

## Safe Driving Around Farm Equipment

The agricultural industry is one of the largest employers in North Carolina. Slow-moving agricultural equipment can be found in all parts of the state, including suburban areas. Caution should be taken when sharing the road with farm equipment.

Most of the crashes that involve farm equipment occur on a clear day, during daylight hours, and/or on a dry surface that is paved. Typical crashes with farm equipment include sideswipes and angle crashes.

These types of crashes typically occur while farm equipment is turning left and another automobile attempts to pass. In some cases, a machinery operator uses a left hand signal, and drivers may mistake this as a sign for them to pass. When the farm machinery slows to make the turn, the automobile following attempts to pass and crashes with the equipment. It is important to know that many farm machinery operators use hand signals to warn other drivers when they are turning or stopping.

When sharing the road with farm equipment, you must obey the rules of the road. It is illegal and very dangerous to pass farm equipment in a no passing zone. Farm equipment may be wider than what is visible from behind and may require ample space in both lanes. Furthermore, it may also be difficult to see traffic approaching in the opposite direction.

The key to safety when sharing the road with farm equipment is to be patient. If farm equipment is causing a delay in traffic, the operator should move off the road at the nearest practical location and allow the traffic to pass. This is the only advisable time to pass farm equipment on public roads.

During the harvesting and planting seasons, farmers work longer hours and are often on the road in the early morning and evening hours. Farm equipment is required to have one front white light as well as a rear red light that is visible for up to 500 feet. Two red reflectors that are at least four inches in diameter can replace the rear red light.

*Remember, when approaching farm equipment the closure time is much quicker because of the slow speed of the equipment. Always approach farm equipment with care.*

Farm equipment is legally entitled to travel on most roads in North Carolina (except interstates).

## Crashes

### If a crash seems possible:

- sound the horn;
- keep to the right;
- turn away from oncoming traffic, even if you must leave the road; and/or
- drive off the road, into an open field if possible.

### If you are about to be hit from the rear, and there are no vehicles in front of you:

- press the accelerator and move away as quickly as possible;
- be ready to apply your brakes if there is no room to move;
- brace yourself between the steering wheel and the seat; and
- press the back of your head firmly against the head rest.

### If you are about to be hit from the side:

- keep a tight grip on the steering wheel; and
- prepare to turn fast so that you can try to control the car.

### If you are about to be hit from the front:

- use your arms and hands to protect your face from breaking glass; and
- throw yourself against the seat to keep from hitting the steering wheel or windshield.

### In the event you are involved in a crash:

- You must stop the car immediately — if you do not stop, you have violated the law.
- Take precautions to prevent further crashes at the scene.



**STOP**



Division of Motor Vehicles  
North Carolina  
Department of Transportation

# Driver's Handbook



**REST  
AREA**



Division of Motor Vehicles  
North Carolina Department of Transportation  
1100 New Bern Avenue  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27697-0001  
[www.dmv.dot.state.nc.us](http://www.dmv.dot.state.nc.us)

500,000 copies of this publication were printed at an estimated cost of \$157,110.00  
or 31¢ a copy.