



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Compactor and Baler Safety

Compacting and baling machines have uses in many industries, but are involved in a number of fatalities and serious injuries. Often, lack of proper lockout/tagout procedures is to blame. Many workers have been killed while attempting to clear a jam from an operating compactor or inadvertently activating equipment that was not properly de-energized. Proper employee training, paired with functioning machine guards and safety devices, are essential to fully protect workers.

Be familiar with and use all of the safety devices on compactors and balers. Guards, conveyors, remote chutes, control switches, and safety interlocks for doors and ports are designed to keep you out of the compression chamber and harm's way. Do not try to bypass safety features in order to perform maintenance, clear a jam, or ease the loading process. Use access ladders and platforms, or walk around moving conveyers. Use safe access points and consider fall protection if you are working over gravity-fed chutes or chambers. Watch out for the baling materials because they are under pressure and can snap if they are overloaded.

Follow the safe work practices designed for your machine and job tasks. Always clear the area and account for all workers before you activate a compactor or baler. NEVER reach into or enter a baler or compactor unless it has been de-energized. ALWAYS use lockout/tagout procedures before you perform maintenance, inspections, or clear jams. Jams are a frequent occurrence in baling and compacting operations, so design your lockout/tagout procedures to be efficient and effective by marking the power points and wiring the machinery together to reduce the number of lockouts needed.

Safety precautions:

- Regularly inspect the baler or compactor prior to operations to verify it appears to be in proper working order.
- Confirm that safety guards, gates, and screens on the baler or compactor are functioning, and the machine does not operate when these are open.
- Ensure operators are all over the age of 18 and no one under the age of 18 is allowed in the area where the machine is while it is in operation.
- Never climb inside the machine or insert a hand or leg to try to resolve a problem with jammed or stuck materials.
- If the machine has been tagged or marked that it needs repair, do not operate it.
- Never attempt to fix a broken machine yourself unless you have been trained and certified to perform maintenance and repairs on your compactors.

- Wear safety gloves, goggles, earplugs, and hardhats as needed when working around, operating, and using waste balers and compactors.
- Require authorized operators to enter a passcode into a keypad in order to operate the machine.
- Always leave the machine in the “off” position whenever it is not in use.

Lockout/tagout:

Workers may be unaware that a machine remains operational even during a jam. Unless the power supply to the equipment is cut, a worker can activate it inadvertently. Be certain employees are properly trained to de-energize equipment before clearing a jam or when performing maintenance on compactors and balers. Lockout/ tagout training should include:

- A clear outline of the hazards of working with the machine;
- Identification and clear marking of all power disconnects;
- Steps to shut down and secure the machine;
- Designating safe placement and removal of lockout/tagout devices and the person who is responsible for them; and
- Notification process to be followed before lockout/tagout devices are applied and before they are removed from a machine.

Machine guarding:

Machine guards must be used on all compactors and balers. Newer machines should already be equipped with point-of-operation guards, but older machinery may need to be retrofitted. Workers should not be able to easily bypass guards.

Compacting and baling equipment attached to a conveyer should be interconnected so that a single lockable device will de-energize and isolate power to both machines. If this is not done, workers may mistakenly believe that shutting off power to the conveyer de-energizes the baler as well. All emergency stop devices also should be interconnected.

Remember:

Follow the safe work practices designed for your machine and job tasks.

Always clear the area and account for all workers before you activate a compactor or baler.

NEVER reach into or enter a baler or compactor unless it has been de-energized.

Don't let a compactor or baler put the squeeze on your safety!!

