



SAFETY UNLIMITED, INC.

Weekly Safety Meeting

Skid-Steer Loader Safety

Skid steering loaders are a common piece of heavy equipment found on many jobsites. They are capable of being equipped with a multitude of implements operated from the host machine's hydraulic system.

Skid steer loaders are small, powerful machines that may be operated safely by following the general safety requirements for heavy equipment and some rules specific to skid steer loader operations.

Skid steers are incredibly versatile and highly maneuverable, but they can also be very dangerous.

Proper precautions must be taken to prevent a serious injury or a fatality.

Hazards:

- Falls and rollovers (from instability and overloading);
- Striking workers and pedestrians;
- Striking hidden obstacles;
- Being struck by loader arms and attachments;
- Being struck by falling materials;
- Slips and trips;
- Working around leading edges; and
- Exposure to fumes, noise, and vibration.

Identify Controls - Know Your Machine:

- Get the proper training and review the user manual before operating a skid steer.
- Perform regular safety checks and document your findings.
- Check all high-pressure hydraulics for leaks.
- Find the rated operation capacity (ROC) for the machine and never exceed it. Overloading can make a skid steer excessively front-heavy. This can cause instability and reduce handling response.
- Never remove the rollover protective structure (ROPS) from a skid steer and keep side screens in place. People have been crushed to death when they were caught between the loader arms and the skid steer frame on unscreened machines.
- Always use the seat belt and/or the seat bar.
- When getting out of the machine, always turn it off first and lower the bucket or attachment.
- Always turn your machine off before changing attachments.

- Make sure any attachments you use are rated for your machine. Remember that an attachment will reduce your load capacity.

Know Your Surroundings:

- Use barriers or another method to cordon off your work area. That way, you can concentrate on your work without having to worry about other people in the vicinity.
- If you have to work near other people, make sure you know where the blind spots are on a skid steer. Make eye contact with anyone entering the area you're working in and turn off the machine if you need to have a conversation.
- Never lift, swing, or otherwise move a load over anyone.
- Watch out for uneven floors or for objects buried in the ground. If the machine hits them, it may stop suddenly.
- If working on an elevated floor, make sure the floor can support the weight of the machine.
- If working on an elevated slab, make sure bumpers or barriers are installed in front of all openings.
- If working near a trench, always stay a safe distance from the edge.

Know the Safe Operating Procedures:

- Adjust your speed to suit the working conditions and terrain. Avoid sudden stops, starts, and turns.
- Try to go around obstacles, rather than over or through them.
- Keep the bucket as low as possible when traveling or turning. A skid steer becomes less stable the higher the loader arms are raised.
- Never use a skid steer as a work platform or for carrying workers—it's against the law.
- Never try to operate the steering levers or any other hydraulic controls while standing outside the cab. Because of the hydrostatic drive, the skid steer will respond instantly when the levers are engaged.
- Make sure that the attachment locking devices are engaged, even if you are switching attachments for only a few minutes. If an attachment is not locked, it could break free and roll back down the loader arms.
- Use hearing protection when operating a skid steer.

Remember:

Skid steering loaders are manufactured in a variety of sizes, each with its own characteristics for operation. Operators must thoroughly familiarize themselves with the machine they are to operate. Always test run an unfamiliar machine in an open, unpopulated area before attempting to perform work, especially around ground personnel.

REMEMBER THAT UNPREPARED...MEANS UNSAFE!!

