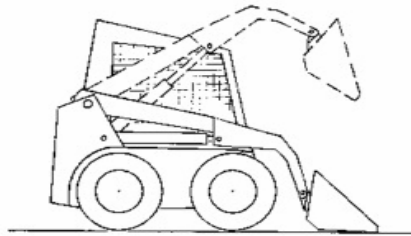


ACCIDENT ALERT

Skid Steer Loaders: Raised lift arms can be deadly!

A health and safety message from the WCB



In recent years there have been several fatal accidents involving skid steer loaders. Operators have been crushed when they exited skid steer loaders with the lift arms raised or when they operated controls from outside the cab. They have also been run over after leaving the controls with the engine running.

Workers can be:

- Pinned between the bucket and frame of the machine or between the lift arms and frame.
- Struck and crushed by the bucket, bucket arms, or material falling from the bucket.
- Injured in rollovers and runovers.

In a recent accident, a worker removed a loader's lift arm cylinders. He left the bucket in an elevated position, approximately 1.4 metres (4.5 feet) off the floor. The bucket and arms were blocked by placing two braces between the front of the loader and the bucket mounting plate.

The manufacturer's instructions state that when lift cylinders are removed, the loader bucket and arms must be less than half a metre (1.5 feet) above the ground and must be placed on secure blocking. Additional blocks may have to be placed at the rear of the machine to keep the front wheels from lifting.

When the worker tried to reinstall the lift arm cylinders five days later, he found that the lift cylinder pistons needed to be adjusted in order to refit the arms. He started the engine, then moved between the raised arms and the frame, leaning over to activate the foot control that moves the lift cylinders. Over the five days in the raised position, the bucket pivot had crept out of position, forcing the two braces from the secure position. As the worker activated the foot control, the bucket tilted, dislodging both braces. The now unrestrained bucket and arms swung down, crushing and killing the worker.

Safe work practices

- Follow the manufacturer's operating and servicing instructions.
- Never operate the machine from the outside of the cab.
- Always lower the lift arms before exiting the cab.
- Turn off the engine and set the parking brake whenever you exit the loader.
- Elevate loads no higher than necessary.
- Avoid working or moving below elevated loads.
- If you must work beneath an elevated load, securely block it and do a hazard assessment to ensure the blocking will remain secure.

Related "Hazard Alert" Bulletins

- HA 93-09 Do Not Short Cut Safety Devices!
<http://publications.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/posters.asp?ReportID=31619>
- Warning 01-03 Construction - Skid Steer Loader Tips
<http://publications.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/posters.asp?ReportID=31306>

Online Resources

NIOSH alert on preventing injuries and deaths from skid steer loaders
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/skidalt.html>

CCOHS information bulletin on safe operation of skid steer loaders
http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/landscaping/compact_loaders.html

OSHA bulletin on pinch point hazards on certain models of skid steer loaders
http://www.osha.gov/dts/hib/hib_data/hib19930806.html

Supporting regulations

- Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Section 4.3: Safe Machinery and Equipment
<http://regulation.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Part4.asp#SectionNumber:4.3>
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, Part 16: Mobile Equipment
<http://regulation.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Part16.asp>

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