



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Skid Steer Loader Safety



Skid steer loaders are very versatile, compact and powerful. They are also extremely dangerous if they are operated or maintained improperly.

There are many uses for them in agriculture and construction environments. According to reports, between 1992 and 1997, there were 37 workers in 10 states who died while using or maintaining skid steer loaders. The fatal incidents were:

- **10** - of these fatalities occurred as the worker was standing or working beneath the bucket.
- **11** - were caught between the bucket and the machine's frame (five while entering or exiting the machine).
- **8** - were caused by the driver leaning outside the operating compartment into the path of the ascending or descending path of the lift arms and was crushed between the arms and the frame.
- **6** - of the remaining accidents were from rollovers.

SKID STEER LOADER SAFETY HAZARDS-

- **Run-over by the machine:**
Operator falls from the operator station.
Operator carrying a person in the bucket and they fall out.
- **Caught in an attachment:**
Operator attempts to maneuver the machine from outside, reaching in for the controls.
Miscommunication between the driver and a helper.
- **Crushed between machine parts:**
Operator attempts to reach in for the controls and is caught in the lift arms.
Working under a bucket and it malfunctions or the operator fails to see the location of the helper.
- **Trapped by loads that roll or drop into the operator station:**
The load is too large and bulky for the machine and it rolls back into the cockpit or operator station.
Small loads can also roll back and injure the operator.
- **Pinned by rollover or tipping of the machine:**
A load can tip forward from excessive weight (Loaders should have ignition interlocks that prevent operation of the machine if the seatbelt is not buckled. Operators sometimes disable the safety devices making them more vulnerable). Also loaders can tip or rollover if they are operated on steep slopes or uneven terrain.
- **Improper mounting or dismounting:**
Either of these hazards can result in various types of injuries, most of which are debilitating.
- **Overtaxed or overloaded hydraulic lines:**
These can result in a high pressure leak, in certain situations close to the operator's body. An injection from a high pressure leak can penetrate your body with so much pressure that it can cause a limb irritation, if not treated ASAP.

SKID STEER LOADER SAFETY TIPS-

- ✓ **Get in and out safely-**
Enter and exit the equipment according to the manufacturer's warnings and instructions.
~Park on level ground.
~Before leaving the seat, lower the lift arms and attachment flat on the ground.
~Turn off the engine.
~Engage the parking brake.
~Move controls until locked (if applicable).
- ✓ **Use control levers properly-**
~Use the loader's controls only from the operator's position.
~Do not use the controls as grab handles.
- ✓ **Maintain, Inspect, and operate carefully-**
~**Never perform maintenance or service under a raised lift arm** unless a manufacturer-approved lift arm support is used properly.
~**Never** modify, bypass, or remove lift arm support devices, control interlocks, seatbelts, safety bars, roll-over protective structure (ROPS) or side-screens.
~**Always** use a seatbelt and keep your head, arms and legs inside of the cab while operating the loader.
~**Maintain and inspect** equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
~**Prior** to raising the lift arms and cage, support the skid-steer loader according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ✓ **Emphasize training-**
~**Read and follow** the manufacturer's operating and service procedures specified in the manual and on machine decals.
~**All** operators and service personnel must be **trained** in the safe use and maintenance of the equipment and demonstrate competency in these activities.
~**Obtain** training courses and videos from equipment dealers or the manufacturer.

PERSONAL PROTECTION-

Skid steer loaders are, in most conditions, used in dirty and dusty environments, in buildings with noise bouncing off the walls or in enclosed areas with gas fumes reeling around the operator. With this in mind the operator should wear:

- Hard hat for shock protection
- Steeled-toed shoes or boots
- Long pants and gloves
- Eye and hearing protection (depending upon conditions)

BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY!

~~~ **BE ALERT** ~~~

<> **ACCIDENTS HURT** <>