



Farm Implements on the Road

Off Farm implements driven on the roads are subject to the *Highway Traffic Act (HTA)*. This factsheet provides a brief overview of the key requirements for farm vehicles (tractors, combines, towed implements) driven on a highway. "Highway" refers to **all** public roads.

For more detailed information, refer to the [FARM GUIDE: Farm Equipment on the Highway](#).

Driver's Licenses:

A Driver's License is not required to drive a farm tractor or self-propelled implement of husbandry along a highway, but you must be at least 16 years old. Children under 16 can only drive farm vehicles **directly across** a highway. If your Driver's License has been suspended for impaired driving, you **cannot** drive farm machinery on a highway.

Hand-held devices ban:

An amendment to the *Highway Traffic Act* in 2009 banning the use of hand-held devices (cell phones, etc.) while driving applies to farm tractors and self-propelled implements of husbandry on the road.

Where to Drive:

Although it is not illegal to drive farm equipment on the shoulder of the road, you should always drive on the travelled portion of the highway as the shoulder may not be able to support the weight of your farm equipment. Also, although farm equipment is exempt from the width rules in the HTA, you **must** yield ½ the roadway to oncoming vehicles.

Lights:

Farm vehicles on a highway must use head and tail lights from ½ hour **before** sunset to ½ hour **after** sunrise, or when vehicles are not clearly visible from 150 metres (500'). Have at least **2** white lights facing forward and **1** red light facing rearward.

When towing implements, the rearmost unit must have at least 1 red tail light; 2 tail lights if over 2.6 metres (8½') wide. Farm vehicles over 2.6 metres wide require special lighting. Refer to the **FARM GUIDE** for the specific requirements. Farm implement combinations over 6.1 metres (20') long require side marker lights; 2 green or amber at the front and 2 red at the rear; clearly visible from 150 metres.

SMV Signs:

Every farm tractor or self-propelled implement on a highway **must** display a Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) sign. SMV signs should be centered on the rear of the rearmost vehicle, .6 to 2 metres (2' – 6') above the road. Farm equipment using a SMV sign **must** obey its 40 km/h (25 MPH) speed limit.

Amendments to the HTA in 2009 permit farmers to tow implements behind a pickup truck. The truck/implement combination **must** operate at a speed of 40 km/h (25 MPH) or less too. Replace faded SMV signs. They must be clearly visible from 150 metres (500').

Farm vehicles carried on a truck or trailer are not slow moving vehicles; they are a load, and the SMV sign should be removed or covered up. As well, SMV signs must not be placed on a fixed object, such as a gate post or mail box, visible from the road.

Fendt, JCB or other High-Speed Tractor:

All farm tractors and self-propelled implements of husbandry, including those capable of road speeds over 40 km/h **must** obey the 40 km/h speed limit attached to use of the SMV sign. This perspective is based on the following elements in Section 76 (SMV Signs) in the HTA;

- **Section 76. (1)** No person **shall** operate a slow moving vehicle on a highway unless a slow moving vehicle sign is attached.
- **Section 76. (2)** Farm tractors and self-propelled implements of husbandry **are** slow moving vehicles;
- **Section 76. (6.1)** No person **shall** operate a slow moving vehicle with a slow moving vehicle sign attached ... at a speed greater than 40 kilometers/hour.

In law, "shall" is a command, used to express what is mandatory. Section 76. (1) requires **all** slow moving vehicles to display the SMV sign when on the roads. Section 76. (2) includes farm tractors and self-propelled implements of husbandry as slow moving vehicles. Section 76. (6.1) requires **all** slow moving vehicles, including high-speed tractors, to obey the SMV sign's 40 km/h speed limit.

Safety Chains:

The HTA requires farm wagons and implements drawn along a highway behind a farm tractor, combine, pickup or car, to have two separate means of attachment, so if one fails the towed implement will not separate from the towing vehicle. The draw bar/hitch provides the first means of attachment; a safety chain/cable the second. A single safety chain is the most common way to meet this requirement. The safety chain must be strong enough to hold the weight of the towed implement plus its load. If more than one implement is towed, each draw bar/hitch combination must have its own safety chain.

A three-point hitch does not require a secondary means of attachment. Two chains, crossed under the draw bar is a requirement only for heavy truck trailers. MTO's **FARM GUIDE** contains chain strength tables.

Self-Propelled Implements of Husbandry (SPIH):

SPIH are vehicles "manufactured, designed, redesigned, converted, or reconstructed" for a

specific use in farming. When converted from former road vehicles, SPIH should exhibit significant outward, physical change to the cargo-carrying portion of the vehicle and the modifications should enable it to perform its specific farm use.

SPIH are permitted to travel on a highway without license plates only if travelling from "farm to farm" to perform their farm use, or to or from places for maintenance or repairs. **All** other uses, including farm to commercial elevator or processing plant, require plates.

Mud on Roads:

It can be difficult to avoid leaving mud on the roads during harvest or planting times. Some municipalities will invoice farmers who do not clean up mud deposited on local roads from farm equipment tires. Mud on the roads may present a road hazard to other road users. While you may not face a ticket for leaving mud on the roads, you may be found liable for any resulting damages incurred by other road users. Take the necessary actions to ensure you do not leave mud, etc. on the roads you travel on.

For information on farm trucks, refer to [MTO's FARM GUIDE](#) or OFA's fact sheets; [Farm Trucks](#) and/or [Trailer Towing Checklist](#).

For information on farm ATV use, refer to the [FARM GUIDE](#) or OFA's fact sheet on [Farm ATV/ORV Use](#).

For further information, contact your local OFA Member Service Representative or OFA's Guelph office.

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