

Motorists and Farmers Urged to Share the Road During Harvest Season

Posted by [TBN\(Staff\)](#) On 09/28/2019

Annapolis, MD - September 28, 2019)– Fall has arrived, and farmers will be using combines and other large, slow moving equipment during the harvest season. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Maryland Department of Agriculture are urging the importance of driver safety as motorists traveling Maryland highways and rural roads likely will share the road with farm equipment from one of Maryland's 12,400 farms. Harvest season typically extends between September and the beginning of November.

"Harvest season is a critical time of year for Maryland farmers, and may require us to operate farm equipment on state highways and rural roads as we move from farm to field," said Agriculture Secretary Joe Bartenfelder. "I encourage all motorists to be patient while traveling on roads near Maryland farms and to drive with caution. Our top priority is the safety of all motorists and Maryland farmers, who are working hard to provide food and fiber for millions throughout the region."

This harvest season MDOT State Highway Administration and the Maryland Department of Agriculture are working together to educate drivers to expect farm equipment on rural routes, and to approach these vehicles with caution. Farming equipment is very large, and likely will share travel lanes while working along farmland adjacent to Maryland roads.

"Farms across Maryland will be busy this fall harvest season, and drivers can expect to see an increase in farming equipment sharing our roadways," said MDOT SHA Administrator Gregory Slater. "To keep everyone safe, it is critical that drivers stay alert for large farm vehicles on the road. Please be patient when approaching farm equipment, and only attempt to pass if able to do so safely."

If you encounter farm equipment, a farmer understands that your trip is being delayed, so he or she will pull off of the road at the first available safe location to allow you to pass. Do not assume that the farmer can immediately move aside. Road shoulders may be soft, wet or steep, and this can cause a farm vehicle to tip, or the shoulder may be unable to support a heavy farm vehicle.

The following tips will help ensure the safety of motorists, passengers, and operators of slow-moving equipment:

- If a farmer has pulled off the road to allow you to pass, or if he or she cannot pull off the road and you feel you must pass, do so with caution.
- Be watchful of vehicles behind you that may also try to pass.
- If you must enter the oncoming lane of traffic, do not pass unless you can see clearly ahead of both you and the vehicle you will pass.
- If there are any curves or hills ahead that may block your view or the view of oncoming vehicles, do not pass.
- Do not pass if you are in a designated "No Passing Zone" or within 100 feet of any intersection, railroad grade crossing, bridge, elevation structure, or tunnel.
- Do not assume that a farm vehicle that pulls to the right side of the road is going to turn right or is letting you pass. Due to the size of some farm implements, the farmer must execute wide left-hand turns. If you are unsure, check the operator's hand signals and check the left side of the road for gates, driveways or any place a farm vehicle may turn.

For more information about agriculture in Maryland, visit mda.maryland.gov

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