

Working Around Heavy Equipment

Introduction

Workers on foot can be struck, pinned, or crushed by equipment, attachments, or loads. Plan separate pedestrian routes and controlled work zones before equipment starts moving.

Hazards & Controls

Stay outside travel, swing, articulation, and load zones. Use designated crossings and the required high-visibility clothing. Never stand under raised loads or between a machine and a fixed object. Alarms and visibility clothing do not create a safe approach path.

Before approaching, use the agreed signal and obtain positive operator acknowledgement. Wait for the machine to stop and attachments to be safely positioned before entering with authorization. Eye contact alone is not permission. If communication or separation fails, stop the operation and restore the controls.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

How will ground workers obtain a safe, acknowledged approach to this machine?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Preventing Backovers - Safety Solutions

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Meeting Record & Sign-In

Working Around Heavy Equipment

Company: _____ Date: _____

Jobsite: _____ Presenter: _____

Time / duration: _____ Crew / shift: _____

Site-specific hazards and controls discussed

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Follow-up action / responsible person / due date

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Pre-Operation Inspections

Introduction

Inspect before use under the manufacturer instructions, site program, and applicable equipment rules. Covered off-highway construction vehicles need checks at the beginning of each shift; inspection requirements differ for other machines.

Hazards & Controls

Check the required brakes, steering, tires or tracks, controls, seat restraint, guards, coupling devices, and warning or visibility systems. Look for leaks, damage, loose parts, and unsafe access points. Test functions only in a clear area using the approved method.

Report defects and remove unsafe equipment from service until corrected and authorized for use. Do not bypass an interlock or dismiss a warning light. Record findings as required and verify the correct machine manual and any required emergency equipment are available.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

Which defects require this machine to be taken out of service, and who clears its return?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Motor Vehicles (1926.601)

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Mounting and Dismounting Equipment Safely

Introduction

Use the designated access system and manufacturer procedure every time. Mud, ice, damaged steps, and carrying items in your hands can turn routine access into a fall.

Hazards & Controls

Stop and secure the machine before climbing. Face the equipment and keep three points of contact with the approved steps and handholds while moving: two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand. Do not use steering controls, hoses, or attachments as improvised handholds.

Inspect and clean the access route and check the landing surface. Keep hands free using an approved method to transfer tools. Never jump or mount or dismount moving equipment. If access is damaged, stop use and arrange repair rather than improvise a climbing route.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

Where are the approved handholds, and how will we transfer tools without occupying our hands?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

HSE: Preventing Falls from Vehicles

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Equipment Blind Spots and Spotter Communication

Introduction

Blind areas change with equipment configuration, attachments, loads, and operator position. Mirrors and cameras help but may leave unseen areas and do not replace the site traffic-control plan.

Hazards & Controls

Before moving, the operator and designated spotter agree on signals, radio method, stop signal, route, and exclusion zone. Position the spotter where the operator can see them and where there is an escape route, clear of wheels, swing zones, and pinch points.

Stop immediately if the spotter is lost from view or communication becomes unclear. Resume only after safe communication and a clear route are restored. Keep unauthorized people out; do not let a spotter walk backward into hazards or perform distracting duties while directing movement.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

What signal stops the machine, and what happens if visual or radio contact is lost?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Spotters and Backing Safety

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Backing and Reversing Hazards

Introduction

Reduce backing through planned one-way routes and suitable parking where possible. When reversing is necessary, control pedestrian access and confirm the entire movement can be made safely.

Hazards & Controls

Inspect the route, adjust mirrors, check cameras and warning systems, and use the required spotter or observer arrangement. For covered equipment with an obstructed rear view, OSHA requires the specified audible reverse alarm or a worker signaling that movement is safe; stricter site controls may require both.

Back slowly with the required controls in place. Stop for people entering the zone, uncertain clearance, or lost communication. An alarm does not guarantee people will move. If leaving the cab to check, first secure the machine; a walk-around is not a substitute for maintaining a clear path during movement.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

How can we avoid backing, and what controls are required if we cannot?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Material Handling Equipment (1926.602)

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Seatbelts and Rollover Protection Systems (ROPS)

Introduction

Where designed as a protective system, the operator restraint keeps the operator within the ROPS protective zone. Equipment types and restraint arrangements differ, so apply the actual machine instructions and applicable requirements.

Hazards & Controls

Inspect the seat belt, buckle, anchors, ROPS, and associated components before use. Wear the installed restraint as directed for operation and never defeat it. Do not operate with damaged required protection; have it evaluated by authorized personnel.

