

## Safe tractor training offered in June

Written by Gothenburg Times  
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The registration deadline is approaching for a tractor safety/hazardous occupations course to be offered at the West Central Research and Extension (402 W State Farm Road, North Platte) in June.

The class is one of seven locations across the state where University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension Tractor Safety/Hazardous Occupations Courses will be offered. The classes will not only help keep youthful ag workers safer, but also keep farm owners on the right side of federal law when they hire teen-agers to work on their operations, according to Randy Sayer, Extension education.

The North Platte Tractor Safety class is scheduled for June 1-2. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged two weeks before the class start date.

Cost is \$60. For more information or to register, contact Bill Booker at (308) 762-5616, [wbooker2@unl.edu](mailto:wbooker2@unl.edu), Sharry Nielsen at (308) 832-0645, [snielsen1@unl.edu](mailto:snielsen1@unl.edu) or the local UNL Extension office (Lincoln County 308-532-2683) in the county in which the training is offered.

The safety training is for 14- to 15-year-olds who want to work on farms other than their parents', or who just wish to have the safety training.

Federal law allows the employment of 14- and 15-year-olds for many agricultural tasks only after they have completed more than 20 hours of training.

Completion of the course grants an exemption to the law for 14- and 15-year-olds. Penalties for producers who violate the law can include stiff fines and prison time.

The intensive training consists of two days, with classes from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day plus homework assignments. Participants should dress for safety. This means full shirts and long pants with shoes that cover the ankles.

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The first day is primarily classwork and written tests, while the second day is to test the students' ability to handle a tractor and trailer safely.

The classroom instruction will cover the required elements of the National Safe Tractor and machinery Operation Program.

The goal of safety training is to prevent injuries and fatalities. Nebraska farm fatalities have averaged almost 32 per year since 1969.

Historically, tractor rollovers have been the most common cause, but lately ATVs (all-terrain vehicles or four wheelers) have replaced tractors, according to statistics quoted by Booker. In 2008, farm accidents killed 16 Nebraskans, ranging in age from 8 years old to adult.

Agricultural workers make up only 6.6% of Nebraska's workforce, but in 2002 they accounted for 33% of the state's workplace fatalities, according to a report in Cornhusker Economics.

Participants should dress for safety. This means shirts and long pants with shoes that cover the foot and preferably the ankles. Students that are not dressed safely will not be allowed to drive.