

# SAFETY SENSE

SEPTEMBER 2007

**Editor's note: BE SURE TO PASS EACH ISSUE OF THIS NEWSLETTER ON TO EVERYONE WITH SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES AT YOUR COMPANY.**

## Serious Eye Injuries CAN Be Prevented

### KEY POINTS:

- Eye injuries commonly occur within the green industry.
- Wearing safety glasses, safety goggles, or other eye protection is critical to avoid being poked in the eye with plant material, splashed in the eye with chemicals, or getting dust or other airborne particles in your eyes.
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) inspectors often drive by job sites and cite employers when they spot workers not wearing safety glasses and/or other protective equipment.

### Employer's Eye Injury Prevention Dos and Don'ts

#### DO —

- Provide high quality safety glasses and other eye protection for your employees.
- Require crew leaders to *enforce* the use of eye protection.
- Let your employees know that you want them to use eye protection so they will be able to continue to provide for their families, and see their children grow up.

#### DON'T —

- Decide that workers do not need to use eye protection because they don't like the way it looks. Many different styles are available.
- Hesitate to discipline workers for not using the required eye protection. Discipline is a better alternative than possible blindness or the loss of an eye.

### Crew Members' Eye Injury Prevention Checklist

- ✓ Do not remove your safety glasses because they are uncomfortable or you don't like the way they look. Instead, ask your supervisor for a different pair.
- ✓ Know the difference between safety glasses and safety goggles. Safety goggles offer better protection when applying powdered or liquid pesticides.
- ✓ Do not substitute regular glasses or sunglasses for safety glasses.
- ✓ Know that the failure to use eye protection could result in permanent blindness or the loss of an eye.
- ✓ Learn more about [eye protection](#).

# Reduce the Risk of Death From a Skid-Steer Loader

## KEY POINTS:

- Landscape contractors and other green industry workers who operate or work around skid-steer loaders are at high risk of serious injury or death.
- Among the skid-steer-related incidents within our industry: A worker who stepped off a moving loader became entangled between the two left wheels. He was run over and crushed to death. An operator backed a loader over the edge of a 140-foot slope. It rolled down several times. The man escaped with a ruptured intestine and broken wrist. A worker standing on a loader's elevated bucket lost his footing, fell, and hit a concrete wall. He lost consciousness from head trauma and died two days later.
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has an excellent NIOSH ALERT entitled [Preventing Injuries and Deaths from Skid-Steer Loaders](#).

## Skid-Steer Loader Safety Checklist

- ✓ Stay completely inside the cab and in the operator's seat when operating a loader. Remain seated. Wear your seat belt and keep the restraint bar in place.
- ✓ Never allow passengers on a loader.
- ✓ Don't jump on and off a moving loader — and NEVER stand in the bucket.
- ✓ Check the immediate area to make sure no one is around before moving the loader or raising or lowering the bucket.
- ✓ Load, unload, and turn on level ground whenever possible.
- ✓ Operate the loader with the bucket in the lowest possible position. Don't overload the bucket.
- ✓ Don't operate a loader across slopes. Instead, travel straight up or down with the heavy end of the loader pointed uphill and the bucket lowered to the ground.
- ✓ Check behind you when operating a loader in reverse.
- ✓ Never remove or disable a loader's safety devices.
- ✓ Use both hands when getting on and off the loader. Don't use the foot or hand controls in place of steps and handholds.
- ✓ Be on the constant lookout for hazards. These may include low-hanging branches, cables, or sudden drop-offs.

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