Skid Steer Safety Meeting Kit



WHAT IS A SKID STEER?

This type of heavy equipment is available with a track or wheels. It is a smaller piece of equipment with a metal structure and two lifting arms on each side. It’s compact size makes it a popular machine in smaller work projects and locations.

The cab is often caged and a more popular attachment is a bucket.

RISK OF INJURY

Skid steer loaders put workers at risk of rollover and runover incidents.

For example, the operator’s seat and controls are between the lift arms and in front of the lift arm pivot points. Thus operators of skid steer loaders must enter and exit from the loader through the front of the machine and over the bucket. If the worker does not exit or enter properly, a foot or hand control may be activated and may cause movement of the lift arms, bucket, or other attachment. Such an incident could cause death or serious injury.

HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATING A SKID STEER

- Struck-by hazards pose a serious threat for those working around skid steers. The operation of these machines often includes working in high traffic areas. Reversing is also a common necessity during work tasks. These factors paired with blind spots creates a huge risk for struck-by incidents to occur.
- Crushed-by hazards are also a major concern while operating a skid steer. Workers who are on the ground around this equipment can be pinned and crushed between a skid steer and another object if they find themselves in the line of fire. Those operating the skid steer can also fall victim to being crushed by their own machine.
- Tip overs or roll overs are another leading cause for fatalities of the operators of skid steers.
- Pinch points are common on skid steers and can easily lead to injuries to body parts.

WORKERS BEWARE

Workers need to take these steps to protect themselves.

1. **Follow safe operating procedures:**

- Operate the loader from the operator's compartment—never from the outside.
- Stay seated when operating the loader controls.
- Work with the seat belt fastened and the restraint bar in place.
- Keep your arms, legs, and head inside the cab while operating the loader.
- Load, unload, and turn on level ground when possible.
- Travel and turn with the bucket in the lowest position possible.
- Operate on stable surfaces only.
- Do not travel across slopes. Travel straight up or down, with the heavy end of the machine pointed uphill.
- Keep bystanders away from the work area.
- Never disable safety devices.

2. **Enter and exit from the loader safely:**

- Enter the loader only when the bucket is flat on the ground—or when the lift arm supports are in place.
- When entering the loader, face the seat and keep a three point contact with handholds and steps.
- Never use foot or hand controls for steps or handholds.
- Keep all walking and working surfaces clean and clear.
- Before leaving the operator's seat,
- lower the bucket flat to the ground,
- set the parking brake, and
- turn off the engine.

3. **Maintain the machine in safe operating condition:**

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep the foot controls free of mud, ice, snow, and debris.
- Regularly inspect and maintain
- Interlocked controls
- Safety belts
- Restraint bars
- Side screens
- Rollover protective structures (ROPS)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

- Always use and maintain the safety devices provided by manufacturers:
- Lift arm supports
- Interlocked controls
- Seat belts
- ROPS
- Follow safe operating procedures.
- Follow safe mounting and dismounting procedures.
- Follow proper maintenance procedures.
- Train workers to read an follow the manufacturer's procedures for operating and servicing skid steer loaders.

FINAL WORD

While skid steers are not as imposing as huge articulating dump trucks or excavators, they still are dangerous to operate. Lack of training and complacency of the danger of these machines results in many injuries every single year.