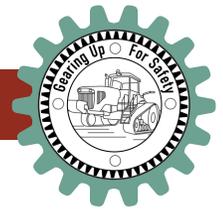


OPERATIONAL EXAM



INTRODUCTION

The Operational Exam is the third and final component in the Gearing Up for Safety testing process. Participants in this stage of testing should have successfully completed both the Written Exam and Pre-operational Exam. Also at the final stage of testing, youth should have operated a tractor and towed trailer prior to the test day (should have been determined at the conclusion of the Pre-operational Exam).

Based upon current requirements, each youth seeking certification must, in addition to passing a written exam, demonstrate his or her ability to operate a tractor safely with a two-wheeled trailed implement (trailer) on a course similar to one used for the 4-H Tractor Operator's Contest. Several course designs have been developed over the years and each has been used at some time as part of the certification process. Several different course layouts have been evaluated that are believed to meet the intent of the HOOAs for skills testing. The following five examples of course layouts are included in this section.

- Indiana 4-H Two-Wheel Tractor Operator Course
- Wisconsin Two-Wheel Tractor Operator Course
- Kentucky FFA Two-Wheel Tractor Driving Course
- National 4-H Two-Wheel Tractor Operator Course
- National Safe Tractor and Machinery Operation Program (NSTMOP) Course

To provide uniformity in scoring or recording individual performance of participants, a standardized scoring sheet has been developed. This score sheet is useable on any of the included course layouts or other standard courses used by tractor operator contests.

The Operational Exam instructions include set-up procedures, explanations for each evaluation point, and scoring. Items included in the set-up section should be addressed prior to the exam date. Failure to dedicate time to set-up will make administering the exam difficult. Gathering needed materials, finding an appropriate tractor, preparing a location, setting up the driving course, and specific instructions for participants before starting the exam are included in this section. Instructions for each evaluation point are included in the second section.

Although, exam administrators should be familiar with safe tractor operation, explanations are included to outline a specific purpose of each question established when conducting research to construct the test items. The third section contains information regarding proper scoring after the Operational Exam has been completed. Proper scoring is essential to be fair to all participants and ultimately affects certification. Successful completion of the Operational Exam will result in certification of youth as all three required testing components have been successfully completed under the GEARING UP FOR SAFETY testing process.

The Operational Exam is designed to evaluate safe operational skills of participants while independently operating an agricultural tractor with a towed trailer through a tractor driving course. There are three sections in the Operational Exam: starting safety, driving safety, and mounting and dismounting safety. Starting safety includes safety items that should be checked by participants before starting the engine. When the participant has completed these tasks and has been properly approved by the exam administrator, the engine can be started and driving through the obstacle course can begin.

While navigating the course participants are evaluated with respect to tractor operation, driving performance around the obstacles, and safe operating behavior. The dismounting safety section takes place from the time the participant finishes the driving course until the tractor is stopped and dismounted. It should be noted that the proposed scoring sheet contains items that would cause the student to automatically fail the Operational Exam if he or she fails to demonstrate a specific skill correctly or performs an unsafe procedure. The curriculum designers concluded that the performance of some skills and the exhibition of certain safe behaviors are so important that, if not performed correctly or performed in an unsafe manner, they constitute grounds for not passing a participant.