



## Safety Tips for Operating Heavy Equipment

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Operators of any equipment should first be trained to use it properly and demonstrate an acceptable skill level before operating it. Most equipment accidents are a result of some type of operator error. **Accidents involving heavy equipment have a higher probability of resulting in a fatality**, so it is imperative that all safety rules and procedures are followed when operating heavy equipment.

Before being used, any piece of equipment should have a complete **walk-around inspection** to identify any safety defects. All safety sensitive devices must be operable. The equipment should be serviced regularly according to manufacturer's specifications.

A **seat belt** must be worn while operating the equipment.

Use extreme caution when operating around trenches, excavations and overhead power lines. **Always call for locates** of any underground utilities before trenching or excavations.

Ensure the machine you are operating has a **Roll Over Protection System**. To prevent rollovers do not travel or operate parallel to steep grades, embankments or unstable soil.

**Good communication is a must** between the operator and all ground level workers. The operator should always know exactly where everyone is when operating equipment.

**High visibility clothing or a vest should be worn** by ground level workers. A swing radius and a limited access zone should be set.

Use barricades to separate pedestrians and vehicles from the moving equipment, where possible.

**Always use a spotter when backing up.** Do not depend solely on the backup alarm.

A standard set of **hands signals** agreed on by both the operator and a trained spotter should be used.

Wear all **personal protective equipment** when needed when working with heavy equipment.

**Three points of contact** should always be used when entering or exiting the cab. Never jump onto or off equipment.

**Keep grease and other fluids from the walking and working surfaces** of the equipment to prevent slips and falls.

**Always put the transmission in park**, shut the engine off, set the brakes, lower any attachments fully, and follow the lockout/tagout procedures before working on or around equipment. ■