

SKID STEER LOADERS

(For assistance, please contact EHS at (402) 472-4925, or visit our web site at <http://ehs.unl.edu/>)

Skid steer loaders are useful but dangerous pieces of equipment. Nationwide, a number of serious injuries and fatalities have been associated with use of this equipment. At UNL, an employee mangled a foot after accidentally knocking the bucket mechanism when trying to enter the equipment after leaving it to adjust a load. Beginning in the 1980's, manufacturers equipped skid steer loaders with interlocking devices to prevent injuries such as this. New skid steer loaders are equipped with interlocks, rollover protection, side screens, and seatbelts. While newer skid loaders have more safety features, there are still plenty of hazards to be aware of and precautions to take to ensure safe operation.

- Operators must read the owner's manual and be trained in the proper use and maintenance of this equipment. Keep the manual on file and refer to it often.
- Replace older equipment with new equipment that has safety devices or retrofit older equipment with safety devices to include lift arm supports, interlocked controls, seatbelts, rollover protection, and side screens. Never by-pass or disable the safety devices.
- Maintain equipment in good operating condition with all safety devices functioning properly. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance of the equipment. Keep the steps and operators controls and compartment free of mud, ice, snow, and debris.
- Do not service the equipment when the engine is running unless directed to do so by the operator's manual.
- Never work around the equipment when the bucket or fork attachment is raised unless it is supported and the brakes are set, and the key is removed from the ignition. Use lift arm supports when they are present on the equipment. If no supports are present, contact the equipment dealer or manufacturer for help in determining proper support procedures.
- Enter the equipment only when the bucket or other attachments are on the ground, or are locked in place with lift arm supports. Face the seat and keep a three point contact with the hand holds and steps. DO NOT use the operating controls for handholds or steps.
- Always wear the seatbelt when operating the equipment.
- Operate the loader from the loader compartment, never from the outside.
- Stay seated with seatbelt on and restraining bar in place when working the controls.
- Keep arms, legs, and head inside the cab when operating the loader.

- Operate the equipment on stable surfaces. When possible, load, unload, and turn the equipment around on level ground.
- For maximum stability, travel and turn equipment when the bucket is in the lowest position possible.
- Never exceed the load limit specified by the manufacturer of the equipment.
- When traveling on hills, go straight up or down with the heavy end of the machine pointing uphill. Never travel across hills.
- Always look in the direction of travel.
- Keep bystanders away from the work area.
- Never carry people in the bucket of the skid steer loader. A small bump or quick turn can dislodge them, resulting in a serious accident or even a fatality.
- Never raise people to an elevated position on the attachment.
- Before leaving the equipment for any reason, set the bucket on the ground, set the parking brake, and turn off the engine.
- If exiting from the front of the equipment is not feasible, use the emergency exit through the roof or across the back.