

May 2026

Using safe methods can prevent fatal injuries when changing tractor tyres

What happened

A farmer was fatally injured while changing a rear tractor tyre on a Canterbury farm in January 2026. The person was working alone and was fitting a new tyre onto a rim. It appears they became trapped between the tyre and rim as the bead seated and the tyre dropped under its own weight.

Why this is important

- Large agricultural tyres and rims are extremely heavy (in this case, the tyre was about 316 kg and the rim was about 196 kg) and can move suddenly and with significant force during fitting
- When fitting a tyre onto a rim off the vehicle, workers can be exposed to crush and asphyxiation hazards if positioned inside the tyre or in pinch points between the tyre and rim
- Changing tyres yourself may seem quicker or cheaper, but without the right equipment, training, and method, the risk of fatal harm is high.

Contributing factors identified

WorkSafe identified these contributing factors:

- working alone, with no one present to help with handling, spotting, or emergency response
- tool choice and body positioning, with straight tyre irons reportedly present and industry guidance noting curved/C-bar levers can provide improved leverage and alternative body positioning.

What you should do

To reduce the risk of serious harm when changing large agricultural tyres:

- use a competent tyre professional where possible, especially for large agricultural tyres and split or complex rims

- if doing the task yourself, you should be competent and experienced to do so, and seek advice from competent tyre fitter
- avoid working alone when handling heavy tyres or rims, or when using high-force methods such as levering beads
- plan the job, including the weight of the tyre and rim, the stability of the set-up, pinch points, and how the tyre or rim could move at each step
- keep out of crush zones and avoid positioning yourself inside the tyre or between the tyre and rim
- use the right tools for agricultural tyres including tyre paste, follow manufacturer guidance, and avoid improvised tools
- make sure the tractor is stable if you are working on it, including parking on firm, level ground, applying the park brake, chocking wheels, using rated jacks and axle stands or blocks designed for the load, and checking stability before removing wheels
- have an emergency plan, including reliable communications, first aid capability, and a way to get help quickly. See [Workplace emergency plans](#)

Further information

For more information, see tyre industry guidance identified in this investigation report: *USTMA Agriculture tires demounting and mounting procedures (August 2023)* and *the Firestone demounting handbook*.

Note: This safety alert is intended to share learnings. Avoid sharing identifying details unless approvals are obtained and the content is appropriately anonymised.