



Agricultural vehicles

Agricultural vehicles are generally slow moving and often wide. Slow moving vehicles can cause inconvenience or danger to other highway users; frustrated motorists may take unnecessary risks as a result. Wide vehicles may over-ride verges in narrow lanes, spread mud and possibly damage drains or ditches; repairs may prove expensive. For these reasons:

- Vehicle widths must comply with current regulations. In accordance with the Motor Vehicles (Construction and use) Act 1986 (as amended), agricultural vehicles should be a maximum of 2.6 metres in width;
- Vehicles must not be unsuitable for the type of road being used;
- Consideration should be given to other road users. Please pull into lay-bys and similar passing places to allow traffic to pass safely;
- Agricultural vehicles should not be used, as far as practical, on main roads during peak hours (7.30 - 9.30 and 16.30 - 18.00).

Signs

Appropriate reflective road signs must be erected where farming operations affect the highway. Farmers should be aware of the following when erecting signs:

- Signs of the correct size, type and shape should be used to warn other highway users of potential danger;
- Shropshire County Council may, at its own expense, erect permanent warning signs at regular animal crossing points;
- Signs can be purchased from various sign manufacturers. Shropshire County Council's contractor, JDM Accord, provide signs at reasonable costs. They can be contacted by telephone on **01743 273500**.



600mm



600mm

N.B: The use of signs does not necessarily prevent liability from prosecution or civil claims.

Shropshire County Council Contacts

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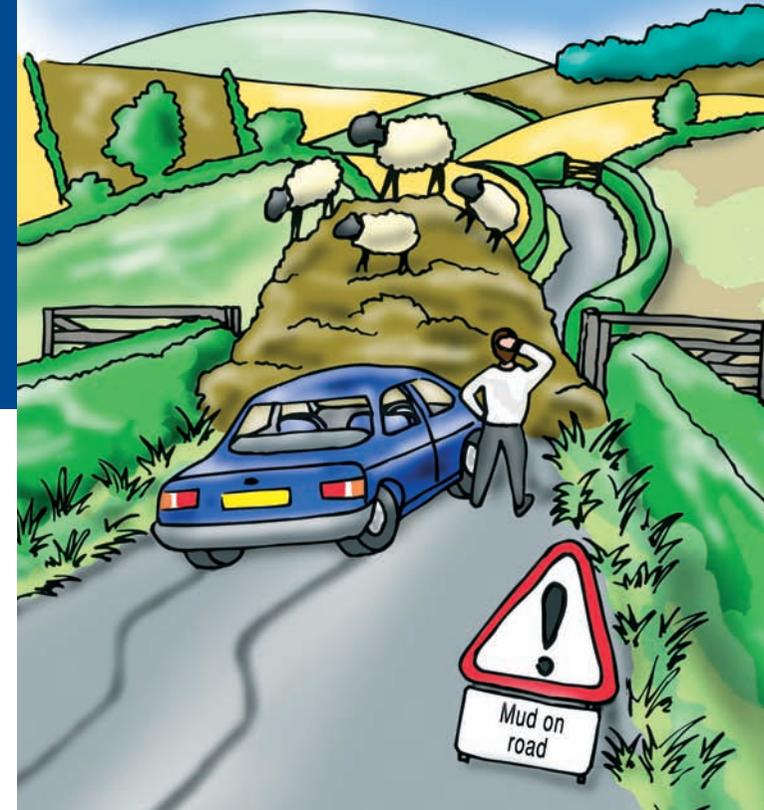
southshropshire.highways@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Highway Maintenance website:

www.shropshire-cc.gov.uk/hwmaint.nsf

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Farming and the Public Highway



A code of practice

 **Shropshire**
County Council



Agriculture is a major industry in Shropshire. Farmers and agricultural contractors use the county's highway network in the course of their daily work. However, farming operations can compromise the safety of other highway users. This leaflet outlines the areas in which the co-operation of the farming community is vital in helping Shropshire County Council to keep public roads, cycle routes and footways safe for all users.

Legislation

Laws exist to protect all highway users. Shropshire County Council recognises and commends the efforts made by the farming community to adhere to legislation. However, individuals unwilling to co-operate could face prosecution under Highways Act 1980.

The Act stipulates:

- Mud and debris must not be deposited on a public carriageway so as interrupt its use and create potential hazards for other road users.
- Hedgerows, trees or shrubs belonging to adjacent landowners, must not obstruct visibility on the highway.
- Free passage along a highway must not be obstructed.
- In accordance with Section 174, adequate signs should be provided to warn other highway users of farming operations which may affect the network.

Farming operations and the highway

Mud on the road

Mud deposited on the road during farming operations can cause an inconvenience; even constitute a danger. To help keep mud to a minimum, farmers should be aware of the following:

- The Road Traffic Act 1988 and Associated Regulations state agricultural vehicles should not be overloaded. Loads carried must also be properly secured;
- Excess mud should be removed from the wheels of agricultural vehicles, prior to joining a public highway. The provision of hard standing areas near to gateways regularly used to gain access to the highway, may help to mitigate this problem;
- Animals should be herded along public highways in a safe manner. Any resulting mud or dung should be removed as soon as possible;
- Mud and/or surface water run off from fields adjacent to public highways should, where possible, be prevented. Providing a sizeable gap between the highway and vegetation can help to mitigate this problem.

Ditches and drains

Good drainage systems help to remove surface water from the highway; as a result, reduces the risk of vehicles' skidding, damage to the carriageway and highway maintenance costs. In rural areas, road drainage is often provided by land drainage ditches or drains in verges and adjacent fields. Common law states the occupier of land adjacent to the highway is responsible for maintaining these drains and ditches. All ditches should be cleared at regular intervals and any obstruction which may inhibit flow should be removed.



Crop irrigation and smoke

Spray from crop irrigators and smoke from burning operations can be both a nuisance and potential hazard for highway users. Spray or smoke produced on adjacent land should not be allowed to enter the vicinity of the highway.

Hedge maintenance

Adjacent landowners are responsible for highway hedgerows. Landowners have a duty of care to inspect and maintain highway hedgerows on a regular basis.

Landowners should adhere to the following when carrying out hedgerow maintenance:

- Remedial action should be undertaken to prevent diseased or unstable trees becoming a potential hazard for highway users;
- Hedge cutting operations should be carried out in a safe manner; the potential risks and inconvenience which may be caused, should be taken into account;
- Hedge cutting should be timed to avoid the bird nesting season. In addition, hedgerows should also be cut at an appropriate time of the day, preferably when the highway is least busy;
- All cuttings must be removed from roads, footways and ditches as soon as possible, to minimise the risk or inconvenience to others. Failure to remove cuttings from the highway constitutes an offence under the Highways Act 1980. Shropshire County Council will remove the cuttings and recover costs, if cuttings are not removed within a reasonable timeframe.