Do not drill, weld, remove, or modify protective structures without approved engineering or manufacturer authorization. Do not improvise a restraint or assume every canopy is certified ROPS. Learn the machine-specific rollover emergency procedure before operation; a generic jump-or-stay rule is not suitable for every machine.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

How do we confirm this machine has the correct protective structure and operator restraint?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Rollover Protective Structures (1926.1000)

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Seatbelts and Rollover Protection Systems (ROPS)

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Safe Driving on and Around Jobsites

Introduction

Jobsite traffic changes as work progresses. Uneven ground, edges, pedestrians, overhead hazards, and poor visibility require a route and traffic-control plan suited to the machine and task.

Hazards & Controls

Use authorized routes, follow site right-of-way rules, and keep people separated from moving equipment. Stay within speed limits and slow further for conditions. Maintain safe clearance from excavation edges, structures, other vehicles, and overhead lines under the applicable rules.

Operate only when trained and authorized for the machine. Use the required restraint and warning systems, maintain a safe stopping distance, and avoid phones or other distractions. Stop if visibility, ground support, fatigue, or congestion prevents safe movement. Never carry unauthorized riders.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

What route hazards or changing conditions require us to slow down or stop?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Off-Highway Construction Vehicles

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Transporting and Loading Heavy Machinery

Introduction

Plan the loading and transport operation using the actual machine weight, dimensions, center of gravity, attachment configuration, and manufacturer instructions. Vehicle, trailer, axle, ramp, and securement capacities must all be suitable.

Hazards & Controls

Use firm, stable ground and secure the transport vehicle before loading. Inspect and properly support or attach rated ramps. Establish an exclusion zone and agreed operator-spotter communication. Keep people clear of possible roll, fall, or run-off paths; stop if alignment or stability becomes uncertain.

Use approved attachment points, rated tiedowns and anchors, and the applicable cargo-securement requirements, including accessory equipment. Tiedown number, arrangement, and working load limits must be verified for the actual load; four chains are not a complete universal plan. Check route clearances, permits, and required en-route inspections.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

Who verifies the capacities, securement plan, and route before this load moves?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

FMCSA: Cargo Securement Rules

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Equipment Parking and Shutdown Procedures

Introduction

Secure parking prevents unintended movement and exposure to attachments. Use the machine-specific shutdown procedure and a designated location that avoids traffic routes, edges, unstable ground, and emergency access.

Hazards & Controls

Park on suitable level ground where practicable, lower or secure attachments as instructed, neutralize controls, set the parking brake, and shut down using the approved sequence. Equipment on an incline needs required wheel chocking and parking-brake controls. Secure access and keys under site policy.

Before leaving, verify the machine cannot move unexpectedly and communicate any defects. Shutdown does not by itself isolate stored hydraulic, electrical, gravity, or other energy. Service work requires its separate isolation, blocking, and verification procedure; never invite someone underneath solely because the engine is off.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

What must we verify before leaving this machine, and what extra controls are needed for service?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Equipment Parking and Blocking (1926.600)

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Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance

Introduction

Only trained, authorized personnel perform maintenance using the correct procedure, parts, and tools. A parked or switched-off machine can retain energy and can move if supports or isolation fail.

Hazards & Controls

Identify and isolate energy sources, apply required lockout or tagout controls, release or restrain stored energy, and verify the safe condition. Lower attachments where possible. Substantially block or crib raised machinery and use the required mechanical supports for dump bodies; never rely on hydraulics or a jack alone.

Keep people out of pinch points and do not search for pressurized hydraulic leaks with your hands. Manage hot fluids, batteries, tires, and other stored-energy hazards through their specific procedures. Inspect the completed repair, restore guards, account for workers and tools, and conduct controlled testing before authorized return to service.

Follow the manufacturer instructions and employer's task-specific procedures for this equipment. These awareness notes do not qualify an operator, authorize a task, or replace required training and inspection.

Safety Reminders

Keep people clear of moving equipment and suspended loads. Stop for lost communication, unsafe clearance, equipment defects, or changing conditions. Reassess and restore controls before resuming work.

Engagement Questions

Which stored-energy sources and physical supports must be verified before maintenance begins?

What site-specific hazards or changes would make us stop work?

Sources and use notice

OSHA: Construction Safety and Health

OSHA: Equipment Support and Maintenance

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