

**Canadian  
Agricultural  
Safety Week  
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# **FACT SHEET #4**

**THE CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE**

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## **Runover by unmanned machine**

Unmanned runovers subsequent to jump-starting older tractors are a leading cause of fatalities for the senior farmer age group. Among persons 60 years and older, 51 per cent of the runover deaths occurred when a dismounted operator was run over by his or her unmanned machine, often subsequent to a jump-start or by-pass procedure.

A tractor should never be started by means of its side ignition box. Of the fatalities where the victims were “pinned or struck by a machine”, 18 per cent were due to alighted operators being pinned against fixed objects by unmanned tractors or trucks in motion.

“We know that human error is the most common cause of farm-related injuries and fatalities,” said Bob Freisen, President of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. “Farmers need to make safety a part of their daily routine.”

Studies by the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program (CAISP) indicate that farmers aged 60 and over suffer 35 per cent of all agricultural fatalities and 24 per cent of agricultural hospitalizations, though they represent only 13 per cent of the farming population. This age group is also at high risk for machine-related injuries, including unmanned runovers and being pinned or struck by a machine.

Thirty per cent of the runover deaths occur when an operator falls from his or her tractor and is then runover by it. It is important for tractor operators to stay seated and to use a seatbelt at all times. Operators can easily lose their balance when traveling over rough terrain, resulting in fatal falls.

Falls from machines were more common in older farmers than in younger farmers. In farmers aged 60+, 20 per cent of hospitalized machine-related injuries were due to falls from machines, compared to 13 per cent for farmers aged 15-59.

Unmanned machine runovers from the ground are also a significant cause of death. In a common scenario, an operator leaves his or her tractor idling to perform a chore while standing in front of the tractor, which then slips into gear or rolls down an incline into the operator. Before dismounting a tractor, an operator should always turn its engine off and set the brakes.

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The Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association (CASA), Farm Credit Canada (FCC), and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, are urging farmers to equip their tractors with a rollover protective structure (ROPS) and wear a seatbelt.

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**For more information call:**

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