



# Tailgate Safety Talk

*Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries*

## **What's the problem?**

- Driving tractor mowers at high speeds can result in accidents because of the risk of overturning.
- Quick maneuvers in tight spaces and on slopes can also cause a rollover as does using the brakes while turning.

## **What do we need to know about driving to the work area?**

- Be sure the tractor has a slow-moving vehicle emblem as well as working lights and warning flags.
- If the tractor is equipped with a ROPS, fasten your seat belt. Equipment with a ROPS MUST have a seat belt.
- If the mowing attachment doesn't have its own brake system, it's important to keep a safe and slow speed. Avoid very sharp turns since they can cause attachments to jackknife.
- Always let traffic clear and make sure you have enough time to cross a highway.
- Any mowing attachments (over the fence mowers, batwing mowers, etc) should be properly stowed and secured as per the owner's manual.

## **What should we do about safety in the work area?**

- Before starting work, make sure mowing ahead signs are in place as per local guidelines and as terrain allows, considering sightlines and cross streets. For routes that have been previously designated, use a shadow vehicle.
- Be alert for rough ground, large pieces of litter, culvert holes, rocks, tree stumps, utility boxes, and guide wires on utility poles.
- If you get stuck in a ditch, don't rev the engine and pop the clutch. Try backing out. If you can only go forwards, you may have to dig out in front of the rear wheels and use a low gear while letting out the clutch slowly and applying the brake on the spinning tire.

## **What about operating on slopes?**

- When starting up a hill, let the clutch out slowly. Popping it can cause the mower to tip backwards. You might even want to back up the hill.
- If the tractor does start to tip, steer the front wheels downhill to increase stability and help prevent an overturn.
- Keep the tractor in gear while going downhill and let the engine act as a brake to slow it down. Use both brake pedals if necessary and never take the tractor out of gear.

*Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.*