

Tractor roll-over protection structures (ROPS) - Requirements

June 2017

Purpose of the fact sheet

This fact sheet highlights to farmers, farm managers and farm equipment operators:

- the legal requirements for roll-over protection structures (ROPS) on tractors
- the dangers of operating tractors that don't have ROPS

Background

Tractor roll-overs continue to be one of the most common causes of death and injuries on farms. Tractor operators are most at risk of injury when:

- their tractor does not have ROPS
- the operator does not wear fitted seatbelts
- equipment is poorly maintained
- working on sloping terrain
- working on rough, slick or muddy surfaces
- towing or pulling objects or loads
- travelling through pastures where high vegetation can obscure stumps and/or pot holes
- working near dams, ditches, irrigation channels, embankments or over hanging structures

Recommendations

To provide the highest level of protection to people operating tractors, fit a ROPS to your tractor or upgrade machinery to a vehicle fitted with ROPS. Changes in ROPS design make them available in many configurations, including fold-down.

When using a tractor, ensure that:

- ROPS that have been temporarily removed or lowered are reinstated:
 - prior to using the plant at another location at the workplace
 - once the task for which it was lowered/removed is completed
- the tractor is operated within the manufacturer's recommendations for the task and any fitted implements
- the tractor is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- counter weight and/or ballast are fitted where needed

General safety requirements to prevent tractor roll-overs include:

- when pulling heavy loads, never hitch above the centre line of the axle
- if using a tractor to tow another vehicle, consider hitching to the front drawbar and using reverse gear (to eliminate the potential for the tractor to backflip)
- engage the clutch gently when starting up a hill or towing
- steer uphill when turning on slopes
- use wide wheel settings and correct ballast

Caution: Drilling and /or welding of rollover protective frames by unqualified persons to fit ancillary equipment can render the frame unsafe and non-compliant.

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

Under regulation 111 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 an employer must ensure that a tractor is not used at the employer's workplace unless it is fitted with roll-over protection. This regulation applies to a tractor that conveys its power directly to the ground by wheels.

This Regulation does not apply to:

1. A tractor manufactured in, or imported into, Victoria before 1 July 1981, if it is not reasonably practicable to fit roll-over protection to the tractor.
 - If a commercially manufactured ROPS is available for the tractor. WorkSafe Victoria considers it reasonably practicable to have ROPS installed on older plant.
2. A tractor used at a workplace in circumstances in which there is no likelihood of the tractor overturning.
 - This exclusion generally applies to stationary plant used for activity such as pumping and where the plant is not used with any attachments or at any other location on the property.
3. A tractor that is fitted with roll-over protection that has been temporarily removed or lowered for the period during which it is being used under a tree or other vegetation or in another place where there is insufficient space for the tractor to operate effectively while the roll-over protection is fitted.
 - This exclusion only applies while using the tractor in these circumstances. As soon as the tractor is being used in a place that has sufficient space, the ROPS should be reinstated.
 - Short distance travel for the purpose of gaining access to or from an orchard or for the purpose of accessing plant maintenance or storage facilities is permitted where there is no likelihood of the tractor overturning. In the absence of ROPS, the duty holders should identify and control hazards. It helps to document controls as these may be of assistance to employees during training and induction.
4. A tractor weighing less than 560 kilograms, the weight being taken in the lightest form in which the tractor is normally available for retail sale when new and without water, fuel or lubricating oil.

Further information

WorkSafe Advisory Service

Toll-free **1800 136 089**

Email **info@worksafe.vic.gov.au**

Website **www.worksafe.vic.gov.au**

General health and safety advice and WorkSafe publications are available on WorkSafe's Website **www.worksafe.vic.gov.au** and can also be obtained from the WorkSafe Advisory Service by phone Toll-free **1800 136 089** or by emailing **info@worksafe.vic.gov.au**

The material has been prepared using the best information available to WorkSafe Victoria. Any information about legislative obligations or responsibilities included in this material is only applicable to the circumstances described in this material. You should always check the legislation referred to in this material to ensure that you have complied with the law. Accordingly WorkSafe Victoria extends no warranties as to the suitability of the information for your specific circumstances.

This guidance has been reviewed and updated for the sole purpose of amending year and regulation references relating to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, in line with amendments which came into effect on 18 June 2017.