Landscaping – Loaders – Fact Sheets



WHAT SHOULD I CHECK BEFORE STARTING THE ENGINE?

Check the following before starting the engine:

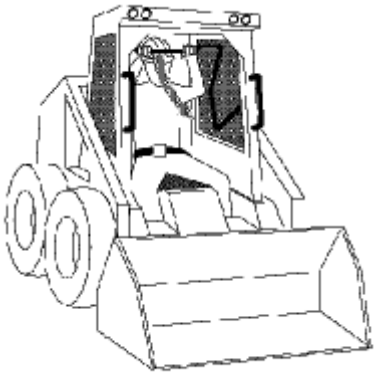
- fuel and oil levels,
- hydraulic fluid level,
- cooling system fluid,
- operator cab, seat belt and seat bar,
- lift arm and cylinder pivot points, and
- tires.

Follow the manufacturer’s recommendations about how often to lubricate all the “lube” points.

What should I do when using a loader?

Set-up:

- Read, understand, and follow instructions in the manufacturer’s operating manual and safety decals on the loader.
- Know how to load, tie-down, transport, and unload the loader safely.
- Use only manufacturer-approved attachments and buckets.
- Always ensure the attachment locking devices are in place, even if you are switching attachments for only a few minutes. If not locked, an attachment could break free and roll down the loader arms or fall onto a bystander.
- Wear hearing and head protection.
- Remain alert at all times when operating the loader.
- Ensure all required safety shields are on the tractor and in good condition.
- Use the safety treads and grab handles to get on and off the loader.
- Use seat bar and fasten seat belt if the tractor has a roll-over protective structure (ROPS). (Do NOT wear a seatbelt if the tractor does NOT have a ROPS.)



Operation:

- Keep your feet on the pedals when operating the loader.
- Keep other people away from work area.
- Drive with caution and check behind you before backing up.
- Travel with the bucket or attachments as close to the ground as possible to maintain equipment stability and give the operator an unobstructed view.
- Load the bucket evenly (i.e. weight should not be lop-sided) and do not load beyond the limits or rated capacity of the equipment. You can lose stability and steering control.
- Load, unload, and turn on level ground.
- Lower the bucket when not using the loader.
- Go straight up and down slopes, keeping the heavy end of the loader pointing uphill – back down slopes slowly. Avoid driving forward when going downhill with a loaded bucket.
- Look out for holes, rocks or obstructions which may cause a roll-over or loss of control.
- If you become confused about operation of controls from having to perform too many functions at once, remove hands and feet from the controls. All machine functions should stop when pressure on the controls is released.

Repairs:

- Turn off the engine before attempting any repairs or adjustments.
- Lower the bucket and set the parking brakes before getting off the seat.
- If the equipment is going to be left unattended for some time, remove the ignition key.
- When checking for leaks in the hydraulic system, use a piece of paper or cardboard – never use your hands since oil from a pin-hole leak under high pressure can penetrate the skin. If this does happen, get immediate medical attention.

What should I avoid when operating a loader?

- Do not operate loader if you are ill, over-tired or on medication causing drowsiness.
- Do not use loader without an approved roll-over protection (ROP) and falling object protection (FOP) cab.
- Never remove the ROP structure. Keep side screens in place.
- Never exceed rated operating capacity.
- Never attempt to repair, adjust or unplug equipment with the Power Takeoff (PTO) engaged.

- Never attempt to operate steering levers or any other hydraulic controls while standing outside of the cab.
- Do not carry passengers.
- Do not use the loader as a lift for people, as a fence post puller, or as a work platform.
- Do not make sharp, fast turns or move bucket controls abruptly.
- Do not travel or turn with lift arms up.
- Do not leave loader with engine running or with lift arms up.
- Do not travel across a slope: go straight up or down slopes with the “heavy” end of the loader pointed uphill.
- Do not approach overhead wires.

How should I go up and down a slope with a full bucket?

- Keep the heavy end pointing up the slope!



Loader going up



Loader going down

How should I go up and down a slope with an empty bucket?

Keep the heavy end up pointing up the slope!



Loader going down



Loader going up

What kind of loaders does this information apply to?

This information applies to smaller, front-end loaders or skid steer loaders. “Smaller” is a relative term; compact is another name for smaller loaders. Different manufacturers may rate their loaders up to 40 – 80 horsepower (or about 30 – 40 kW) as compact loaders. Some manufacturers use the term “compact loader” to mean what is usually called a skid steer loader or skidsteer loader used in landscaping. More commonly, “compact loader” refers to an articulating wheel loader; i.e., a loader that has two sections connected by a flexible joint and that can be steered by “bending” at the joint.

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