

What this means...

The new law means that youth operating tractors or self-propelled machinery for their own family on public roads will be required to have certification. Persons violating may receive a \$20 fine for the first offense and fines not to exceed \$50 for each subsequent offense.

To provide youth with the necessary state and federal certification, the Wisconsin Safe Operation of Tractor and Machinery Certification programs are being offered throughout the state.



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Wisconsin Safe Operation of Tractor and Machinery Certification Program

An educational program to enhance the safety knowledge and skills for youth operating tractors and machinery on Wisconsin farms



The Law....

Since 1970, Part 570 of the Child Labor Regulations, Subpart E-1, has provided exemption related to hazardous tasks for youth age 14 to 15 for employment on farms other than those operated by their family through tractor and machinery certification programs.

Wisconsin Act 455

Effective July 1, 1997, no person may direct or permit a child under age 16 years to operate a farm tractor or self-propelled implement of husbandry on a public road unless the child has been certified as successfully completing a tractor and machinery certification course. This does not apply to operation of a farm tractor or self-propelled implement of husbandry on the road when crossing perpendicular to the direction of the road.

Youth must be 12 years of age to enroll in the training program.

Wisconsin *Safe* Operation of Tractor and Machinery Certification Program

This program will:

- ♦ provide youth 12 years of age with the necessary requirements to be certified for compliance under Wisconsin Act 455.
- ♦ meet the federal requirements for Part 570, Child Labor Regulations, Subpart E- 1 "Occupations in Agriculture Particularly Hazardous for Employment of Children under age 16".

The 24 hour program includes:

- ♦ hands on instruction for tractors and farm machinery operation;
- ♦ hazard recognition and correction;
- ♦ general farm safety knowledge and
- ♦ stresses the importance of a positive attitude towards safety.

To successfully complete the course, youth must:

- ♦ attend 24 hours of instruction and
- ♦ pass written and driving exams.

Wisconsin Act 455 stipulates that the state program is to have the equivalent requirements to the federal tractor and machinery certification. Therefore, this course will be taught at a level for 14 to 15 year old youth.

Who should attend?

- ♦ Youth 14-15 years of age who need the federal certificate of training for employment on farm in accordance with Part 570, Child Labor Regulations, Subpart E-1.
- ♦ Youth 12 years of age who will be operating tractors or self-propelled farm machinery on public roads for their own family.
- ♦ Youth desiring tractor and machinery safety instructions.

Where and When are the programs offered?

This varies by county. These programs can be offered through the county University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension office or the local agricultural education instructor. In many counties a program is offered once a year as a cooperative effort between UWEX and the county agricultural education instructors.

Program dates vary throughout the state but most are conducted between January and June. To find out when the program will be held in your area contact your local county UWEX office or local high school agricultural education department. All counties may not offer the certification program but could provide assistance in locating an available program.

Should your child attend this program?

It is your responsibility as parents/guardians to determine if your child is ready to attend a Wisconsin *Safe* Operation of Tractor and Machinery Certification program.

Some facts for you to consider:

- ♦ 82% of fatalities involving youth under age 16 result from agricultural equipment.
- ♦ Youth under age 14 are involved in nine times as many accidents per exposure hour of tractor driving than tractor operators 25-44 years.
- ♦ Youth under age 15 have higher accident rates for operating tractors on public roads.

Common factors in these accidents were inexperience and lack of maturity to handle the situation. Being capable of reaching the pedals will not help if the child can't recognize a hazard or anticipate a danger. Generally, youth under age 14 do not have the ability to anticipate danger, realize the danger and react in order to prevent an accident.

Ask yourself the question "*Is my child ready to drive a semi-truck?*"

Assessing your child's ability to drive a tractor or operate machinery:

1. Age of child

2. Physical Abilities

- ♦ Can the youth sit securely in the operator's seat and fully depress clutch and reach all controls?
- ♦ On seats with seatbelts, the child should be able to reach all controls.
- ♦ Does the child have the strength needed to shift, steer or hook equipment up to the tractor?
- ♦ Is the child able to turn and check behind them for traffic and still keep the tractor in control?

3.Cognitive Abilities

- ♦ Is your child able to recognize dangerous situations like driving too fast or turning too sharp?
- ♦ Is he/she able to think through situations quickly to avoid hazards?
- ♦ When given directions does the child follow them?
- ♦ If the child has difficulty paying attention for 15 minutes in a class, what could happen if his/her mind wanders while driving down the road?

4.Emotional maturity

- ♦ Does peer pressure cause him/her to show off or attempt things beyond their ability?
- ♦ Does the child become easily upset when he/she is unable to do something that he/she want to do?

Every child is different. Preventing injury to your child may mean saying no and waiting until the child's abilities develop.