tips in mind.

- ? Slow down as soon as you spot a piece of farm equipment. In fact, if you see something ahead that is neither car nor truck, slow down ? at least until you have identified the object.
- ? Watch for hand signals. Just because a tractor veers right does not mean the operator is pulling over for you to pass. The sheer size of farm equipment often dictates the necessity of wide turns ? hence the veer right. If a tractor operator is signaling you to wait, trust him. He has a much higher vantage point than you.
- ? Be aware of the triangular Slow-Moving-Vehicle (SMV) sign. Only use SMV signs on slow moving vehicles, not to mark driveways or for other non-vehicular uses. Not only are these actions illegal in many areas, they devalue the purpose of SMV signs, putting producers at risk when moving equipment.
- ? Watch for flashing amber lights. This type of light often marks the far right and left of farm equipment. Also watch for reflective tape marking extremities and sides of equipment.
- ? Do not speed past farm machinery. Even when you may pass safely and legally, the turbulence created by your vehicle may cause the machinery to sway and become unstable.
- ? Do not pull out in front of slow moving vehicle and then slow suddenly. A tractor pulling a grain cart does not have the maneuverability of a car. Make sure you have ample space to pass. As with any passing operation, check the rear-view mirror before returning to your travel lane.
- ? Do not expect equipment to run partly on the road shoulders. Driving with one set of wheels on the pavement and one set on loose-surfaced shoulders substantially increases the risk of overturn or other accident.
- ? When you meet a piece of equipment on the road, try to find a safe spot to pull over to allow safe and easy passage of the implements.
- ? Rural motorists are asked to be alert and adjust their driving accordingly. When encountering slow-moving farming equipment, assess the situation. Watch for farm lanes or agribusiness into which the equipment might be turning.
- ? Also, do not pass until certain the way is clear and make sure the farm equipment operator is aware of your intentions.