

# Sharing the road with farm equipment? Pay attention and stay safe!

Over half of the 1,271 miles of roads maintained by Washington County's Department of Land Use and Transportation are in rural settings. Scenic two-lane roads wind through farms, forests, nurseries and vineyards. Due to population growth, more high-speed traffic now travels on roads not designed for that kind of traffic.

Motorists traveling Washington County's rural roads may find themselves sharing the road with large, slow-moving farm equipment. Not recognizing slow-moving vehicles, or simply not being aware of them until it is too late, is a leading cause of collisions.

How can you recognize farm vehicles? According to the Oregon Drivers Manual, farm machinery and equipment that

travels at 25 mph or less must display a slow-moving vehicle emblem on the rear when traveling on public roads. As a motorist, you must be prepared to slow down when you see this triangular sign with a red reflectorized border and a fluorescent orange-red center. Some farm vehicles may also display flashing yellow lights.

They're so big and slow, how could you possibly rear-end a farm vehicle? Consider this: A car traveling 55 mph requires about 224 feet to stop on dry pavement, assuming average reaction time and braking. A car traveling 55 mph can close a 300-foot gap (the length of a football field) and overtake a tractor moving at 15 mph in about five seconds. If you do not begin to slow as soon as

you see a farm vehicle, you might not have time to avoid a collision.

The most common accident occurs when a slow-moving farm vehicle is turning left. Although a tractor may appear to be stopping beside the road or turning right, it might actually be turning left. The farmer is swinging wide to line up with a gate or driveway; the driver behind the farmer may think the farmer is pulling over to let the driver pass. Look for gates, driveways or access roads on the left side of the road that may indicate a left turn.

How and when is it safe to pass farm equipment? It is illegal and very dangerous to pass farm equipment in a no passing zone. Pass only when the road ahead is clear and there is ei-

ther a dashed yellow line on your side of the road or a dashed white line. When passing, be extra cautious. Tractors and other farm equipment may be wider than they look from behind and may require ample space in both lanes.

ODOT's Crash Analysis and Reporting Unit reports that in the five-year period from 2003 through 2007, Oregon experienced 151 crashes involving farm equipment; 112 people were injured and 10 people died. Eight of those crashes and one death occurred on Washington County's roads. Almost two-thirds of Washington County's crashes were rear-end crashes or crashes during

turning movements. Most crashes took place on a weekday, during the day, on dry pavement. The most frequent day of the week for crashes involving farm equipment in Washington County was Wednesday.

The keys to safety when sharing the road with farm equipment are caution and patience. A farmer understands that your trip is being delayed, so he or she will pull off the road at the first available safe location to allow you to pass.

For more information, see the Oregon Farm Bureau's publication Rural Road Safety online: [http://www.oregonfb.org/images/pdf/Road\\_Safety.pdf](http://www.oregonfb.org/images/pdf/Road_Safety.pdf).

## Learn how to buy a home in "Homebuying A to Z"

Open Door Counseling Center of Hillsboro will be offering a HUD certified first-time homebuyer group class, HOMEBUYING A to Z, on Saturday, September 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The class will be held at the Beaverton Resource Center, 12500 SW Allen Blvd., Beaverton. Anyone who has not owned a home in the last three years is considered a first-time homebuyer. The \$8,000 tax credit for first-time homebuyers will be explained, as well as the no down payment USDA rural housing development program, which has recently expanded qualified areas.

There is no fee for attendees to this program. The cost of tuition is funded by government grants, sponsor support and private donations.

Financial assistance programs provide homebuyers with potentially thousands of dollars for down payment and

many of the class segments. They offer their expertise as a community service.

Topics to be covered include qualifying for down payment/closing cost assistance programs, understanding credit scores, the no down payment



closing cost relief. Completion of this class earns the participant a Certificate of Completion, which is a requirement for many such programs.

Industry professionals teach

USDA rural housing development program, financial preparation, understanding mortgages, shopping for a home, home inspections, home insurance, the closing process, foreclosure prevention, energy efficient housing and post purchase guidance.

Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Contact Joan Perry at 503-748-0412, email [jperry@opendoorcc.net](mailto:jperry@opendoorcc.net), or register on-line at [www.opendoorcc.net](http://www.opendoorcc.net).

Special classes will be offered, by appointment only, on weekdays at our facility in Hillsboro/Cornelius.



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