

Safety Tips for Agriculture Transport Vehicles

A large percentage of injuries to agricultural workers occur while they are being transported in vehicles from one location to another.

Incidents occur due to an unsafe condition of the transport vehicles or unsafe action of the driver. Employers and workers should be knowledgeable and follow all laws regulating farm worker transport vehicles and their drivers.

Regardless of who owns the vehicle, all farm worker transport vehicles must be registered with the California State Labor Commissioner by law. The vehicle must have a certification sticker and safety inspection sticker issue by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) or be subject to heavy fines.

Vehicles used must be in working condition. They are required to have a function a steering wheel, horn, door latches, and tires with adequate tread. The vehicle must have mirrors (rear-view and side), a clean windshield, and functioning windshield wipers in order to provide good visibility.

Windows should work and the exhaust system should discharge away from passengers to provide good ventilation. The body of the vehicle should be free of openings and rust areas that could cause injury. Also, the passenger load should not exceed the vehicle manufacturer's weight rating.

In addition, the vehicle must be equipped with a lap or lap and shoulder seatbelt assembly at each passenger seating position and all components must be in good condition. Seatbelts must be installed properly and vehicle approved, and not "improvised." Passengers also may not share a seatbelt.

Vehicle drivers must have a valid California driver's license approved for the class of vehicle that is used. Also, the driver must complete a driver-training course approved by the Department of Motor Vehicles and the California Highway Patrol. Safe speeds should always be maintained for the road, weather, and traffic conditions, also attention must be given to posted traffic signs and caution used while crossing lanes of traffic. Drivers need to stay focused on the road and not eat, talk to passengers or use the phone.

Lastly, drivers should not drive if they are sleepy or fatigued, and should never drive while under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

With a properly working transport vehicle and a licensed and careful driver, agricultural workers can be transported to the fields and home again safely.

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