

GUIDELINES FOR TRACTOR OPERATION

ISSUE NO.: 2.

Date of Issue: April 2002: 1.0 and 2.0 amended July 2007.

1.0 PREAMBLE

Please read these statistics: Accidents can happen to YOU!! In recent years more people have been killed by tractors than any other piece of rural machinery. Nearly nine out of every ten people killed on farms die as a result of accidents involving tractors. One in every four people killed in tractor accidents are children under the age of 16 years. Ninety percent of tractor accidents occurred at less than eight kilometres and hour. Seventy-five percent of the operators involved in these accidents had more than five years experience on tractors. Sixty percent of all accidents occurred on slopes of less than five degrees. A tractor can roll over in half a second.

2.0 GENERAL

Safety in historic tractor displays and pulls in Australia is one in which all associated parties need to think about before serious accidents occur or the external (Government or Insurance Industry) regulators take and interest. Indeed the matter of Roll Over Protection (ROPS) frames is a prime example with the recent Victorian Workcover move to mandate them on all tractors. However, Victorian collectors have been successful in receiving specific exemption from ROPS for historic tractors under display.

The risk of potential problems increases with the increased interest in tractor collecting and the trend towards collecting tractors by many people who are relatively inexperienced operators of the same. An experienced operator may well save a tractor from turning over during a pull when front wheel lift becomes critical but we cannot rely upon that experience.

Quite simply we must act to minimise the reliance on driver skills by sensible safety practices. Some ideas for consideration are (noting that some of these ideas are still difficult to define and apply but may form a basis for further discussion): (Please refer to the NHMA Tractor Pull Guidelines that will apply from 31st July, 2007)

- A limit on maximum drawbar height has been set.
- Operators and officials are the only persons permitted within the pulling track compound, which must be fenced and sign posted to exclude any member of the public. Parked tractors to be secured to prevent accidental rolling; touching a running tractor or accidentally starting a stationary tractor. All tractors must have a clutch that releases correctly, an engine stop control that can be operated from the drivers seating position, and safe practices are required to ensure the hitch/unhitch staff are not at risk when hooking and unhooking the pulling sled. (Please refer to NHMA Tractor Pull Guidelines)
- The rally ground may be regarded as a public place. This requires some form of access approval from the authorities (e.g. registration, permit, etc.). Generally, all tractors driven in a public place must have with a necessary permit or club registration. This is a normal requirement of law. Indeed the insurance companies have indicated that “in this case a motor propelled machine which a State Motor Transport Authority defines as a vehicle would need to be registered by law. Where this applies and the vehicle is not so registered then your Public Liability Insurance will not respond”. However, if they are unloaded, loaded and driven in an area which is fenced off from the public they may not need to have a permit or club registration. A motor propelled machine includes traction engines and models that can be driven. Clubs should check the legal requirements in their local area.

- All drivers are to be licenced and insured. As equipment such as tractors and the like are classed a heavy machinery, some States have regulated that the minimum age of a heavy machinery driver is 18 years of age. In addition, there is no provision for “L” plate drivers.
- Children are NOT permitted to drive a tractor in any tractor pull.

3.0 UNLOADING AND LOADING

It is recommended that a loading ramp be provided to allow for two heights of tray truck to safely load or unload. It is also desirable to have a tandem trailer height ramp. All ramps to be of solid construction and regularly maintained.

Loading and unloading of tractors will be carried out in a safe manner on the loading ramps provided, or by the transports own ramps which must be of adequate construction for the tractor being carried.

4.0 STATIONARY DISPLAYS

DISPLAYS MUST BE FENCED TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC. Ensure public cannot accidentally start a stationary tractor. The public and especially children **MUST NOT** climb onto the tractors. If PTO shaft is operating it must have a protective cover for the full length of the drive shaft. No tractor may be left running unattended by the owner unless in a fenced off area with a responsible club member in attendance. Respective owners must advise the attendant on how to stop the engine.

Rotary hoes and slashes must be disengaged unless they are being demonstrated in the enclosed area.

5.0 PARADES ON “PUBLIC PLACES”

All tractors must be in a safe working condition and be registered or have a permit. The speed of a tractor at a club function or parade must not be greater than walking speed (approximately 8km/hr). The Public Liability Insurance cover from the NHMA does **NOT** respond to ‘property damage’ on a public place. Owners should take out ‘third party property’ or comprehensive insurance if they wish to have cover on public places.

6.0 TRACTOR PULLS

6.1 GENERAL

The NHMA is concerned about the safety of participants, officials and members of the public. Clubs organising such events are expected to adhere to the NHMA Tractor Pull Guidelines 2007 and participants are expected to abide by those guidelines.

It is important that tractor pulls remain fun, and have the chance to try out the treasured toy, rather become a competition for trophies at any cost.

A tractor modified for performance so that it is not in its standard form is not part of a historic tractor pull and is not included within the existing insurance arrangements. There should be other arrangements made for these types of vehicles. High performance tractor and truck pulling really belongs to the motor sport fraternity and should be controlled by the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS), not the National Historical Machinery Association (NHMA).

6.2 THE TRACK

The pulling track is to be fenced along all sides. This should include space between the pull track and spectators. The distance between fencing should be between 8 and 12 metres in width with the length to suit the sled in use.

The pulling track must be safe and free of areas such as deep mud holes which might contribute to unexpected turn-overs.

6.3 SAFETY

Ensure public are denied access to pull site. Tractors must be separated from the public by a fence of type suitable to restrain the public from the track.

All tractors must be submitted to a safety check by the club's Safety Officer/Committee. Safety Officers/Committees will have the FINAL say in all safety matters. Entrants' tractors may be inspected by a Safety Officer/Committee Member at any time for safe operation.

Safe practices to be followed to ensure hitch and unhitch staff are not at risk when hooking and unhooking the pulling sled.

Never fuel a tractor with the engine running.

No loose objects on the tractor, especially fuel containers.

No dismounting from moving vehicles.

The driver must demonstrate competency in tractor operation.

Drivers MUST attend a driver's briefing at the start of the pull.

An adequate first aid kit and knapsacks or fire extinguishers to CFA requirements must be on hand. It is considered appropriate that members, trained in the use of such equipment, will be in attendance.

The storage of combustible fuels shall be in an approved container and stored away from running engines.

Always start a tractor with a qualified person in the driver's seat. By sitting in the seat you can reach all the necessary controls, whereas, if you stand on the ground beside the tractor, you can only reach some of the controls.

A tractor has one seat to carry on person, the driver. Some may have an additional seat fitted as standard equipment. Riding on drawbars, three point linkages, carry alls or on foot flats is strictly prohibited.

Always get on and off a tractor from the left-hand side, looking from the rear unless the tractor design prevents this, in which case more care must be taken.

If there is a seat fitted on the tractor the driver must remain correctly seated at all times. NO passengers allowed on tractors. DRIVER ONLY during pulling.

Pulling will start and stop at the sound of a horn on a sled, or as signalled by a flagman.

Tractors must be in neutral and driver must have both hands raised to indicate neutral before hook up or unhooking occurs.

Track marshals are to be in control of pulling at all times.

Only the tractor driver and sled staff are to be on the track at any time.

INTENT OF SAFETY GUIDELINES

The intent of these guidelines is to provide a safe area for working exhibits with safe working practices, both for the operators and the general public. Exhibitors are advised that unsafe working practices will not be tolerated and that any exhibitor using unsafe working practices will be asked to shut down their exhibit. The exhibit may be restarted, at the discretion of the Safety Officer, if safe working practices are implemented to the satisfaction of the Safety Officer.