

FRONT END LOADER SAFETY PWD/ROAD

Objectives

- To ensure all employees understand the safe operating procedures for front end loaders

Working with earthmoving equipment requires employees to be attentive to their actions and the task. Operation of heavy equipment such as front-end loaders should be done by highly skilled operators who have demonstrated the ability and necessary skills to operate safely. OSHA has hundreds of examples where employees believed they were competent and skilled with the equipment but still suffered serious injuries and/or fatalities.

Example:

On August 13, 2003, an employee was assisting the loader operator in smoothing out gravel in an excavation. The loader operator poured gravel into the excavation and Employee #1 was in the trench moving the gravel with a shovel. The loader operator stopped the loader facing the trench, placed it in neutral, set the parking brake, turned off the engine, and descended the loader to speak with Employee #1. While speaking with Employee #1 the loader started to roll towards the open trench, pinching Employee #1 between a concrete manhole and trench wall. The loader was found to have oil on the brake pads causing them to slip. Employee #1 suffered fractures and was hospitalized.

Employee #1 was working alone unloading a piece of rental construction equipment from a flat bed truck. After the chains used to secure the equipment during transport were removed, the front-end loader slid off the side of the flat bed truck striking Employee #1. Employee #1 was killed.

Employee #1 was operating a front-end loader to level dirt. He was slightly turned in the operator's seat, looking out the left window. As he drove the machine backwards, the bucket lowered and his head was caught in and crushed by the armature of the loader. The left window of the loader was not provided with a window screen guard.

An employee was operating a John Deere Model 544E front-end loader to clear a road into a wooded area. The operator was backfilling stump holes when Employee #1 saw that the loader was leaking hydraulic fluids. The previous week, the loader had been in the shop to repair a leak in the hydraulic system of the bucket arms. Employee #1 instructed the operator to place the bucket of the loader onto a stump, so that they could

work on the leaking system. The operator placed the bucket on a stump, and left the loader to assist Employee #1. The operator left the loader in neutral, and did not set the parking brake. They disconnected the hydraulic lines and removed a cylinder. The bucket fell from the stump crushing and killing the employee.

SAFE OPERATING PROCEDURES

Improper procedures used by employees can cause injury, disability, or even death. By outlining the following safe operating procedures for front-end loaders, employees will learn to prevent injury and safeguard themselves and their co-workers.

- Always follow the manufacturers recommended guidelines
- Use equipment for its specific purpose only
- Do not operate equipment unless you have been properly trained to operate that specific type of equipment
- Wear all PPE required for the equipment
- A loader is a one person machine, **NO RIDERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED** (in the cab or the bucket)
- Know all pinch points and wrap points on the loader
- Operate at speeds consistent with the equipment, working conditions, visibility, and terrain
- When crossing exposed railroad tracks, ditches, ridges, or curbs reduce speed and cross at an angle
- Carry loaded buckets as close to the ground as possible, the further a loaded bucket is from the ground the more unstable the loader becomes
- Use extreme caution when operating a loader on side slopes, slow down and carry the bucket (loaded or empty) as close to the ground as possible
- Stay in gear or low gear when traveling downhill, this will help control speed
- Never move a load above the heads of co-workers
- Familiarize yourself with the area you will be operating the loader, check for any overhead lines that may pose a problem
- Check loader for any hydraulic leaks and do not use equipment if leaks are observed
- Keep work area as level as possible. Avoid developing ruts by occasionally back dragging the bucket to smooth the surface
- Never jump off equipment, always use the “three points of contact” rule when climbing on or off the loader
- Inspect and service the loader on a regular basis

POLICY

Discuss all County policies related to operation of front-end loaders.

CLOSING

- *Encourage discussion about this presentation and the measures each person can take to ensure their safety and the safety of their coworkers.*