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The HSA has a clear and valuable set of guidelines on how to protect children from the potential risks of farm machinery.

- Only carry children in a machinery cab if it is absolutely essential. The cab must be fitted with a properly designed and fitted passenger with seat belts.
- Children under seven should not be allowed in the cab of a tractor or other farm machinery, even with a passenger seat. This is a legal requirement.
- Discuss farm safety with visitors and agricultural contractors and make contractors aware of any possibility of children being present.
- It is important to talk to children about the dangers of machinery and set rules.
- But a child cannot be expected to keep themselves safe. This is an adult's responsibility.
- Park your tractor, or any vehicle, to ensure forward movement when you next drive off.

Visibility is always best when driving forward.

- Check blind spots for people, especially children, before moving off.
- Adults and children tend to move to the back window of a tractor to attempt to communicate with the driver but on many tragic occasions, the driver reversed without seeing them.
- Always be aware of the possible presence of children along roads, around schools, villages and towns and travel at a speed that provides time for a safe controlled stop.
- Never allow children to travel on trailers, transport boxes or machines. The risk of falling off is very high and the consequences can be devastating.

Safe driving for teenagers

Children can be very interested in tractors and self-propelled machines but they are not permitted to drive them.

The HSA states that children 14 and over may be permitted to drive a tractor or self-propelled machine on the farm if:

- They have attended a recognised training course
- They are closely supervised by a responsible adult
- They have the ability to operate the controls with ease
- All the controls are conveniently accessible for safe operation by the operator when seated in the driver's seat
- The controls which operate the



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Preventing tragedy – on the farm

Health and Safety Authority (HSA) figures tell us that 17 children lost their lives due to farm related accidents between 2014-2023. Over 90% of cases involved a farm vehicle or machine.

power take off (PTO) devices, hydraulic devices and engine cut-off are clearly marked to show the effect of their operation

- The tractor is well maintained
- The ground over which the tractor is to be driven is free from hazards such as steep slopes or excavations, river banks, lake or pond edges, deep ditches and similar areas.

Risk assessment

Every farmer with three or fewer employees must complete a farm safety risk assessment document. To find out more, please contact your local Teagasc office. You may also decide to register to attend a half day Farm Safety Course which will help you develop a plan focused on managing safety on your farm.

Safety information for children

A child-focused farm safety webinar will take place on July 19. This fun and interactive event will teach young children some important farm safety tips through a lively, engaging 30 minute webinar featuring our animated Farm Safety Mascot, Jessy. To register go to the Teagasc website.

Colouring competition Teagasc are inviting children to showcase their artistic talents by participating in our child safety focused art competition and win prizes.

Don't miss out – sign your child up before today and help them be a part of Jessy's Farm Safety adventure!

www.teagasc.ie/farmsafetycomp/

Farm safety resources

- Health & Safety Authority www.hsa.ie
- Agrikids www.agrikids.ie/