

Number 5 2003

Tractor Operating Control: The Forward-Neutral-Reverse Shuttle Lever



Here the lever is in the notched neutral position.



Here the control lever has remained balanced on top of one of the high point bearings between the notches.

Details

Several makes and models of tractors available in Australia have a similar shuttle control lever mechanism as the one shown above.

It is normally located just behind the steering wheel of the tractor, and allows for the quick selection of the forward/stop/reverse movement of the tractor.

To engage either forward or reverse drive, the lever must be lifted up and moved over one of the high point bearings between each of the notches. There is a return spring attached to this lever that assists in pulling the lever back down into the selected notch.

Contributing factors

A recent investigation in Tasmania revealed that:

- Under certain circumstances, the control lever can remain balanced on top of one of the high point bearings between the notches.
- If the lever is accidentally left in this position, it only takes a small bump against the steering wheel (or even just closing the cab door) to allow the lever to drop down into one of the adjoining notches. This would then immediately engage the drive of the tractor.

If this were to happen while a driver is disembarking from the tractor, he may be severely injured by the suddenly moving tractor.

Recommendations

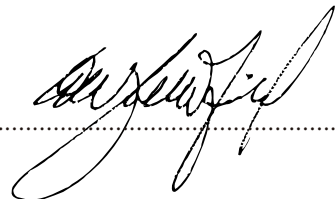
- That the lever mechanism and roller bearings are in good working order and well lubricated
- That the return spring is in good working order, as per the manufacturer's specifications.
- That all tractor operators are advised of this potential problem.
- That all tractor operators always check that the lever is actually positioned in the neutral notch before embarking from the tractor.

If you would like further information contact Workplace Standards Tasmania on:
Telephone: **1300 366 322** (inside Tasmania) or (03) 6233 7657 (outside Tasmania)

Fax: (03) 6233 8338

Email: wstinfo@dier.tas.gov.au

Internet: www.wst.tas.gov.au



Don Schofield
Chief Inspector of Industry
Workplace Standards Tasmania
May 2003