

Rural Roads are more Hazardous

By Farm Safety For Just Kids

Rural roadways can be danger zones for both farm machinery and those sharing the road if both aren't careful. You're 2.5 times more likely to die in an accident in rural areas.

There are unique factors to driving on rural roads. Large, slow moving machinery are common. Gravel and soft shoulders can be challenging. Wildlife is a concern. It's critical for everyone to take an active role in safety on rural roads.

In the U.S. a teen dies in a traffic accident once every two hours, but on the weekend that jumps to one teen fatality per hour. Youth present unique challenges to rural roads. A driver's license is not required for youth to drive machinery on public roads if they are conducting farm operations. These youth may not have the skill that comes with experience. As a result, they may not be able to predict and prevent an accident.

Following a few safety tips while driving farm machinery and standard vehicles can save your life on rural roads.

Farm machinery operations

- Train youth in safe operation of machinery
- Be a role model
- Make sure slow-moving vehicle signs are installed and easily seen
- Ensure the machinery is in good working order, including lights and brakes
- Wear seat belts and equip all tractors with rollover protective structures (ROPS)

Standard vehicle operators

- Always wear seat belts and insist passengers do as well
- Drive cautiously and within the speed limit
- Exercise patience when behind a slow moving vehicle
- Pass only when certain the road is clear
- Teach youth defensive and safe driving
- Never let people ride in the bed of a pickup