

Fire warning issued

The Department of Environmental Resources, Bureau of Forestry, is cautioning motorists with 1975 cars equipped with catalytic converters that studies have revealed that the converters can cause grass and forest fires.

Under normal operating conditions, exhaust gas temperatures are significantly increased within the converter for the purpose of reducing the engine's chemical emissions. The skin temperatures of converters have been reported as ranging from 800 degrees F to 1200 degrees F, depending on the type of converter. Malfunctioning engines, out of tune engines, or vehicles under a strain such as towing or going up a grade, can result in very high converter temperatures because of an increase in unburned fuel reaching the catalyst. When this occurs, temperatures may go above 2500 degrees F, twice the temperature of a lighted cigarette. In addition, reports indicate that when catalytic converters reach these extreme temperatures, components are sometimes expelled through the tail pipe, exiting at temperatures around 2000 degrees F.

These temperatures are potential fire hazards and may start grass and brush fires. Dry grass and dry pine needles begin burning at temperatures between 700 degrees F to 800 degrees F.

Contact time for ignition decreases dramatically in the 800 degree F to 1100 degree F range with almost instantaneous ignition occurring between 1000 degrees F and 1100 degrees F.

With the upcoming hunting season, 1975 cars may become quite a problem as hunters park their cars in grass fields or sit and idle their vehicles in high grass areas, or drive through these areas. Owners of 1975 vehicles should be made

aware of this potential fire danger to prevent grass and forest fires, damage to their vehicles, and injury to themselves. Care should be taken when parking off the road and making sure the vehicle is operating properly.

Under Pennsylvania laws, a person responsible for starting a forest fire is liable for the cost of extinguishing the fire and the damage it causes. This pertains to fires started accidentally as well as those started on purpose.

LIFE on the farm

By Dieter Krieg

Sitting in the shed, the corn picker looks dead. In action, out in the field, it is deadly.

It all starts with the power-take-off shaft, which transfers power from the tractor to the picker. The rotating motion of the shaft is mechanically transformed into other types of motion, until the entire machine vibrates and hums with activity.

Some parts move up and down, others from side to side. Most moving components spin on axles — and they do so with amazing speed. That's where the danger comes in.

Every year lives are lost because the operator of the machine neglected to turn the power off while making adjustments, repairs, or removing debris from around the snapping rolls. The speedy chains and rolls can't tell the difference between ears of corn and a man's hand.

The snapping rolls travel at a speed of 12 feet per second. Unfortunately, too many men have tested the accuracy of that statement by ignoring the warning printed in several places on the picker: "Keep Hands and Feet Away From Moving Parts, Turn the Machine Off Before Attempting to Make Repairs . . ."

A man's reflexes aren't fast enough to compete with the speed of the machine.

While the picker's countless moving parts are dangerous, they are also beautiful in the way they all work together to perform the job.

The orchestrated movements come close to beating out their own symphony. There are the spinning gears and rolls; the racing and clattering chains; the humming blower; and the snapping, crackling noises of corn as it tumbles along its path to the wagon behind.

The wind provides its effect as it whistles through the remaining stalks in the field. Even the tractor has a part in this outdoor orchestra. The sound of the engine is somewhere between a roar and a hum. Its rear wheels create crunching sounds as stripped corn stalks are crushed beneath them.

Amidst the ever-present noises of the corn-picker and tractor, and the dust which accompanies the job, the farmer continues his work until sundown — often perfectly silhouetted against the huge, red-orange autumn sky.

Good records needed

Form A to Z, whatever the small business, the Internal Revenue Service points out there's a common characteristic to almost every successful enterprise — good records. According to the IRS, good records are important to the success of a business because they:

- help keep track of profits
- help determine depreciation allowances and enable the businessperson to get full tax deductions
- show which business income is taxable and which may not be taxable
- substantiate information provided on tax forms and help answer a tax examiner's questions during and IRS audit
- establish reportable earnings for social security purposes.

Business records need not follow any particular form to meet IRS requirements, as long as the records clearly establish all income, deductions, and credits. The Internal Revenue Service is ready to assist persons operating small businesses and to provide free pamphlets covering a variety of business topics.

Innocent!

A soft-spoken witness insisted on directing his testimony to the prosecutor, making it hard for the members of the jury to hear him. "Will the witness please speak to the jury?" the judge finally ordered. Turning, the witness looked the jury over, nodded affably, and said brightly "Howdy!"



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