



Do you recognize this symbol?

Paying attention to this sign is a matter of life and death for drivers of cars and farm equipment on rural roads.

A slow-moving vehicle sign must be displayed on farm equipment and other vehicles designed to travel at speeds of 25 miles or less.



The sign is not simply a reflector — it is a warning to slow down.

At night, the reflective red border of the SMV emblem is visible. When you see this sign in your headlights, slow down immediately. In low light, it is difficult to judge how fast you are closing in on a slow-moving vehicle, or what its dimensions are.

For more information on road safety, visit the Oregon Dept. of Transportation website at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS.

Tips for farmers

Farmers have a role in rural road safety, too. Here are tips to alleviate some hazards when taking wide equipment onto the road:

- ▲ **Oregon law** requires you to place a slow-moving vehicle reflector on any machine that travels the road slower than 25 mph. Always point the triangle up, keep the SMV emblem clean to maximize reflectivity, and replace the emblem when it fades, normally every 2 to 3 years.
- ▲ **Mark the edges of tractors and machines with reflective tape and reflectors.** Consider installing retrofit lighting on older machinery to increase visibility.
- ▲ **Turn on your lights**, but turn off rear spotlights when going onto the road. From a distance spotlights can be mistaken for headlights.
- ▲ **Be aware of heavy traffic patterns.**
- ▲ **Use pilot cars**, one in front and one in back, if you are going a considerable distance. Hang a brightly colored flag out the window of these pilot vehicles.
- ▲ **Consider installing mirrors** on equipment so you can see motorists around you. Be careful where the mirrors are placed.
- ▲ When moving multiple farm implements down the highway, **leave enough space between each vehicle for cars to pass.**

ATTENTION!

It is illegal for any Oregon resident to display the slow-moving vehicle sign on permanent, stationary objects like mail box posts, driveway entrances, and fences.

To use an SMV sign on anything other than slow-moving equipment is a Class C offense.



Share the road safely

Slow-Moving Vehicle signs

*Oregon revised Statute 815.115
effective January 1, 2014*



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Farm equipment shares the roads

While driving on a rural road, particularly during the summer and fall when many farmers harvest their crops, you may encounter farm equipment. It may be a single vehicle, like a combine, or a tractor with an implement in tow. Farm equipment is often wider than a typical car and can even be wider than the lane. Large equipment is designed to travel at speeds of only 15 to 25 miles per hour.

Sometimes farm equipment must drive on highways to move between fields. Just as motorists can use public roadways, farmers can legally operate farm equipment on these same roads.

Caution, courtesy, and special attention to the following tips will help ensure the safety of motorists, passengers, and operators of slow-moving equipment.

If you are driving 55 mph and come upon a tractor that is moving 25 mph, it only takes 8 seconds to close a gap the length of a football field between you and the tractor.

Red and orange slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblems must be visible on large equipment from at least 500 feet away. Because it can be difficult to judge the speed at which you are closing in on a vehicle ahead, you should slow down immediately.



Think of the slow-moving vehicle sign as a warning to slow down.



Be patient

Farmers understand that your trip is being delayed, so they will usually pull off to the side of the road at a safe location to allow you to pass. However, don't assume that the farmer can immediately move aside. Roadway shoulders may be soft, wet, or steep, and this can cause equipment to tip.



Even if you have to slow down to 20 mph and follow a tractor for two miles, it takes only six minutes of your time, which is like waiting for two stoplights.

Yield to wide vehicles

Some farm equipment may be wider than the lane of travel. If you approach a piece of wide equipment traveling in the opposite direction and you cannot pass safely, please stop. Then pull off the road to a location that will allow the vehicle to pass you.

Don't assume the farmer knows you're there

Most farm equipment operators will regularly check to see if there is traffic behind them. However, the driver must spend most of the time looking ahead to keep the equipment safely on the road and watch for oncoming traffic. Also, most farm equipment is very loud. Don't assume that the driver knows where your vehicle is. Before you attempt to pass, use your car's horn to signal you are there.

In Oregon every year there are 25 to 35 serious auto accidents involving farm equipment, particularly during summer and fall harvest months.

Pass with caution

If you decide to pass farm equipment on the road, please 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 proceed 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 make wide left-hand turns. If you are unsure, check the operator's hand signals and look at the left side of the road for gates, driveways, or any place a farm vehicle might turn.

By being aware of farm equipment during your travels on rural roads, you can help make the trip safe for both you and Oregon farmers.