



# Tailgate Safety Talk

## Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

### Safe Operating Tips for Backhoes

You, the backhoe operator, are the key to safety. Safe operating practices not only protect you, but also the people around you, especially when working in tight and congested work areas. Here are some safe operating tips for backhoe/loaders:

- Stay in gear when traveling downhill. Don't shift into neutral. Maintain engine RPM to provide steering and braking functions. Use the same gear range for traveling down a grade as you would for traveling up the grade.
- Always use service brakes and parking brakes carefully, in accordance with the operator's manual for the equipment.
- When working in hazardous or tight areas, you must be alert to conditions at all times.
- When operating a loader, make sure the backhoe is in the transport lock position to prevent movement of the stick.
- If the backhoe attachment has been removed, make certain the equipment has an adequate rear counterweight. Check the operator's manual.
- Avoid steep slopes or unstable surfaces. If you must drive on a slope, keep the load low and proceed with extreme caution. Don't drive across a steep slope under any circumstances. Drive straight up and down the slope.
- Avoid turning on an incline. If it is necessary, use extreme caution and make the turn wide and slow with the bucket carried low.
- Be careful when handling objects such as guardrail posts, stumps and so forth. Lifting too high or rolling the bucket too far back could result in these objects sliding rearward down the loader arms onto the operator.
- Keep the work area as flat and level as possible. Avoid spinning the machine's wheels and causing dangerous ruts. Use the loader bucket to backdrag or occasionally to maintain a smooth surface.
- When operating a backhoe on a slope, swing to the uphill side to dump a load, if possible. If downhill dumping is necessary, swing only as far as is required to dump the bucket. Support your machine with the stabilizers before you begin digging.
- If trenching, always drop the spoil a sufficient distance from the cut to prevent a cave-in.
- Never undercut a high bank. When working at the base of a bank or overhang, watch for dangers such as rock or earth slides, overhanging trees or a cave-in.
- Use extreme caution when working along the top of banks or slopes. Keep away from the edge.
- Use extreme caution when backfilling, since the weight of the fill material plus the weight of the machine could cause the new work to collapse.

*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.*