

## Spring Driving Safety Tips

Brooke Beam, Ph.D.

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*Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblems are used on farm machinery to warn approaching motorists to slow down and use caution.*

Spring has arrived in Highland County with many blooming trees, warmer weather, and outdoor activities. Increased outdoor activities also bring increased concerns for the safe operation of vehicles on roadways.

Many farmers are working in their fields and will have large pieces of machinery on the roads over the next few weeks. Drivers, of all kinds of vehicles, should be cautious and use good judgment while on the roadways.

According to research from the Committee on Agricultural Safety and Health Research and Extension, crash fatalities in rural counties are almost double the rate of fatalities in urban areas. The study found that traffic accidents in rural areas involving motor vehicles and farm implements generally involve higher rates of speed from cars or trucks. The report also found that farm machinery operators were killed nearly twice as often as the operator of the non-farm vehicles in on-road accidents.

Drivers of a non-farm motor vehicle can follow the following driving tips to avoid accidents with farm machinery this spring:

1. Slow down when you see a piece of farm machinery
2. Keep your eyes on the road
3. Be aware of Slow Moving Vehicle emblem (SMV)
4. Watch for flashing amber lights
5. Pass farm machinery with caution and only when you are sure the farm machinery operator is moving over to let you pass
6. Do not drive under sprayers or in-between pieces of machinery

Operators of farm machinery can follow the following driving tips to avoid accidents with farm machinery this spring:

1. Make sure all safety lights are operational
2. Keep flashing lights on when on the roadway in the daytime and nighttime
3. Have someone follow you in a car or truck with the hazard lights flashing
4. Watch the oncoming traffic and be aware of the traffic behind you.

It would take less than 6.5 seconds for a car traveling 60 mph to hit a tractor traveling 20 mph, 400 feet ahead of the car. In conclusion, be cognizant of others on the roadways. As we share the roads with agricultural machinery this spring, slow down and watch for vehicles of all shapes and sizes.

For information about SMV emblem mounting, contact the Highland County Extension office at 937-393-1918 or go to <https://agsafety.osu.edu/smv-emblem>.

References: Committee on Agricultural Safety and Health Research and Extension. 2009. Agricultural Equipment on Public Roads. USDA-CSREES, Washington, DC.

## Leadership Highland

The Highland County Extension Office is in the process of re-establishing Leadership Highland. If you are a previous facilitator or graduate, and are interested in assisting with the new Leadership Highland program, please contact Brooke Beam at 937-393-1018 or [beam.49@osu.edu](mailto:beam.49@osu.edu). If you are interested in participating in the new class, look forward to more information coming soon.

## Follow Us on Social Media

The Ohio State University Extension Office in Highland County has joined social media! Please follow our accounts for updates on Extension programming.

 [fb.me/OSUExtHighland](https://fb.me/OSUExtHighland)

 [@OSUExtHighland](https://twitter.com/OSUExtHighland)

 [OSUExtHighland](https://www.instagram.com/OSUExtHighland)

## Upcoming Events

**Trees on Tap** will be held at The Ohio State University Mansfield campus on May 23, 2018. Trees on Tap is a program designed to encourage better tree education and care. Topics of the day will highlight the marvels and challenges of tree growth today. The event will be held at The Ohio State University Mansfield campus. Registration is \$40.00, and participants can register at <https://woodlandstewards.osu.edu/events/trees-tap>

Fayette County Master Gardener Volunteers will be hosting a **Daylily Show** on Saturday, June 30, 2018. The event is open to the public and exhibitors. There will be cash awards and multiple prize categories. The event will be held at the Agricultural Service Center at 1415 U.S. Rt. 22 SW, Washington C.H., Ohio 43160. The event will begin at 9:00 A.M. and conclude at noon. More details can be found at [fayette.osu.edu](http://fayette.osu.edu). Additional questions can be directed to Sara Creamer at [cream.70@osu.edu](mailto:cream.70@osu.edu) or by phone at 740-335-1150.



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