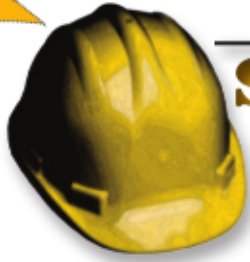


Tear this out and share with your crew



SAFETY WATCH

by Marcia Gruver

One-man machines

The operator should be the only person on a wheel loader



Illustration by Don Lomax

The accident: Crews were working at night to replace aging cast-iron water pipes in an intersection. One worker was standing in the street, guiding the operator of a wheel loader as he backed out into the intersection. After the loader stopped backing up and started moving forward, the worker decided to hitch a ride, and grabbed the loader's side ladder. The ladder rungs were slick with rain, and the worker lost his grip, falling beneath one of the rear tires. He went to the hospital with

10 fractured ribs, a bruised lung and a lacerated liver.

The bottom line: Always maintain a three-point contact with steps and hand holds and never attempt to mount or dismount a moving wheel loader. Face the machine when you get on or off a machine. Don't use the steering wheel or any control lever as a hand hold when you enter or leave the machine.

Before starting a wheel loader, walk completely around the equipment. Make sure no one is under

the machine, on it or close to it. Sound the horn and let other workers and bystanders know you are starting up. Don't start until everyone is clear of the machine.

Never use the bucket for a work platform or to carry other workers. Always look around before you back up, hook up or swing an attachment. Be sure that everyone is in the clear. Know the pinch points and rotating parts on the machine; never let anyone in or near the pivot point of an articulated machine.

Take it slow and easy when traveling through congested areas, and give the right of way to loaded machines. Maintain a safe distance from other machines. Pass cautiously.

Don't obstruct your vision when traveling or working. Carry the bucket low for maximum stability and visibility, and carry attachments in the transport position.

Stay in gear when traveling downhill. Do not shift into neutral. Maintain engine rpm to provide steering and braking functions. Use the same gear for traveling down a grade as you would for traveling up a grade. **EW**

Information for this Safety Watch was gathered from newspaper reports of a real accident and the Association of Equipment Manufacturers. It is meant for general

information only; to order AEM's "Wheel Loader/Tractor Safety Manual," go to www.aem.org.