

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



November 17, 2008 Safety Tips: Skid-Steer Loader



Most all of our research units have or have access to a skid steer loader. Like any piece of motorized equipment, there are hazards that exist when using these loaders. The most common hazards are runovers and entrapments. Runovers are the result of an operator falling out of the machine while it is running, an assistant on the ground who is assisting the operator, bystanders, or riders in the bucket.

There are cases where an operator was outside the frame and tried to use the controls inside, and the lift arms come down on one or more body parts. Another type of entrapment hazard is miscommunication between an operator and a helper on the ground.

Other types of hazards are faulty hydraulic systems, lack of visibility around the machine, and slips or falls from improper mounting and dismounting from the machine. There have been cases of victims crushed from falling objects.

Following are some suggestions that if followed could help prevent the majority of skid steer injuries and fatalities:

## PAY ATTENTION TO BASICS -

- Keep protective structures in place.
- Wear a seat belt or use a restraining bar.
- Use the 3-point method for mounting or dismounting.
- Never exceed the loader's capacity.
- Lower bucket to park safely.

## REGULARLY INSPECT -

- Controls and levers for safe operation.
- Safety start devices.
- Bucket & attachment locking/hooking points.

## NO RIDERS ANYWHERE -

- No one, adult, child or baby should be in the machine. It hinders visibility and interferes with the controls. There isn't sufficient room for a small kid, or small adult.
- Buckets don't have shock absorbers - children & adults can easily bounce out.

## IF YOU NEED TO LEAVE THE SEAT -

- Lower the arms and stop the engine.
- If you can't lower the arms, then lock the lift arms with the mechanical lockout system.

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## KEEP TRACK OF SHIFTING BALANCE -

- A loaded bucket shifts the weight to the front axle from the back axle.
- Move the skid steer with heavy end facing up hill.
- Keep bucket level as lift arms are moved or as loader moves up and down a slope.

## KNOW YOUR FIELD OF VISION -

- The arms, bucket & size of the load alter your field of vision.
- Get familiar with all the blind spots.
- Watch for small children. Sometimes you can't see them at all.

## OPERATE ONLY FROM THE OPERATOR'S SEAT -

- Keep all body parts in the cab.
- Keep bystanders at a safe distance.

## STAY ALERT TO MOVING PARTS -

- Never swing, lift, or move a load over anyone.
- Know the pinch points.
- Inadvertent bumping of controls can result in instant collapsing of lift arms.

## WHEN TRAVELING -

- Keep the bucket low. If vision is blocked, travel backwards.
- Slow travel keeps the machine under control.
- Avoid hot-rod starts, stops, turns & changes in direction.
- If you must travel on roads, an effective slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem and flashing warning lights are critical.

## WHEN USING THE BUCKET -

- Tie down loose loads which can fall from the bucket.
- Use the right bucket type for the job.
- Don't overload. Know the bucket's limits!!

I don't see seatbelts being used universally on the loaders around our stations, but we should use them religiously. The same is true with skid steer loaders, as with tractors with ROPS and SEATBELTS. 99.9% of the operators that use them won't be killed if they have an accident.

**IF YOU CAN'T BE GOOD - BE CAREFUL!**

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**IF YOU CAN'T BE CAREFUL -WE'LL GET A CALL!**