

## SUMMER AG SAFETY SERIES

# EQUIPMENT SAFETY



When was the last time you refreshed yourself on farm equipment safety procedures? Even if you have been farming for decades, it's still good to look at the latest recommendations and check to make sure you're not skimming over anything important. The following is some important information from the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health.

### Pre-operation inspection

Arguably the most important part of equipment safety is the pre-operation inspection, for which you can use the acronym T-CLOC:

- **T – Tires and wheels** – Check the air pressure and condition of the tires, and look for problems with the rim bolts, axel nuts and wheel bearings.
- **C – Controls and cables** – Check the operation of all the controls, including brakes, steering and shifter.
- **L – Lights and electronics** – Make sure your lights, ignition switch, gauges and instruments are working correctly.
- **O – Oil, fuel and air filter** – Check that your oil filter is clean, inspect the vehicle for leaks, and check oil, fuel and coolant levels.
- **C – Chassis, suspension, driveshaft and external equipment** – Lastly, check the underside of the vehicle and that all toolboxes are secured and in good repair. Check the suspension to make sure nothing is loose and the shocks are operating correctly.

### Operating safety

After the pre-operation inspection, of course, it's important to use your equipment in the way the manufacturer intended. After all, if the operator is careless, it doesn't matter if you have safe equipment. Follow these tips to avoid injury or death:

- Shut down the motor before cleaning or working on the blades.
- Wear tight-fitting garments and gloves and restrain long hair.
- Wait until the tractor is stopped before stepping into the hitching area, and signal others when it is safe.
- Shut off power before attempting to clear plugged equipment, and use lockout/tag out when appropriate.
- Take care when releasing the spring so it does not hit you or other people.
- Use cardboard or mirrors when checking for leaks in the hydraulic system; never use your hands.

### Tractor safety

As you drive tractors on roads with other, faster vehicles, keep these safety precautions in mind:

- Have a slow-moving vehicle sign on the tractor.
- Use a rollover protective structure.
- Always wear a seatbelt.
- Perform regular maintenance.
- Never leave a tractor engine running.

Your equipment is meant to help you — not hurt you. Make sure you're a responsible operator.