

Hayride Safety

With the fall harvest season upon us, and Halloween just around the corner, the popularity of hayrides will increase. However, the chance of serious accident looms. These events need to be well organized and carefully monitored, so that a fun outdoor activity doesn't turn into a tragedy. The following will help minimize the injury risks associated with hayrides:

Wagons

- Check for loose boards, splinters and sharp edges.
- Should be equipped with two red tail lights, signal lights, at least one flashing amber warning light(s), a good SMV emblem, retro-reflective 2 x 9 inch retro-reflective strips that include two red strips mounted as near the rear extremities as practical, and two amber strips mounted on each side and front of the wagon as near the extremities as possible.
- Make sure the tires are properly inflated.
- The wagon should be hitched to the tractor or truck with a pin that has a safety locking mechanism.
- Safety chains that connect the wagon tongue to the towing vehicle should be used.
- Should be equipped with at least 36 inch high sides all around the wagon to reduce the risk of riders falling off.

Operation Procedures

Operators of vehicles pulling wagons should be experienced mature vehicle operators and at least 18 years of age.

- Escort vehicles should be operated 1,000 feet to the front and rear of the wagon and pulling vehicle with operating flashing warning lights to warn on coming traffic. This is particularly important on roads that have hills and curves where other vehicles would not have at least 1,000 unobstructed feet to see the wagon and pulling vehicle in to the front and rear.
- Wagons should come to a complete stop before crossing any road and the vehicle operator should look in both directions to make sure it is safe to cross.
- A low traffic route of travel should be selected and local authorities should be notified.
- At least one adult observer should be stationed in the wagon and a means to quickly alert the operator needs to be established in case the wagon needs to be stopped quickly.
- Hayride participants can easily fall from a wagon or truck and be run over by the vehicle's wheels causing traumatic injuries. No horseplay should be allowed and all riders should stay seated during the ride. All riding rules should be reviewed with the participants before the ride begins.
- No smoking should be allowed on the wagon.
- At least a 20 lb. dry chemical fire extinguisher should be carried on the pulling unit.
- A first aid kit should be available on the pulling unit.
- At least one of the adult organizers and/or chaperones should have a cell phone to call for help in case of an emergency.
- Never attach more than one wagon behind the pulling vehicle.
- Never pull a wagon with a tractor or truck so fast that it sways out of a straight line.

For more information, please contact the Carle Center for Rural Health and Farm Safety at 365-7961 or visit www.carle.org/farmsafety