



# Power take-off (PTO) safety

A Power take-off (PTO) is a rotating shaft on a tractor that transfers engine power to implements like mowers, balers, and augers. PTOs spin at 540-1,000 RPM — up to 16+ rotations per second — much faster than human reaction time.

## Why are PTOs dangerous?

- Entanglement happens instantly
  - Loose clothing, long hair, strings, laces, or jewelry can catch and pull a person into the shaft
- Injuries are often severe or fatal — including scalping, amputations, or whole-body wrapping
- Most accidents involve missing or broken shields, stepping over a running shaft, or working near the shaft during maintenance

## Key safety rules

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### 1. Keep all shields in place

- Ensure tractor master shields and implement driveline guards are installed and functional
- Inspect shields daily and repair or replace immediately if damaged

### 2. Shut down before servicing

- If servicing is required, disengage the PTO, shut off the engine, and wait for all motion to stop
  - Never clear jams, unclog, adjust, or repair equipment with the PTO running

### 3. Dress for safety

- Wear fitted clothing, remove jewelry, and tie back long hair
- Avoid anything that can dangle or flap

### 4. Never step over a PTO

- Always walk around a PTO, even if the shaft is shielded
  - Many serious injuries occur from tripping into a spinning shaft

### 5. Maintain equipment and stay alert

- Look for damaged guards, worn parts, or debris before use
- Engage PTO slowly, avoid sharp turns, and stop if you notice vibration or noise

### 6. Hitch and connect properly

- Use the correct PTO driveline for each implement
- Adjust the drawbar length/height so the telescoping shaft stays connected — separation can create a whipping projectile

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## 7. Keep people away

- Do not allow extra riders
- Children and bystanders must stay far from operating machinery
- Ensure the area is clear before engaging the PTO

## Final reminders

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A PTO accident happens in seconds — most victims never see it coming. Stay alert, follow the rules, and never take shortcuts. Your life depends on it.

*The information and recommendations contained in this material have been obtained from sources believed to be reliable. However, SECURA accepts no legal responsibility for the accuracy, sufficiency, or completeness of such information. Additional safety and health procedures may be required under particular circumstances. Please talk with your SECURA Risk Management Consultant for more information.*

# Power take-off safety

Trainer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ End time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Trainees

**Printed name**

**Signature**

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*I hereby certify that I presented and these people received the power take-off safety training.*

Trainer (Signature) \_\_\_\_\_