

## Safety Tips for Tractor Loading and Towing<sup>1</sup>

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### Towing Equipment

- Make sure that the tractor is properly counterweighted and that all attachments are secure and properly mounted.
- Avoid operating attachments during road travel, and keep the power-takeoff lever in neutral.
- Make sure that the tractor is large enough to handle its load and hitch the load only to the tractor's drawbar hitch points. The drawbar is designed for pulling heavy loads without the risk of a backward overturn. If the load is hitched any higher, the tractor can overturn quickly by rotating around the rear axle.
- When towing equipment without brakes, keep speed under 20 miles per hour.
- Towed equipment should have brakes if, when fully loaded, it weighs more than one and a half times the weight of the towing unit. Stopping distances increase with speed and as the weight of towed loads increases, as well as on hills and slopes.
- When towing equipment with brakes, stay below 25 miles per hour.
- Equipment that weighs more than 4.5 times the weight of the towing unit should not be towed.

*Remember:*



Figure 1.

### Front-End Loaders

Front-end loaders can make tractors unstable and subject to side overturns.

- When using a tractor with a front-end loader, use wide wheel settings and add rear weights as needed.
- Travel with the bucket in a low position and at low speeds, especially when turning or traveling on rough and slippery terrain.

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- Avoid fast starts and stops which can cause the loader to rock, possibly shifting weight or loads dangerously.

## Loading and Unloading Tractors

When loading a tractor onto a trailer or truck, always load it on level, stable ground. Make sure that the truck or trailer cannot move by setting the brakes or blocking the wheels or both. Whenever possible, slowly back the tractor onto the truck or trailer. Check to see if anyone is behind the tractor or near the trailer during loading and unloading.

- Make sure ramps are clear of mud, grease, or debris. Make sure they are secure.
- Lock the brakes on the tractor and secure it to the trailer with chains and load binders.
- Fasten chains and lock and wire load binders so that they can open.
- If possible, someone nearby should guide the tractor operator with hand signals.
- Check the owner's manual for specific recommendations.

### For more information...

For more information about tractor safety, visit the Florida AgSafe Web site:  
<http://www.flagsafe.ufl.edu>

The following publications are available at your county Extension office and at the EDIS Web site, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>. (IFAS Publication Numbers are in parentheses after the titles.)

- Get Started on the Right Foot: Dangers of Bypass Starting (ABE299) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE173>.)
- Filling Gas Cans Safely (ABE301) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE174>.)
- Lighting and Marking Farm Equipment for Road Travel -- Summary of ASAE Standard S279.10 (ABE302) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE175>.)

- Road Safety for Tractors (ABE303) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE176>.)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Rollover Protective Structures (ROPS) (ABE304) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE177>.)
- Avoid The Invisible Hazard: Know About Soil Shear Lines (ABE305) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE178>.)
- Shortcuts are Shortsighted! or Invest Seconds, Save Lives (ABE306) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE179>.)
- Ready or Not? Get Ready with a Tractor Operator Checklist (ABE307) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE180>.)
- Yee-Haa! Formula for a Successful Tractor Rodeo (ABE308) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE181>.)
- Hand-me-down Hazards: Dangers of Used Equipment (ABE309) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE182>.)
- Safety Tips for Tractor Loading and Towing (ABE310) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE183>.)
- Safer Tractor Operations for Agricultural Employers (Circular 1249) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE195>.)
- Safer Tractor Operations for Privately Owned and Operated Farms and Ranches (Circular 1250) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE196>.)
- Safer Tractor Operations for Acreages and Homeowners (Circular 1251) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE197>.)
- Safer Tractor Operations for Landscape Maintenance and Horticultural Industries (Circular 1252) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE198>.)
- Safer Tractor Operations for Emergency and Rescue Personnel (Circular 1253) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE199>.)

- Safer Tractor Operations for Farm Workers and Employees (Circular 1254) (View this publication at: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AE200>.)