

The purpose of this Safety Alert is to: 1) Highlight a recent occupational fatality; 2) Identify ways this specific incident may have been prevented; and, 3) Provide broader guidance on how to prevent similar incidents.

Company Owner Crushed by Skid Steer While Performing Maintenance

WHAT HAPPENED?

On October 14, 2022, a 51-year-old owner of a tree and landscape company was performing maintenance on a skid steer loader in a garage. He was working alone and was changing the wheels over to tracks for snow removal for the winter season. The skid steer was not properly secured—it was supported with two wood boards and a two-ton jack. The skid steer unexpectedly tipped and fell over, crushing the owner. Fire and medical personnel removed him from under the skid steer and pronounced him dead at the scene.



A skid steer

HOW COULD THIS INCIDENT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED?

- ▶ **Support skid steers the right way:** Make sure workers properly support skid steers when they are being lifted for service. Check the manual and follow jack instructions.
- ▶ **Work with others:** Make sure at least two people are assigned to tasks involving lifting and lowering skid steer equipment.

HOW CAN EMPLOYERS PREVENT OTHER TYPES OF SKID STEER INCIDENTS?

- 1. Make sure employees follow proper maintenance procedures per manufacturer's guidelines.**
 - ▶ Assign at least two people to work on tasks involving lifting and lowering skid steer equipment.
 - ▶ Set up supports in the correct way when lifting skid steers for service. Advise employees to check with their supervisor if they aren't sure.
 - ▶ Never perform service under a raised bucket, and make sure support devices are in place.
 - ▶ Never work on the machine with the engine running unless directed by the operator's manual.
- 2. Inspect the skid steer before work begins.**
 - ▶ Create and follow a pre-start checklist: inspect tires, cab and side screens, seat belts and bar, grab handles, steps, attachments, mirrors, horns, alarms, and check for fluid leaks.

3. Regularly inspect and maintain safety devices on skid steers.

- ▶ Safety devices include control interlocks, seat belts, restraint bars, side screens, rollover protective structures (ROPS), and falling object protective structures (FOPS).

4. Remind employees to report any missing or damaged safety equipment to their supervisor and to never modify or skip using safety devices.

5. Emphasize the importance of following safe operating procedures per manufacturer's guidelines.

- ▶ Never carry riders.
- ▶ Do not exceed the manufacturer's recommended load capacity.
- ▶ Enter and exit the cab safely.
- ▶ Never use foot or hand controls as steps or handholds.
- ▶ Adhere to safety messages and sign/warning labels on skid steer.

6. Provide training to workers and operators on safe use and maintenance of skid steers and ensure operators are properly licensed.

MORE INFORMATION

National Resources:

- [2014 FACE Skid Steer Incident Report \(CDC\)](#)
- [NIOSH Alert: Preventing Injuries and Deaths from Skid Steer Loaders \(CDC\)](#)
- [Skid Steer Loader Safety \(OSHA\)](#)

If you need help starting a health and safety program, find resources from the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards:

[On-Site Consultation Program \(mass.gov\)](https://www.mass.gov/on-site-consultation-program)



This narrative was developed to alert employers of a tragic incident. Developed by MA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program in the Occupational Health Surveillance Program (OHSP) at the MA Department of Public Health. The FACE program is supported by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). For more information, visit www.mass.gov/fatal-work-related-injuries. Please email MA.FACE@mass.gov if you have any questions.