Toolbox Talk

Mobile Equipment

People are injured each year on Manitoba worksites by mobile equipment, such as; backhoes, skid steers, excavators, road grading and surfacing machinery, loaders, and tractors.

There is danger not just for operators of the machinery but also for individuals working near it. The main causes of fatal incidents are:

- Workers on foot struck by equipment, usually when it is backing up or changing direction.
- Equipment rolling over the operator while on a slope or when it is being loaded or unloaded from a flatbed/lowboy truck.
- Operators or mechanics run over or caught in equipment when the brakes aren’t set, equipment is left in gear, wheel chocks are not used or the equipment and controls aren’t locked out.
- Workers on foot or in a trench crushed by falling equipment loads, backhoe buckets or other moving parts.

Reducing the risk of injury, disability or death requires knowing and following safe operating procedures. This includes wearing the proper protective gear — boots or safety shoes, long pants, hearing protection, hard hat and gloves — and conducting a walk-around inspection before the machine even starts up.

Loose or worn parts should be repaired or replaced immediately. All fluid levels should be checked. Hydraulic line connectors and hoses should be inspected for leaks. (Use paper or cardboard, not the hands, to check for leaks. Hydraulic fluid escaping under pressure can penetrate the skin and cause serious harm).

A pre-start inspection also involves making sure tires are properly inflated and have no cuts, bulges or abnormal wear. The cab area should be free of clutter and the windshield, lights and mirrors kept clean.

Injuries can happen even while workers are getting on or off machinery. Remove all oil, grease or mud and snow from grab bars, hand rails, steps — and from boots and gloves. Maintain three-point contact (two hands and one foot or one hand and two feet) with steps and hand rails. Do not use the controls or steering wheel as a handhold and do not jump off the machine. Always face the equipment when mounting or dismounting.
Here are some more pre-job safety precautions:

- Be aware of jobsite hazards, such as overhead power lines, unstable or uneven surfaces, underground utilities etc.
- Before starting up, fasten your seat belt, adjust the seat and make sure all operating controls are in neutral and the parking brake is set.
- Warn personnel in the area that you are starting the engine.
- Start the engine only from the operator’s seat and allow it to warm up at low idle.
- Check all gauges, lights, instruments, warning devices and implements to ensure they are functioning properly.
- Test steering right and left and brakes at minimum ground speed.

All equipment must be operated at speeds compatible with worksite conditions. Do not coast downhill; select a gear that will prevent excessive speed when going downhill. Know the stopping distance of the machine at any given speed.

At no time should a piece of equipment be left unattended while the engine is running, especially if the machine is on an inclined surface or on loose material. Do not park on a steep incline.

Before an operator shuts down or gets off a machine, all hydraulic equipment must be lowered. Safety should always be on the minds of everyone in the vicinity of heavy equipment. Remember:

- Be aware of a machine’s danger zones (blind spots, swing radius, travel path etc.) and stay clear of them.
- Those who do enter a danger zone must first establish communication, preferably eye contact, with the operator or safety spotter.
- Wear high-visibility clothing and all required personal protective equipment.
- No one other than the operator should ride on equipment unless additional seating, seatbelts and rollover protection are available.
The Quiz

These questions are meant to help you remember what was discussed today — not to test your patience or challenge your intelligence. The answers are at the bottom of the page. Cover them up, and complete the quiz as quickly as you can.

1. Heavy equipment can be dangerous for people working near it as well as those who are operating it.
   
   TRUE    FALSE

2. Should personal protective equipment be worn by the operators of heavy equipment?
   
   YES    NO

3. Which of these should be checked before starting heavy machinery?
   
   A. Fluid levels.
   B. Hydraulic connections and hoses.
   C. Tires.
   D. All of the above

4. It is a safe practice to use the steering wheel or controls as a handhold when mounting heavy machinery.
   
   TRUE    FALSE

5. Which of these are good pre-job precautions?
   
   A. Be aware of jobsite hazards such as overhead power lines and uneven surfaces.
   B. Make sure the parking brake is released.
   C. Warn personnel in the area that you are starting the engine.
   D. Start the engine only from the operator’s seat.
   E. Test the steering and brakes.

6. It is acceptable to coast downhill when operating mobile heavy equipment.
   
   TRUE    FALSE

7. Everyone working in the vicinity of heavy equipment should:
   
   A. Be aware of the machine’s danger zones.
   B. Do not enter the danger zone without establishing good communication with the operator.
C. Wear high-visibility clothing.
D. Never ride as a passenger on machinery that does not have additional seating and seat belts available.
E. All of the above.

8. Does all the mobile heavy equipment in your operation have proper rollover protection?

YES   NO   DON'T KNOW
For the Record

Date of Meeting: ________________________________
Location: ____________________ Start Time: ___________ Finish Time: ______________
Topic: ________________________ Meeting Leader: ________________________________

In Attendance *(please print first & last names):*

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