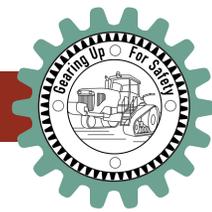


# PRE-OPERATIONAL SKILLS EXAM



## INTRODUCTION

The Pre-operational Exam is the second component of the GEARING UP FOR SAFETY testing process. Youth participating in this stage of testing should have successfully completed the Written Exam. Those youth not successfully completing the Written Exam should be encouraged to explore remedial activities in order to pass the exam or seek alternative forms of employment.

The instructions for the Pre-operational Exam include set-up, explanations for each question, and scoring the exam. Each section will guide the exam administrator through the necessary procedures for proper administration of the exam. Exam set-up includes information regarding gathering needed equipment, supplies, and time scheduling. Set-up also includes information on identifying an appropriate tractor to use, making an exam “key” (matching the exam to components on selected tractor) prior to exam day, and preparing a location to conduct the exam. The second section of the instructions contains information for administering each question of the exam. Although exam administrators should be familiar with tractor components and operation, these instructions are provided to inform the exam administrator on the purpose and scope of the questions as established by research conducted in developing the test items. Proper scoring, the third section of the instructions, is essential to be fair to all participants and to ensure that participants not ready to progress to the third stage of testing for any reason are not allowed to do so. Accurate scoring will depend on the “key” being made prior to testing (e.g. scoring participants with all questions while using a tractor missing some components will unfairly lower the overall score) and should be avoided. Participants successfully completing the Pre-operational Exam have one additional question to answer to determine their qualification to participation in the operational exam. Are they able to operate a tractor and trailer through an obstacle course? The purpose of the question is to determine if participants have experience operating a tractor and trailer prior to the Operational Exam. Driving on exam day is for evaluation purposes only—not teaching the participant how to drive. Practice should be completed prior to the exam. If a participant doesn’t have prior experience, then they should not be able to participate in the Operational Exam.

The Pre-operational Exam (found later in this section) is designed to evaluate youth prior to starting or operating an agricultural tractor for the Operational Exam. The exam has been designed to be administered by a skilled tractor operator while observing the youth taking the exam. These exam administrators could include an experienced farmer or implement service technician under the supervision of an extension educator or a high school agricultural science and business teacher. Results of the Pre-operational Exam may include postponing the youth’s participation in the operational exam if a lack of certain required physical attributes, skills, or basic knowledge required for safe operation is determined. To assess the pre-operational abilities of youth, the exam is divided into three sections: physical compatibility, identification of key components, and pre-operational safety. The physical compatibility section involves assessing if the participant is able to reach all essential controls (e.g. clutch, brakes, gear shifters) while properly secured in the operator’s seat (tractor should be ROPS and seat belt equipped). Potential hazards involving vision or other physical limitations also are part of this section and should be addressed prior to participating in the exam. Identifying key components involves participants identifying items that are essential to tractor operation, maintenance, and safety. The last section, the safety inspection, involves participants actually performing some pre-operational checks and inspections prior to operation. Appropriate supplies are needed for some items in this section and should be gathered during setup. Items included in the inspection component reflect standard pre-operational inspection guidelines included in most operator manuals.