



Putting the skids on skid steer hazards

If you've ever had to remove debris on a demolition site, or move gravel on an aggregates site, or dig foundations on a homebuilding site, chances are you've used a skid steer. These machines are incredibly versatile and highly manoeuvrable, but they can also be very dangerous. Anyone who operates a skid steer or works around one should be aware that this is a high-risk activity. Proper precautions must be taken to prevent a serious injury or a fatality.

Skid steer operators need to be aware not only of hazards that they are exposed to but also the hazards that they can cause for workers around them. Here are some of these hazards:

- Falls and rollovers (from instability and overloading)
- Striking workers and pedestrians
- Striking hidden obstacles
- Being struck by loader arms and attachments
- Being struck by falling materials
- Slips and trips
- Working around leading edges
- Exposure to fumes, noise, and vibration

The following safe practices can help operators prevent these hazards:

Know your machine

- Get the proper training and review the user manual before operating a skid steer.

- Perform regular safety checks and document your findings.
- Check all high-pressure hydraulics for leaks.
- Find the rated operation capacity (ROC) for the machine and never exceed it. Overloading can make a skid steer excessively front-heavy. This can cause instability and reduce handling response.
- Never remove the rollover protective structure (ROPS) from a skid steer. It's there to protect you. And keep side screens in place. People have been crushed to death when they were caught between the loader arms and the skid steer frame on unscreened machines.
- Always use the seat belt and/or the seat bar.

Know your surroundings

- Use barriers or another method to cordon off your work area. That way, you can concentrate on your work without having to worry about other people in the vicinity.
- If you have to work near other people, make sure you know where the blind spots are on a skid steer. Make eye contact with anyone entering the area you're working in, and turn off the machine if you need to have a conversation.





- Never lift, swing, or otherwise move a load over anyone.
- Watch out for uneven floors or for objects buried in the ground. If the machine hits them, it may stop suddenly.
- If working on an elevated floor, make sure the floor can support the weight of the machine.
- If working on an elevated slab, make sure bumpers or barriers are installed in front of all openings.
- If working near a trench, always stay a safe distance from the edge.

Use safe operating procedures

- When getting out of the machine, always turn your machine off first and have the bucket or attachment in its lowest position.
- Adjust your speed to suit the working conditions and terrain. Avoid sudden stops, starts, and turns.
- Try to go around obstacles, rather than over or through them.
- Keep the bucket as low as possible when travelling or turning. A skid steer becomes less stable the higher the loader arms are raised.
- Never try to operate the steering levers or any other hydraulic controls while standing outside the cab. Because of the hydrostatic drive, the skid steer will respond instantly when the levers are engaged.
- Never use a skid steer as a work platform or for carrying workers—it's against the law.

- Make sure any attachments you use are rated for your machine. Remember that an attachment will reduce your load capacity.

- Always turn your machine off before changing attachments.
 - Make sure that the attachment locking devices are engaged, even if you are switching attachments for only a few minutes. If an attachment is not locked, it could break free and roll back down the loader arms.
- It's good practice to use hearing protection when operating a skid steer.



Get our winter driving booklet

Motor vehicle incidents increase at a chilling pace in winter. Many drivers don't understand winter driving and fail to consider the hazardous conditions created by winter weather.

Whether you drive a commercial vehicle or a passenger vehicle, it's important to be aware of the driving hazards caused by winter weather.

Your Guide To Safe, Efficient, Winter Driving (BO10) is a pocket-sized booklet that provides information on safe driving during the hazardous winter months. Order or download your copy by visiting the **Products** section at ihsa.ca

Ice roads safety manual — Now available in French!

In Ontario, ice roads provide temporary access to communities, worksites, and recreational areas. However, working, travelling, and parking on the frozen surface of ponds, lakes, and rivers can be a hazardous activity.

Last year, IHSA made *Best Practices for Building and Working Safely on Ice Covers in Ontario* (IHSA029) available as a free download from our website. This year, we're pleased to offer it in French. *Pratiques exemplaires de construction et de travail sécuritaire sur les couches de glace en Ontario* (IHSA029F) is free to download from the **Products** section at ihsa.ca

Although developed to protect the health and safety of workers, it may also be helpful to recreational users who are travelling over ice covers or going ice fishing.