Skid-steer Loaders – Landscaping Meeting Kit



WHAT'S AT STAKE

Skid-steer loaders are indispensable in the conduct of construction work both outside and indoor work operations. Operations with skid-steer loaders require close co-operation with supervisory personnel and operators.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Skid-steer loaders can cause serious injuries or death if the machine overturns and crushes the operator, a worker is struck by the bucket, or a worker standing on the bucket is injured by a fall or run over by the machine.

Common hazards in skid-steer loaders include:

- Crush injuries or death from rollovers
- Crush injuries from attachments
- Catching fingers, clothing, or jewellery in pinch points
- Fire and spills when refuelling

Incident examples

- A worker was killed after he stopped his skid-steer loader at the edge of an excavation. When he started to lower the bucket, the loader tipped forward and fell into the excavation.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Initial Skid-Steer Loader Safety Checklist

- Make sure you are familiar with the loader and its safe use. Check the operator's manual.
- Make sure the loader is in good operating order and there are no warning lights.
- Check the worksite. Know the location of underground natural gas pipes and other utilities.

- Barricade the work area and keep bystanders away.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including steel-toe footwear, a hard hat, and hearing protection.
- Wear full-length, close-fitting clothing.
- Remove rings, bracelets, and other jewellery that might catch on controls.

Starting the machine

- Face the machine when you get onto it. Never start the machine from outside the cab.
- Adjust the seat to reduce back pain, put on the seat belt, and lower the seat bar if there is one.
- Make sure the rollover protective structure (ROPS) is in place.
- Before starting the machine, make sure the area is clear, and the brake is on.
- If you are not familiar with the particular attachment you will be using, practise manoeuvring it before starting work.

On the Job

- Steer smoothly, making small adjustments and slow turns.
- Carry loads as low as possible.
- Never stand, lean, or reach out of the cab when the engine is running.
- Avoid rough terrain.
- Drive up or down rather than across slopes.
- Prevent anyone from passing under a raised bucket or other attachment.
- Don’t allow any passengers on the loader.

End of Job

- Park the machine with attachments flat on the ground. Stop the engine, remove the key, and set the parking brake.
- If repairs require the attachments to be off the ground, use approved braces on the arms to ensure that the attachment will not come down unexpectedly.
- When transporting the machine, follow the manufacturer’s recommendations for loading, tie down, and unloading.

Refuelling

- Turn off the engine and allow it to cool before refuelling.
- Extinguish all ignition sources (for example, cigarettes).
- Use only an approved fuel container in good condition.
- Keep the nozzle in contact with the fuel tank.
- If you spill fuel on your clothing, change immediately.
- Never overfill the tank.
- Replace the cap and tighten it securely.

Responsibilities of Employers

- Maintain and repair skid-steer loaders.
- Ensure that workers are certified to operate a skid-steer loader.
- Demonstrate how the safety features work (for example, the ROPS and supporting braces for repair work), and instruct workers not to remove any of these features.

- Demonstrate how to lock out the equipment before performing repairs or maintenance.
- Remind workers about the PPE they are required to wear.
- Provide adequate supervision after training.

FINAL WORD

The key thing to remember if you are a less experienced skid-steer loader operator is to practice maneuvering the machine before you start to work.