

HAZARD ALERT

WORKER INJURED WHEN BY-PASSING SAFETY DEVICES



A skid steer loader is a small, quick-moving and powerful rubber tired machine – making it a versatile and potentially dangerous piece of equipment. Recently, a worker inadvertently hit the foot pedals while boarding such a loader. The bucket was activated and pinned him against the roof's edge of the cab. The accident could have been fatal.

The type of skid steer loader involved in the accident was equipped with three safety devices:

- 17 kg (35 lbs) of pressure is required in the seat to operate the arms and the bucket,
- the seat belt has to be fastened to operate the arms and the bucket, and
- a safety bar has to be pulled down over the operator, once seated, to unlock the steering levers and foot pedals.

For safety reasons, the manufacturer recommends boarding the loader by backing into the seat, and to stop the engine before disembarking.

The WHSCC investigation revealed the following causes of the accident:

- The operator boarded a running machine.
- The operator entered head first and placed a hand on the seat, thereby creating enough pressure to disengage the first safety device.
- The seat belt fastened behind the seat was disengaging the second safety device.
- The limit switch on the safety bar was not functioning, which prevented the third and last safety device from working properly.

Recommended Preventive Action

1. An employer shall ensure that powered mobile equipment is maintained in safe working condition and has defective parts repaired or replaced before being set in motion. [Paragraphs 229(1)(a)(b) Regulation 91-191]
2. An operator of powered mobile equipment shall stop the engine when leaving the equipment unattended. [Subsections 228(c)(v) Regulation 91-191]
3. The manufacturer's specifications (recommendations) must be followed. [Subsection 235(1) Regulation 91-191]
4. Safety devices must never be altered [subsection 229.1 (1) Regulation 91-191] or by-passed.