

Watch out for slow-moving farm equipment

Harvest season is officially underway, which means more slow-moving farm equipment will be on Indiana's rural roads. To keep Hoosiers safe this year, state agencies are asking motorists to be alert, patient and responsible, as they share the road with these large vehicles.

"With more than 14 million acres of farmland, this is a busy time of the year for Indiana and our rural roadways," said Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, Indiana's Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development. "We want to encourage every motorist to be aware and exercise caution around farm equipment this season."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, farm equipment vehicles (not including trucks) were involved in 92 fatal crashes across the U.S. last year - with six of those incidents occurring in Indiana.

While the term "farm equipment" encompasses a wide range of vehicles, the most com-

mon types motorists will encounter include combines, tractors pulling grain carts and large trucks hauling agricultural products.

"Chances are, you'll see farmers on the road before they see you, so it's important to know what to do when approaching these vehicles," said Bruce Kettler, Indiana State Department of Agriculture director. "Patience and allowing extra time for your travels is crucial to keeping everyone safe."

The following list includes several safety tips provided by the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Be Alert

Watch for wide vehicles, especially when approaching curves and hills in the road.

Look for a reflective red triangle on the back of any farm equipment on the road. This symbol indicates a slow-moving vehicle, one that travels under 25 mph.

Avoid texting and talking on the phone while driving.

Be Patient

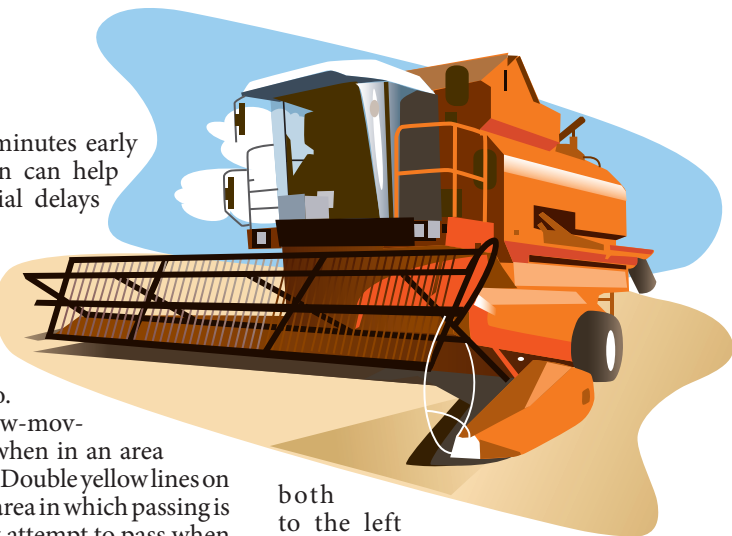
Leaving home 10 minutes early during harvest season can help eliminate any potential delays during the commute.

Most farmers will pull over when they are able to let you pass, but it may take time for them to get to a safe place to do so.

Only pass large, slow-moving farm equipment when in an area that allows for passing. Double yellow lines on a roadway indicate an area in which passing is not permitted. Do not attempt to pass when within 100 feet of any intersection, railroad crossing, bridge or tunnel.

Be Responsible

Look for hand signals before attempting to pass the vehicle. The size of farm equipment often dictates the necessity for wide turns,



both to the left and the right. Just because a tractor veers right does not mean the operator is pulling over to allow someone to pass.

Avoid tailgating, as some farm equipment might have to make sudden stops along the road.

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