BACKHOE LOADER: SAFE OPERATION

INTRODUCTION

Backhoe loaders, or backhoes for short, cause many injuries at jobsites every year. The operator of the backhoe has a responsibility to use caution to keep him or herself safe, keep others safe, and avoid causing damage to the equipment or the site.

PREPARATION

The best way to avoid causing damage or injury when operating a backhoe is to be aware of what is going on around you and work with steady movements.

Before that, however, you must inspect your equipment and the site to make sure it is ready and safe.

- Check everything from the condition of the seatbelt, to the tire pressure, to obvious damage such as cracks in the equipment. Do not operate equipment that is damaged or defective in any way.
- Fasten the seatbelt before operating. The safest place for a driver during a rollover is in the operator's seat.
- Adjust the seat and the steering wheel into a position that makes all of the controls easily accessible.
- Make sure your independent brake pedals are locked together, the boom is locked, and the swing lock is in place if you will be driving on a public road.
- Survey your surroundings before starting the backhoe loader, know where any buried utilities are, and sound the horn before moving.
- Activate the parking brake every time you park the backhoe.

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OPERATION

The leading cause of accidents involving backhoes is working too close to an edge and operating on steep or uneven grades. Proper use of stabilizers, as well as the following safety guidelines, will help to reduce these risks greatly.

- Stabilizers should be spread to their full width and the bucket must be in solid contact with the ground. If the machine is not stabilized correctly, it will bounce and increase the level of risk.
- Beware of ground conditions under your stabilizers and add support as needed.
- When operating on a hill, swinging a full bucket of dirt changes the center of gravity. Make sure you always work slow and keep your bucket as low as possible.
- Make an effort to know where others are in your area at all times.

- Keeping the bucket as low as possible at any time will avoid throwing off the center of gravity and maintain visibility.
- Avoid driving across a hill with a loaded bucket, instead go straight up or down the hill.

CONCLUSION

Following the safety guidelines included in this informational packet will help to increase your safety as well as the safety of others around you. Using caution and common sense when operating large machinery like a backhoe loader will greatly reduce your risk.