

Be Wary of Skid-Steer Loaders

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

KEY POINTS:

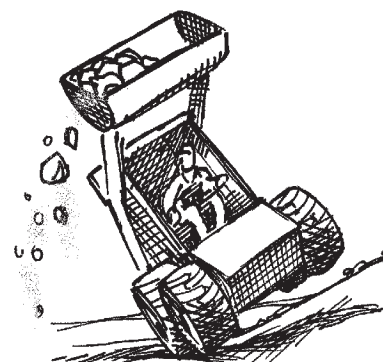
- Skid-steer loaders are useful but can be very dangerous.
- Never operate a loader unless you have been authorized and are properly trained.
- Don't allow passengers – including children – on a skid-steer loader.

Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a training 10- to 15-minute session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.



Skid-steer loaders can be very dangerous

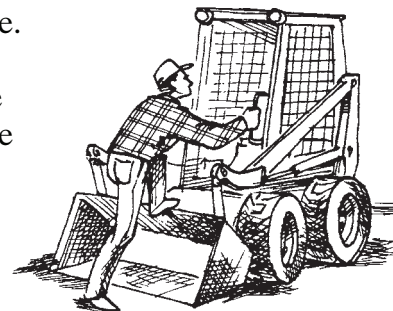
- Skid-steer loaders are useful machines, but they can also be very dangerous.
- It's important that you never operate a loader unless you have been authorized and are properly trained. See your supervisor if you have any questions about the safe operation of a skid-steer loader.
- Serious injuries or deaths have occurred when skid-steer loader operators:
 - are pinned between the bucket and the frame
 - are pinned between the lift arms and the frame
 - are pinned between the loader and another object
 - lose control of the loader and it overturns
 - allow passengers to ride on the bucket
 - allow children to operate the machine
- Serious injuries also occur when operators either take off or modify such safety equipment as the rollover protective structure or ROPS, the seat belt, restraint bars, side screens or overhead shield.



Warning: Never remove, modify or bypass skid-steer loader safety devices.

Getting on and off a skid-steer loader

- Before getting on a skid-steer loader, walk completely around the machine. Check to see that no one is under it or close to it.
- Be sure the lift arms are lowered and the bucket is flat on the ground. The only time you should get on a loader when the lift arms are up is if they are being held up by a mechanical restraining device. The hydraulic system alone isn't enough. See your supervisor if you have any questions.
- When getting on a loader, face the seat and grab the handholds on the machine. Don't use control levers in place of handholds.
- Never jump on or off the machine. Use both hands when getting on or off.
- Before leaving the operator's seat, lower the bucket flat to the ground, put the controls in neutral, set the parking brake, and turn off the engine. Face the machine when you are getting off.



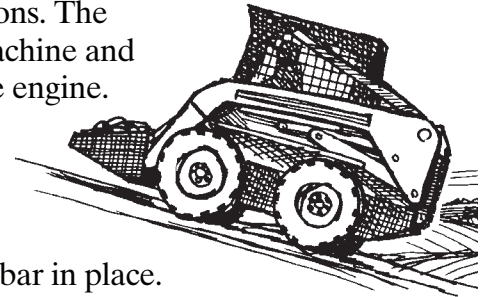
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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

Be Wary of Skid-Steer Loaders

Operating a skid-steer loader

- Carefully review the manufacturer’s instructions before operating a loader. Ask your supervisor for help if you don’t understand the instructions. The instructions will help you become familiar with the parts of the machine and its safety equipment. They’ll also explain how to properly start the engine.
- Be sure you are in the operator’s seat when you start the engine.
- Stay completely inside the cab. That means making sure your hands, arms, feet, legs and head remain inside.
- Stay seated when you operate the controls.
- Wear your seat belt and keep it fastened. Also, keep the restraint bar in place.
- Carry your load low. And don’t carry items that could easily fall off or roll off.
- Avoid sudden stops, starts or turns.
- Load, unload and turn on level ground whenever possible.
- Don’t drive across steep slopes. Drive straight up or down the slope, with the heavy end of the loader pointed uphill and the bucket lowered to the ground.
- Always look back when you’re operating the skid-steer loader in reverse. Make sure no one is in the way.



Drive straight up a slope with the heavy end of the loader pointed uphill and the bucket lowered.

Other important safety tips

- Never allow passengers on a skid-steer loader – including children.
- Don’t park a loader on a hill or slope.
- Never lift, swing or move a load over another person.
- Be careful not to overload the bucket.
- Keep your skid-steer loader in safe operating condition. One way to do that is to keep the controls free of mud, ice, snow and other debris.
- Make sure all lights and warning signs are clean and visible. Be sure the loader has a slow-moving vehicle or SMV emblem that is unfaded and can easily be seen if you take the loader on the road.
- Always be on the lookout for hazards. These include cables, branches, rocks, stumps, ditches and sudden drop-offs.
- Stay away from the banks of rivers and the edges of gullies.
- Don’t wear torn or ripped clothing or clothing with drawstrings.



Are there any questions?

Note to trainer: Take time to answer trainees’ questions. Then review the **Skid-Steer Loader Do’s and Don’ts**.

SKID STEER LOADER DO’S AND DON’TS	
<p>DO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you are properly trained to operate a skid-steer loader. • Be on the lookout for such potential hazards as cables, branches or unexpected drop-offs. • Operate a loader on stable surfaces whenever possible. 	<p>DON’T:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a skid-steer loader if you are overtired, ill, or under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. • Ever allow extra riders on a skid-steer loader. • Remove safety devices from a loader. • Wear torn clothing when operating a loader.

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