

FARM PRACTICE

MOBILE EQUIPMENT

Description

Mobile equipment is defined as any type of equipment that is moving or frequently moves from location to location during farm operations. Equipment that is not relocated or is used on a more permanent status is addressed in the Stationary Equipment Farm Practice.

The range of mobile equipment used on farms is extensive. Farmers use trucks, tractors, industrial crawlers, airplanes, helicopters, motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and a wide variety of implements and machinery that are towed by these mobile vehicles. A wide variety of self-propelled machinery is also used, including sprayers, girettes, swathers, combines, harvesters and bale wagons. Field operation of mobile equipment may be required outside of daylight hours in order to complete operations on schedule and/or to avoid a variety of environmental conditions such as daytime winds when spraying. Machinery and equipment should be maintained in good working order. Machinery moved on roads and highways must follow appropriate acts and regulations.

Nuisance Concerns

The three primary disturbances mentioned in the *Farm Practices Protection (Right to Farm) Act* are odour, noise and dust. Of particular potential concern to mobile equipment operation is noise.

Noise

Farmers engage in a variety of activities that require the use of equipment which generate noise. Noise is defined as any sound that is audible but judged to be an unwanted, irregular or erratic disturbance. Noise levels vary and may rise when equipment is run at higher speeds. Noise may be generated continuously or intermittently.

See also Nuisance Reference: [Noise](#)

Activities and Operations

Aircraft

Fixed wing aircraft are used to apply seed, fertilizer and pesticides to some commodities. Pesticide labels must be checked to ensure that application by aircraft is listed as a possible and suitable use. The local office of the Ministry of Environment should also be contacted for any further restrictions prior to application. Aircraft attract the attention of neighbours and may be more of a disturbance than land-based application methods. Helicopters can be an effective means by which cherries can be dried to prevent splitting. Helicopters have also been used to protect crops from frost damage. Ultralight aircraft may be used to check on livestock on the range.

Motorcycles and All-Terrain Vehicles

Motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are often used instead of trucks and tractors for personal transportation on a farm, in large measure because these vehicles are a more flexible form of transportation. ATVs are sometimes used instead of tractors to perform certain field operations. Motorcycles and ATVs should be operated as much as possible within regular working hours. Occasionally, motorcycles and ATVs have been used to scare birds in an effort to protect crops. The use of such equipment is effective alongside the use of other devices such as automated noisemakers or visual deterrents. Some restrictions are placed on the use of all-terrain vehicles under the *Motor Vehicle Act Regulations*.

Tractors

Tractors are the most common source of power for field operations and should be kept in good working order with functional mufflers. Tractors may be required 24 hours a day but – whenever possible – farmers should perform work during regular working hours. To minimize disturbances, tractors should not be left idling when not in use. The *Motor Vehicle Act*, *Commercial Transport Act* and the *Transportation Act* and their regulations govern the movement of trucks, tractors and other farm equipment on public roads.

Trucks

Trucks play an important role in many farm operations, performing the prime means by which a large variety of materials and livestock are transported. Trucks may be used outside regular working hours when required in critical farm operations for such operations devoted to harvesting crops or tending livestock. To minimize disturbances, trucks should be kept in good mechanical repair and not left idling when not in use.

See also Farm Practice: [Transportation](#)

Related Farm Practices

Other farm practices that pertain to mobile equipment use include, but are not limited to, the following.

Cultivation

The cultivation of land in preparation for planting must often need to be completed over a short period of time. Primary cultivation requires the use of heavy equipment, requiring tractors with engines operating at maximum rated speeds and generating noise. When possible, work should be planned so that areas closest to neighbouring residences are cultivated during the least disruptive times.

Harvesting operations must be carried out in a timely fashion. Harvesting may require the operation of equipment 24 hours a day. Whenever possible, work should be planned to cover those fields or parts of fields closest to neighboring residences during the least disruptive times.

See also Farm Practice: [Cultivation](#)

Pesticides

The timing of spraying operations undertaken to control pests and diseases is critical. Farmers may need to spray at any time. Spraying equipment may be operated during the day and/or night. Most sprayers are equipped with pumps which require the tractor's or self-propelled sprayer's engine to be operated at high speeds. Work should be planned so that those fields or parts of fields closest to neighboring residences are sprayed during the least disruptive times.

See also Farm Practice: [Pesticides](#)

Storage of Hazardous Material

Mobile equipment uses fuel and lubricants that are usually considered to be hazardous material.

See also Farm Practice: [Storage of Hazardous Material](#)

Legislation

Information on federal and provincial legislation can be found in Appendices B and C. Acts, regulations and bylaws that regulate or may affect mobile equipment operating practices include, but are not limited to, the following.

Provincial Legislation

The *Motor Vehicle Act* and the *Motor Vehicle Act Regulations* protect people traveling on public roads.

The *Motor Vehicle (All Terrain) Act* regulations exist only for use of all terrain vehicles.

The *Passenger Transportation Act* requires registration of motor carrier operators for hire.

The *Transportation Act* governs subject areas such as signage, safe access and sufficient parking. In addition, it prohibits a variety of activities which may damage roads.

The *Workers Compensation Act* regulates worker safety, including exposure to noise. Part 28 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* under this Act establishes minimum health and safety requirements for agriculture.

Local Government Legislation

Various local government bylaws governing noise may take precedence over provincial legislation.

Publications

Publications that provide further information on mobile equipment include, but are not limited to, the following. Refer to Appendix D for details.

British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Reference Guide
Farm Vehicles on the Move