



# Tailgate Safety Talk

**Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries**

## Safe Operation of a Milling Machine

They're called many names – milling machines, pavement profilers, and asphalt cutters. But in reality, a cold-milling machine is a piece of highly specialized road-building equipment. As a member of the crew, you will control the speed and quality of the milling job. You need to understand the pavement you're dealing with in order to save time and avoid machine damage. Remember, many factors influence your work including the hardness and abrasiveness of the material to be milled, and the location of manholes, curbs and other structures.

Safety is a critical element since many projects are done under high traffic conditions. The most important part of effective milling is properly staging dump trucks. Plan traffic control with regard for trucks that will have to maneuver in and out of the work zone and make sure backup alarms are working. And have a good idea of how many trucks are needed in front of the machine to keep in running smoothly and at the proper speed.

A milling machine is actually run by more than one operator. For example, the ground crew should assure that the machine is running in a straight line and direct movement of the conveyor belt so it's feeding the trucks. The ground crew should also monitor the cutting pattern, checking for leaks, and watching the conveyor system as the machine works. Also, observe the milling operation to make sure the machine is cutting to grade and make the necessary adjustments to correct any deviation from the desired cut.

Be alert for any tooth that starts to go bad on the cutter. If you don't replace a worn tooth quickly, it can wear into the holder and even the drum. This leads to excessive vibration, lost production due to a slower-running machine and streaks in the cutter pattern on the asphalt.

Make sure the moldboard is properly adjusted. The moldboard scrapes up material inside the cutterhouse, cleaning up behind the machine and holding material in the house until it can be removed from the cutting drum. Too much pressure and the machine drags. Too little pressure and a lot of milled asphalt is left behind and must be swept up and carried off.

Milling machines kick up a lot of dust. Ground crew should wear a dust mask and eye protection. Also, at the end of the day, use a hose to wash the machine down in order to remove gritty material that can accelerate component wear. Don't forget to service the automatic guidance system if there is one. Check the operator's manual. It is critical to maintain the equipment to get the results you want.

*Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.*