STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Tractor Operation SOP

Document no.	SOP-AGR-004
Revision	1.0
Owner	Farm Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To operate tractors safely and prevent rollovers, entanglement and equipment damage through consistent pre-checks, safe driving practices and shutdown steps.

2. Scope

Applies to operating any farm tractor and attaching or using its implements. Pesticide application settings and harvest equipment are covered by their own SOPs.

Definitions

ROPS	Rollover protective structure, the frame on a tractor designed to protect the operator in a rollover.
PTO	Power take-off, the rotating shaft that transfers power from the tractor to an attached implement.
Three-point contact	Keeping three of four limbs on the tractor's steps and handholds while mounting or dismounting.

3. Responsibilities

Equipment Operator	Inspects the tractor before use, operates it safely, and reports defects immediately.
Farm Manager	Confirms operator training, schedules maintenance, and reviews incident and defect reports.
Mechanic	Repairs reported defects and signs off that the tractor is safe to return to service.

RACI matrix

Activity	Equipment Operator	Farm Manager	Mechanic
Complete the pre-operation inspection	R/A	I	-
Attach and check implements	R/A	I	C
Operate the tractor safely	R/A	A	-
Report and repair a defect	R	A	R
Confirm operator training before first use	C	R/A	-

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Pre-operation inspection checklist
- Tractor operator's manual
- Implement attachment pins and safety chains
- Fire extinguisher mounted on the tractor
- Equipment defect and maintenance log

Personal protective equipment

- Seatbelt use at all times when ROPS is in place
- Hearing protection where required
- Sturdy closed-toe boots
- High-visibility clothing where required

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Walk around and inspect the tractor** Before starting, walk around the tractor checking tires, fluid levels, lights, the PTO shield and any visible leaks or damage. **Checkpoint:** The walk-around inspection is completed and any defect found is noted before the tractor is started.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.2	**Confirm ROPS and seatbelt are in place** Confirm the rollover protective structure is upright and secured, and that the seatbelt is functional before mounting the tractor. **Warning:** Never operate a tractor with the ROPS folded down or removed, and never skip the seatbelt when ROPS is in place.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.3	**Mount the tractor using three-point contact** Use the steps and handholds to mount and dismount facing the tractor, keeping three points of contact at all times. **Warning:** Never jump on or off a tractor, and never use the tires or a moving part as a step.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.4	**Attach implements correctly** Attach the implement using the correct pins and safety chains, and confirm the hitch and PTO connection are fully secured before engaging power.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.5	**Check PTO shields and guards** Confirm all PTO shields and guards are in place and undamaged before engaging the PTO shaft to power an implement. **Warning:** Never operate a PTO shaft with a missing or damaged shield. Entanglement injuries can happen in seconds.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.6	**Start the tractor from the operator's seat** Start the engine only from the operator's seat with the transmission in neutral or park and the PTO disengaged.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.7	**Check surroundings before moving** Look around and behind the tractor for people, animals or obstacles before putting it into motion, using mirrors where fitted.	Equipment Operator	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.8	**Operate at a safe speed for the terrain** Match speed to the terrain, slowing on slopes, uneven ground or near ditches, and avoid sharp turns at speed that could cause a rollover. **Checkpoint:** Speed is reduced on slopes and uneven ground before the tractor enters that section.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.9	**Never carry extra riders** Operate the tractor with only the operator on board unless it is fitted with an approved passenger seat, since extra riders risk falling or being run over. **Warning:** Never allow an extra rider on a tractor unless it has a factory-approved passenger seat.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.10	**Refuel safely** Shut off the engine and let it cool before refueling, and refuel away from open flames or hot exhaust components.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.11	**Shut down and secure the tractor after use** Lower any attached implement to the ground, disengage the PTO, set the parking brake, shut off the engine, and remove the key before dismounting. **Checkpoint:** The implement is lowered, PTO disengaged and parking brake set before the operator leaves the seat.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.12	**Report any defect found during use** Report any fault noticed during operation, such as a warning light, unusual noise or steering issue, on the equipment defect log before the tractor is used again.	Equipment Operator	☐
5.13	**Repair and clear reported defects** The mechanic inspects and repairs reported defects and signs off the log to confirm the tractor is safe before it returns to service.	Mechanic	☐

6. Quality checks

- Pre-operation inspection is completed and logged before each day's first use.
- ROPS and seatbelt are confirmed in place and used on every operation.
- PTO shields and guards are in place before the PTO is engaged.
- Reported defects are repaired and signed off before the tractor returns to service.

7. Records

- Pre-operation inspection checklist
- Equipment defect and maintenance log
- Operator training sign-off sheet

8. KPIs

- Percent of pre-operation inspections completed before use
- Tractor-related incidents or near-misses per season
- Average time from defect report to repair
- Operator training completion rate

9. Common mistakes

- Skipping the walk-around inspection when in a hurry to start work.
- Operating with the ROPS folded down for low clearance without raising it again afterward.
- Carrying an extra rider without an approved passenger seat.
- Engaging the PTO with a missing or damaged shield.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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