



# FACT SHEET #3

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## Rural Driving Needs Extra Attention

Driving on rural roads requires extra considerations and alertness by drivers. The late summer harvest season is a particularly dangerous time on rural roads in Canada. According to a study by the Canadian Agricultural Injury Surveillance Program, 45 per cent of farm-related collisions occur in July through September, which is a busy season in terms of field crop production.

When in rural areas, drivers should constantly be on the alert for farm tractors, combines, trucks, wagons, and other farm vehicles. Even if you're not in an area where farm implements are moving from field to field, it's wise to be especially cautious on rural roads.

Why are rural highways more dangerous? There are several factors:

**Speed.** Speed is the single biggest factor affecting the severity of a collision. If you double the speed of a vehicle, you multiply the amount of energy involved in a crash by four. Triple your speed, and energy is nine times greater. Even with a seatbelt and airbag, chances of survival are low in cases of a direct collision with a fixed object or heavy slow-moving vehicle such as a loaded grain wagon if you're going 100 or 120 kilometres per hour.

**Slow moving farm machinery.** When driving in rural areas, keep your speed at or below the posted limits. Remember that tractors, combines, and other farm machines are usually traveling slower than 40 kilometres per hour and can have extra high or wide loads. Watch for the red and orange fluorescent "slow moving vehicle" emblems and adjust your speed accordingly. If you're a farmer, make your implements as visible as possible.

**Road conditions.** Rural roads can be narrow and have uneven surfaces or potholes. On some roads there are steep embankments and ditches on both sides – leaving little room for error. It is especially dangerous on roads like these if you come upon a tractor, combine, or other wide vehicle while driving at high speed. Furthermore, rural roads are often poorly lit or not lit at all resulting in poor visibility. Consequently, the rate of fatal collisions on rural roads triples in the evening or during other low-light conditions.

**Wildlife.** Most of Canada's abundant wildlife lives in the rural areas and can cause unexpected dangers on rural roads. Deer, moose and other creatures crossing roads, particularly at night, are frequently hit by vehicles or startle drivers into veering off the road. The best way to reduce your risk of an incident with wildlife is to reduce speeds on rural roads and be alert to any movements on the side of the road.

**Emergency response.** The emergency response time in rural areas tends to be longer than in urban areas. This discrepancy is due to several factors including: emergency response dispatch services are not available in all parts of Canada; increased emergency response times in rural areas; a greater distances to hospitals; and it can be more difficult for emergency response services to locate the accident scene.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture along with the Farm Credit Canada, the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada want to remind Canadian farmers and rural motorists to be especially careful when driving on rural roads. Farm Safety Means Farm Safely

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**For more information call:**

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