

# Spot The Safety Violation: How to Prevent Tractor Rollovers



Why do you think this tractor rolled over'and what do you think happened to the worker who was on it at the time'



March 12-18, 2017 is Agricultural Safety Week in Canada. Workers on farms, ranches, etc. face many safety hazards, such as the use of powered mobile equipment, including tractors. If this equipment isn't used properly, it can rollover and crush the worker operating it. A fatality is even more likely if the tractor doesn't have a rollover protective structure (ROPS).

This still photo, which is taken from a video from WorkSafeBC, shows the aftermath of an incident in which a tractor rolled over, killing the farm worker who'd been operating it.

The experienced worker had been transporting a bin full of apples. The loaded bin weighed about 360 kilograms and was being carried on the tractor's rear fork attachment or 'bin lift.' As the tractor reached the bottom of a 32% slope, the worker turned sharply, causing the tractor to overturn. The subsequent investigation of this tragedy found that the factory-installed ROPS had been removed from the tractor.

## SAFE WORK PRACTICES FOR PREVENTING ROLLOVERS

Ideally, rollovers should never happen. But because a rollover may occur despite your best efforts'and because the heavy equipment involved can easily kill its operator during a rollover'the OHS laws require employers to take steps to protect workers in that event. For example, you can implement safe work practices such as these:

- Carry out a risk assessment of the hazards associated with operating tractors. Inform workers of the hazards and risks.
- Ensure that a tractor is equipped with a ROPS when operated in these circumstances:

- on slopes greater than 20% (the slope involved in the incident pictured was 32%)
- on roads less than twice the width of the tractor and with sloping edges or shoulders that would permit a rollover
- wherever a rollover risk exists.
- Ask the dealer or manufacturer about fitting an older tractor with a ROPS. You should install ROPSs if your type of mobile equipment requires them under the OHS laws. You should also install ROPS if your risk assessment identified rollover as a potential hazard.
- Make sure the ROPS you install on a tractor meets the requirements spelled out in the OHS regulations or any cited voluntary standards. For example, the ROPS may need to be certified by the manufacturer or a professional engineer as meeting the designated requirements. In addition, it may need to have safety glass and certain labels.
- Ensure the tractor is equipped with a seatbelt and that tractor operators always wear seatbelts. If wearing a seatbelt is impracticable due to the job, type of equipment or how it's operated (such as from a standing position), provide an alternate safety measures, such as a shoulder strap, gate or screen.
- Ensure that workers operating tractors are properly trained.
- Bar workers from operating tractors sideways across a slope unless travelling on a level road or trail.
- Regularly inspect your tractor and its components, including the ROPS and seatbelts, for any defects, damage or other issues that could impact its safe operation.