

WISE CHOICES ON RURAL ROADS

Safety for you and your family depends on choices made before driving either farm implements or motor vehicles on rural roads. Planting and harvest season generate more urgency and lead to shortcuts. Wise choices made during these times are buckling up in farm implements or motor vehicles and taking breaks for meals. Use of drugs for our bodies and driving too fast for conditions could have negative influence on rural road safety. Buckling up can keep you in the driver's seat in emergency situations to help maintain control on every road.

Rural roads are designed differently, are often more narrow than other road systems, and do not have center lines. Some drivers chose to top a hill in the center of the narrow road. If there is a large farm implement or another motor vehicle on the other side of the hill, a crash could result if your choice is to cross into the other lane. Non-hard surface rural roads have a form of slippery rock on them. This surface can cause a driver to lose control if choosing to use excess speed. Very narrow or no shoulders are common on rural roads which may result in ending up in the ditch.

What is chosen to be used in a person's body can lead to crashes. This could mean prescribed medicine for allergies, mood changing, stimulants to keep a person awake to work longer, or any drug that changes the senses and alertness of an operator of farm implements or motor vehicles. Any person consuming a drug needs to know that drugs affect their body while driving. The use of alcohol while driving is dangerous, but rural roads present another problem in this area. People perceive that there is less law enforcement on rural roads so when they think they have had too much to drink, they will 'take the back way home'. Imagine meeting a drunk driver on a rural road!

Farmers are working more acres and the land is further apart, thus there is more transporting of equipment on rural road systems. The choice to fold up winged equipment before transport should be done prior to traveling on a public road of any design even for short distances. Just imagine what might be on the other side of the hill. Taking a break for a meal will give the body needed rest from the stress of operating farm equipment and help diabetics control their blood sugar level. The choice to eat before driving could mean the difference between having or not having a crash.

This planting or harvesting time, remember to make the best choices for you and your family when driving either farm implements or motor vehicles on rural roads. Injuries and death from traffic crashes are preventable.

