



# MAFES Dawg Tracks

September 29, 2014



*Safety Tips: Skid - Steer Loader Safety*



Skid-steer loaders are compact, versatile and powerful. They can be extremely dangerous if they aren't operated and maintained properly. Their versatility makes them very useful in construction and agriculture environments.

The National Institute of Safety & Health FACE program revealed that from 1992 thru 1997, there were 37 deaths in 10 states attributed to using skid steer loaders or maintaining them.

**The fatal incidents were attributed to:**

**10** – Fatalities occurred as the worker was standing or working beneath the bucket.

**11** – Were caught between the bucket and the machine's frame while entering or exiting the machine.

**8** – Caused by the driver leaning outside the operator 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 LOADERS CAN BE VERY DANGEROUS-**

- ✓ Skid-steer loaders are useful machines, but they can also be very dangerous.
- ✓ It's very important that you never operate a loader unless you are authorized and are properly trained. Seek out your supervisor if you have any questions about the safe operation of the loader.
- ✓ Serious injuries or deaths have occurred when skid-steer loader operators:
  - ~are pinned between the bucket and the frame.
  - ~are pinned between the lift arms and the frame.
  - ~are pinned between the loader and another object.
  - ~lose control of the loader and it overturns.
  - ~allow passengers to ride in the bucket.
  - ~allow children to operate the machine.
- ✓ Serious injuries can also occur when operators either take off or modify such safety equipment as the rollover protective structure (ROPS), the seatbelt, restraint bars, side screens or overhead shield. **Never remove, modify, or bypass skid steer loader safety devices.**

**GETTING ON AND OFF A SKID-STEER LOADER-**

- Before getting on a skid-steer loader, walk completely around the machine. Check to see that no one is under or close to it.
- Be sure that the arms are lowered and the bucket is flat on the ground. The only time you should get on a loader with the arms up is if it is held up by a mechanical restraining device. The hydraulic system isn't enough.
- When getting on the loader, face the seat and grab the handholds on the machine. Don't use the control levers in place of handholds.
- Never jump on or off the machine. Use both hands when getting on or off.

- Before leaving the operator's seat, lower the bucket flat to the ground, put the controls in neutral, set the parking brake and turn off the engine. Face the machine when you are getting off.

**OPERATING A SKID-STEER LOADER-**

- Carefully review the manufacturer's instruction manual before operating a loader. Ask your supervisor if there are comments that you don't understand. The manual will help you become familiar with the machine parts, the safety devices and how to properly start the machine.
- Be sure you are seated in the operator's seat before starting the machine.
- Stay completely inside the cab, making sure that your arms, legs, feet, hands and head remain inside.
- Stay seated when you operate the controls.
- Wear your seatbelt and keep it fastened. Also, keep the restraint bar in place.
- Carry your load low. Don't carry items that could easily fall off or roll off.
- Avoid sudden stops, starts or turns.
- Load, unload and turn on level ground if at all possible.
- Don't drive across steep slopes. Drive straight up and down, with the heavy end of the loader pointed uphill and the bucket lowered to the ground.
- Always look back when you're operating a loader in reverse. Make sure no one is in the way.

**OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS-**

- Do not allow passengers on a skid-steer loader.
- Don't park a loader on a hill or slope.
- Never lift, swing or move a load over another person.
- Be careful not to overload the bucket.
- Keep your skid-steer loader in safe operating condition. One way to do this is to keep the controls free of mud, ice, snow or debris.
- Make sure all warning lights are clear and visible. Be sure the loader has a slow moving vehicle emblem mounted on the back (SMV) and that it is clear and visible.
- Always be on the lookout for hazards, such as cables, branches, rocks, stumps, ditches and sudden drop-offs.
- Stay away from the edge of gullies and the banks of rivers.
- Don't wear torn or ripped clothing or clothing with drawstrings.
- Don't operate a loader if you are overly tired, ill or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

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 MAFES / MSU-ES (662) 566-2201 5/20/2014  
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SMOOTH OPERATORS**



**SAFETY'S INTENTION  
IS ACCIDENT PREVENTION**