



## Safety Brief – 2011-9

### Skid Steer Loader Safety Tips

Given its size, a skid steer loader seems like it would be an easily controllable machine, but size can be deceiving. It is important to keep in mind that the power a skid steer can generate can sometimes overwhelm its operator. Accidents that can happen with a skid steer loader include rollovers, runovers, and pinning between the bucket and the frame or between the lift arms and the frame.

#### Safety while entering and exiting

One of the most common ways an accident occurs is from the operator entering and exiting the machine. Most of the skid steer loaders must be entered or exited from the front, over the bucket or other attachment. Because of this, it is very important that safety precautions are followed when entering or exiting the machine.

- Enter only when the bucket or other attachment is flat on the ground or when the liftarm 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 of debris.
- Before leaving the operator's seat:
  - Lower the bucket or other attachment flat to the ground
  - Set the parking brake
  - Turn off the engine



**Skid steer loaders may seem like small, manageable machines, but using them improperly can lead to injuries or fatalities.**

## Use caution during operation

Beyond safely entering and exiting the machine, it is vitally important to maintain safe operation of the skid steer loader. The operator should always read the operator's manual first before operating the machine because it provides specific information about that particular machine. Some of the safety rules to follow include:

- Work with the seat belt fastened and the restraint bar in place
- Operating the loader from the operator's compartment, never from the outside
- Stay seated when operating the loader controls
- Keep your arms, legs, and head inside the cab while operating the loader, when possible
- Plan to load, unload, and turn on level ground
- Never exceed the manufacturer's recommended load capacity for the machine
- Avoid traveling across slopes; travel straight up and down with the heavy end of the machine pointed uphill, always facing the direction of travel
- Keep bystanders away from the work areas, and
- Never modify or bypass safety device

## Built-In safeguards

The safeguards with which most skid steer loaders are equipped are there to prevent fatal accidents. The first safeguard comes in the form of interlocking. This means that the controls or fixture (such as a seat belt and restraint bar) must be secured or activated before operational controls can function.

The other safeguards are:

- Rollover protective structures,
- Falling object protective structures,
- Side screens, and
- Seat belts or operator restraint bars.

It is also important to keep safety in mind when maintaining or inspecting the skid steer loader. Maintenance or service should never be performed under a raised lift arm unless a manufacturer-approved lift arm support is used properly. The equipment should be maintained and inspected according to the manufacturer's instructions. The skid steer loader should also be supported according to the manufacturer's instructions prior to raising the lift arms and cage.

## Bottom Line

Skid steer loaders may seem like small, manageable machines, but using them improperly can lead to injuries or fatalities. It is important to always use and maintain the safety devices provided by the manufacturers, to follow safe operating procedures and safe mounting/dismounting procedures, and to train operators to follow the manufacturer's procedures for operating and servicing skid steer loaders.

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