



Weekly Safety Meeting

Heavy Equipment Safety

The use of heavy equipment on a job site is vital to the overall success of a construction project. However, unauthorized or unwise use of heavy equipment can result in personal injury, loss of life, or severe loss of materials needed to complete the project.

Only highly skilled operators who have demonstrated the ability and necessary skills to do so safely should operate heavy equipment such as excavators, motors, graders, rollers, and bulldozers. Ground-based workers should be trained in how to work safely around the equipment and how to stay clear. Unsafe practices by either the operator or those around the equipment can create very dangerous situations. Serious injuries can occur if the equipment strikes a worker or if the equipment is rolled over.

Primary Sources of Injury to Operators and Other Personnel Working around Heavy Equipment Are:

- Repairing and servicing equipment in dangerous positions;
- Striking individuals or other vehicles with the equipment, particularly its blade;
- Unexpected violent tipping of the equipment;
- Uncontrolled traffic within or through the work area;
- Unexpected violent shocks or jars to the machine;
- Sudden movement of a power unit while it is being attached to earth moving equipment;
- Limbs of trees or overhead obstructions;
- Leaving earth moving or other equipment in dangerous positions while unattended; and
- Failure of lifting mechanisms.

Consideration Should Be Given to Issues Related to Working around Heavy Equipment:

- Inspect the equipment prior to operation to ensure that all lights and audible alarms are working properly.
- Establish a defined route and clear visual path for the operator when moving equipment from the point of origin to the work site.
- Set up of the equipment at the work area with enough space to allow the equipment and workers to perform the planned tasks.
- Use three-point mounting and dismounting technique off heavy equipment – NEVER JUMP OFF HEAVY EQUIPMENT.

- Establish a danger zone, that is, a working area where contact could result in personal injury or damage during operations.
- Predefine hand signals or use two-way radios between the operator and person in charge of the work crew to accomplish all movement.
- Maintaining a clear line of sight between the operator and workers blind spots is common, but if you can't see the operator, he can't see you.
- Use a spotter when heavy equipment is in motion; this requires communication between the operator and workers to maintain safe movement.
- Always try to walk on the driver's side of equipment as the passenger side has a larger blind spot.
- Workers must keep a safe distance from all sides of the heavy equipment while it is in use.
- Be aware of the swing radius on certain equipment and, if possible, cordon off the area with barriers or caution tape.
- Wear high visibility clothing and personal protective equipment.
- Never work under a suspended or overhead load.
- Always stay alert.

Remember:

A little mistake when dealing with heavy equipment can be magnified thousands of times and become a major mistake. This can easily result in a severe injury or even death.

THOSE WHO PLAN AHEAD USUALLY KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ALL AROUND!!

