

LOSS CONTROL BULLETIN

Power Take-Off (PTO) Shafts

Fact: A power take-off (PTO) shaft usually operates at 540 to 1,000 revolutions per minute (rpm). It would take less than one second for a 13-foot rope to become twisted around the PTO shaft at 1,000 rpm.

With the advantages of the PTO shaft also came some serious dangers. The two most frequent types of PTO accidents are entanglements and being struck when the shaft separates during operation. It is possible, however, to use this device safely if operators know what hazards to avoid and what precautionary measures to take.

Hazards to Avoid

The clothing choices that people make present the biggest danger. A PTO shaft in action could catch anything from a shirt cuff to pant leg to a loose thread. Operators should also be aware of the dangers of shoestrings, hooded sweat shirts and long hair.

Types of Shields

- To help prevent human and machinery entanglements, the PTO shaft should have four types of guards to cover all of its components:
- Master Shield – Attached to the rear of the tractor and covers the tops and sides of the stub shaft to protect the operator from rotating entanglements. The stub shaft is where the PTO shaft attaches to the tractor through the PTO drivelines.
- Stub Shaft Shield – Protects the stub shaft when it is not in use.
- Shaft Shield – A tubular shield that completely encloses the PTO drivelines.
- Implement Shields – Covers the area where the PTO shaft attaches to the implement.

Prevention

- Many PTO accidents are caused by operators taking shortcuts or moving too quickly. Accidents can be prevented if people take a few simple precautions.
- Disengage the PTO, turn the tractor engine off and take the key out before dismounting the tractor.
- Engage and disengage the PTO shaft while sitting in the tractor seat, never from behind the tractor.
- Replace all missing and broken shields. Damaged shields can be just as dangerous as not having a shield at all.
- Make sure you properly adjust the drawbar to the manufacturer's specifications for each implement that you use.

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- Never step across a rotating PTO driveline. Always walk around the tractor or implement.
- Make sure bystanders who are not working with the machinery stand at a safe distance away from the equipment.
- Read the safety section of the owner's manual for all implements.

The best precaution that you can take to prevent PTO and farm equipment injuries is to **THINK** before you act.



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