

SAFETY TALK



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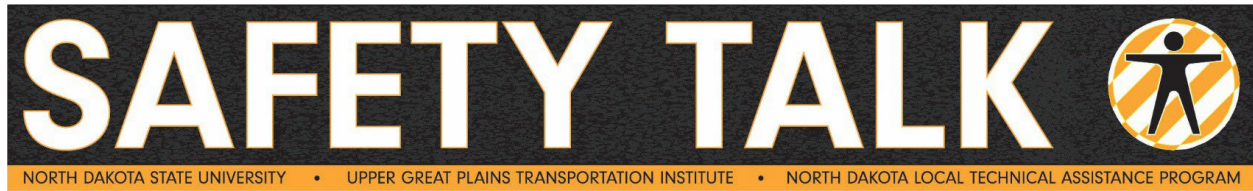
10 Heavy Equipment Operator Safety Tips

Counties and cities in North Dakota use numerous types of heavy equipment. Each piece of equipment poses its own set of safety risks. Here are ten basic heavy equipment operator tips



1. *Agencies need to provide specialized equipment training for operators*
 - Every heavy equipment operator should receive specialized training for the piece of equipment they are expected to operate. Inexperienced operators should be allowed to begin with simple tasks to gain experience before taking on more complex operations.
2. *Inspect equipment before use*
 - Heavy equipment operators should be responsible for conducting an inspection of their assigned machines before each period of work. The inspection should begin with a ground-level walkaround and include a fluid level check looking for loose items, leaks, or other possible issues. These problems can then be corrected before they develop into unsafe situations.
3. *Maintain three-point contact at all times*
 - Many falls occur from unsafe climbing on heavy equipment. Operators should always maintain three-points of contact when climbing around or off any machine. This means at least two hand or feet should be secure while moving one hand or foot in climbing up or down. **DO NOT JUMP OFF OF ANY EQUIPMENT.**
4. *Wear a seatbelt at all times*
 - Heavy equipment often moves over rough terrain and can throw an operator from the machine, causing serious injuries. Always wear a seatbelt when operating any piece of heavy construction equipment, even when only moving it from one location to another.
5. *Watch for blind spots*
 - Large equipment has many blind spots. This creates many risks for inadvertently crushing people or objects during operation. Know your blind spots when operating any piece of heavy equipment and learn to watch them regularly for unexpected workers or adequate clearance around objects or other vehicles.

Register today for the upcoming [NDLTAP Heavy Equipment Safety and Maintenance Training](#)



6. *Recognize your limits*

- Operating some heavy equipment can be physically demanding. Intense heat or other weather conditions can also wear on an operator, causing fatigues and slower reflexes. Know your limits as a worker and stop operating any machine when you feel tired, sick, emotionally exhausted, or otherwise incapacitated in any way. You should also never operate heavy equipment when on medications that could possibly cause drowsiness.

7. *Use effective communication signals*

- Everyone on the jobsite working around heavy equipment should learn the basic hand signals for use with equipment operators. Use these signals to indicate movement and operation, ask questions, and otherwise make your intentions known to those around you.

8. *Have a spotter available*

- A spotter is a person whose designated task is to watch out for a specific piece of heavy equipment. They help the operator with determining clearances, safe operation zones and conditions, and steering other workers away from the danger zone. When possible, each piece of heavy equipment in a busy construction zone should have a spotter in attendance.

9. *Always have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available*

- Heavy equipment operators should wear and use appropriate PPE. This includes head and eye protection, gloves, sturdy steel-toed boots, and other specific equipment for certain jobs. Some environments may require a respirator.

10. *Create Buffer Zones*

- When possible, it is always a good practice to create buffer zones around the areas where heavy equipment is in operation. These “safety zones” keep other vehicles and workers clear of where equipment will be traversing, working or otherwise operating.

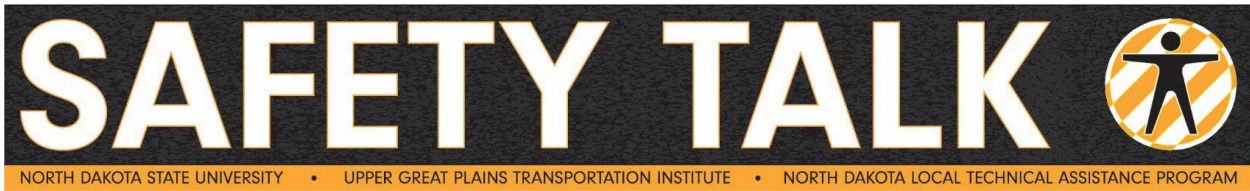
Related Resources:

- NDLTAP safety resources page <https://www.ndltap.org/resources/safety/>
- Transportation Learning Network (TLN) Learning Opportunities <https://www.translearning.org/ops/>
- OSHA [Construction Industry | Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(osha.gov\)](https://www.osha-slc.gov/construction-industry-occupational-safety-and-health-administration)



Safety Talks are published by NDLTAP in cooperation with the National Local Technical Assistance Association and participating partner organizations.





Safety Talk Sign-in Sheet Topic 10 Heavy Equipment Operator Safety Tip

Agency: _____

Crew: _____

Supervisor/Talk Leader: _____

Date: _____

Print Name

Signature

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