

April 16, 2021



From the Sheriff's Desk

DELAWARE COUNTY- Spring is upon us and with that Delaware County Sheriff Craig DuMond wants to remind motorists in rural Delaware County and surrounding counties to be on the alert for slow moving vehicles (SMV's) on our State, County and Town highways.

Delaware County is mainly comprised of rural farm communities, and as such, observe a marked increase in the volume of slow moving vehicles on our roadways during the spring, summer and fall seasons as farmers operating farm machinery and various other types of agricultural equipment utilize the roadways to travel to and from farm fields to plow, plant and harvest crops.

Sheriff DuMond stresses that motorists need to recognize the relevance of how to observe, react and safely share the road with these types of vehicles. Statistics show that over 90 % of SMV collisions occur during daylight hours and more than two-thirds of the collisions involve the farm vehicle being hit from behind. These collisions occur when motor vehicle operators attempting to pass slower-moving agriculture machinery fail to perceive the "closure collision time". An example of this is when a motorist is traveling at 55 mph and rapidly approaches a farm tractor traveling at 15 mph. It takes only seven seconds to travel 400 feet and collide with the farm tractor, equipment and/or animal drawn vehicle (buggy).

Motorists are also reminded it is illegal to pass slow-moving vehicles in a no-passing zone even though they are traveling at slower speeds. When you're driving along a road and encounter a slow-moving piece of farm equipment, it's important to understand how to keep yourself and other users of the road safe.

Here's a look at some important information and tips for sharing the road with farm equipment and other SMV's.

SMV's are generally characterized as:

- All vehicles that operate at less than 40 mph, including:
- tractors
- self-propelled agricultural equipment
- road construction & maintenance machinery
- animal-powered vehicles

NYS Laws requires:

- Slow-moving Vehicle Emblems (SVE- a bright orange/red reflective triangle) must be on all vehicles traveling less than 40 mph.
- The SMV emblems are to be displayed in the center of the back end of the vehicle 2 to 6 feet above the road.
- Speed Identification Symbols (SIS) must be on vehicles that travel greater than 25 mph but less than 40 mph.
- The speed identification symbol identifies the top speed of the vehicle and should be placed next to the emblem.
- The SMVEs and SISs are to be kept clean and replaced when faded.
- Each piece of agricultural equipment whether self-propelled or used in combination shall separately display a slow-moving vehicle emblem and speed identification symbol.
- It is illegal to put SMV emblems on stationary objects - such as: mailboxes and/or driveway posts.

Tips for Motorists-Motorists should:

- Slow down immediately when they see or encounter a slow moving vehicle
- Increase following distance
- Be alert and watch for unexpected turns (*Left hand turns or possibly into fields)
- Drive courteously.... Patience is virtue
- ****DO NOT PASS until it is SAFE and LEGAL to do so****
- Be aware that animal-powered vehicles may make unanticipated movements
- Remember that SMVs operators may have poor visibility due to loads and equipment in tow
- Be aware the equipment in tow may sway

As we all know, driving in rural areas requires your full and focused attention. Play it safe, pay attention and keep your phone shut off while driving as various distractions can more than double your reactionary time.

Although, no one likes being caught behind a tractor or other slow-moving vehicle, simply being patient, and waiting a minute or two before you can safely and legally pass could make a huge difference in someone's life.

Wishing everyone an enjoyable and safe year,

Sheriff Craig S. DuMond