

## TOOLBOX TALK

# Heavy Equipment Safety

### WHY THIS MATTERS

Heavy equipment accidents kill over 200 workers every year. Rollovers, struck-by incidents, crushing between equipment and objects, and contact with power lines are the leading causes. Most deaths involve workers on foot near operating equipment.

**200+**

Heavy equipment deaths per year

**#1**

Cause: workers on foot near operating equipment

**100%**

Equipment accidents are preventable

## 5 Critical Rules for Heavy Equipment Safety

These rules protect both operators and workers on foot — follow every one:

**1**

### ONLY TRAINED & AUTHORIZED OPERATORS

Never operate equipment without proper training and authorization. Each machine requires specific certification.

**2**

### DAILY PRE-USE INSPECTION (WALK-AROUND)

Complete a documented inspection before every shift: fluids, tires, lights, alarms, controls, and safety devices.

**3**

### MAINTAIN SAFE DISTANCE — BLIND SPOTS KILL

Stay out of equipment blind spots. Make eye contact with operators before approaching. Use spotters.

**4**

### USE SEATBELTS AND ROPS AT ALL TIMES

Seatbelts and Roll-Over Protective Structures save lives during tip-overs. Never disable or bypass them.

**5**

### NEVER ALLOW RIDERS OR UNAUTHORIZED USE

No passengers unless the machine has a designated seat. Never leave keys in unattended equipment.

## Daily Pre-Use Checklist

- Has the operator completed the daily walk-around inspection?
- Are all safety devices working (backup alarm, lights, mirrors, horn)?
- Is the seatbelt in good condition and being worn?
- Are blind spots identified and spotters assigned where needed?
- Is the work area clear of workers on foot before operating?

## Walk-Around Inspection — Before Every Shift

**Fluids:** Check engine oil, hydraulic fluid, coolant, and fuel levels. Look for leaks under the machine.

**Tires/Tracks:** Inspect tire pressure, tread, damage, or loose lug nuts. Check track tension and condition.

**Lights/Alarms:** Test headlights, brake lights, turn signals, backup alarm, and horn. All must be functional.

**Mirrors/Camera:** Clean and adjust all mirrors. Test backup camera if equipped. Eliminate blind spots where possible.

**Controls/Brakes:** Test all controls, steering, brakes, parking brake, and emergency stops before moving.

**Safety devices:** Check ROPS, seatbelt, fire extinguisher, falling object protection (FOPS), and first aid kit.

### Common Mistakes That Kill

- ✗ Walking behind equipment without making eye contact — operators cannot see blind spots
- ✗ Skipping the walk-around inspection — failing brakes and leaking hydraulics kill
- ✗ Not wearing the seatbelt — during rollover, the operator is ejected and crushed
- ✗ Operating near power lines without a spotter — electrocution through the machine kills instantly
- ✗ Allowing riders on equipment — passengers are thrown off or crushed during sudden stops

### Safety Tips to Remember

- ✓ If you can't see the operator's mirrors, the operator can't see you — stay clear
- ✓ Three points of contact when mounting/dismounting — never jump on or off equipment
- ✓ Lower all attachments before leaving the machine — raised buckets and blades fall
- ✓ Shut down and lock out before any maintenance — never reach under running equipment
- ✓ Report any defects immediately — tag out of service until repaired by qualified mechanic

## Discussion Questions for Your Team

1. What heavy equipment is operating on our site today?
2. Has every operator completed their daily walk-around inspection?
3. Where are the blind spots on the equipment we're using?
4. Are spotters assigned for backing and tight-space operations?
5. What would you do if you saw someone in an equipment blind spot?

### TOOLBOX TALK SIGN-OFF

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Project: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendance sheet attached:  Yes