

# Rental Safety Tips

No two construction sites are the same. Traffic patterns vary, as do the slopes and grades of the jobsite. Different types of equipment come and go. And of course there can be more than one subcontractor on the job. These variables can make safety a challenge. But that challenge can be met by following simple, yet crucial, safety rules. Your commitment to safety must be consistent. Take steps to make your site and those around you safer.

## **1. Wear seat belts**

Operators of construction equipment are not typically traveling at high speeds, and traffic is limited. Still, there are other working machines and equipment sometimes needs to use or at least cross a public road. But seat belts do much more than protect the operator in the event of a collision. They also keep workers inside the cab's rollover protection structure (ROPS). And in many cases, construction equipment is more likely to roll over than be struck by another vehicle. The underfoot conditions can be unstable, and the operator can encounter a berm, ravine, or a dropoff from a road to a drainage ditch. Any of these hazards can lead a machine to roll as can loading and unloading. Staying buckled up keeps you in the ROPS and keeps you safe.

## **2. Properly enter and exit machines**

Start by taking the proper approach. Always face the equipment, and use the steps and rails provided by the manufacturer. Make sure contact areas are clear; that steps and handrails are properly secured and free of mud and debris; and that the area is adequately lit. Maintain three points of contact when mounting or dismounting. (Either one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot, should be on the steps/handrail.) Make sure footwear is clean, and that hands are free of tools or anything else that could encumber the process.

## **3. Make the shop safe**

Repairing equipment requires caution. Turning off equipment should be obvious. But have you put all safety locks in place? Keep guards and shields on power equipment they're installed for a reason. Proper ventilation and lighting helps prevent injury.

## **4. Know where underground lines are buried**

It's easy to do. In fact, you can have utility lines marked at your future jobsite by making just one phone call. Simply dial 811, which connects you with your local call center. That center handles communications for all utilities. Potential underground hazards will soon be marked at your future jobsite. And 811 is a FREE service. Make sure you call before every job period! The safety of your crew, as well as a hefty fine, is too big of a risk to take. Visit [www.call811.com](http://www.call811.com) for more information.

## **5. Recognize the hazards**

Start by looking around you. Are there overhead lines or other potential electrical hazards? Are there steep slopes, or space issues? Are employees riding on the outside of moving machines? Many dangers are obvious to those who are open to spotting them. If you see a potential problem, but are not sure, ask. Make hazard recognition second nature by: reviewing safety procedures daily; helping new workers learn what to look for; conducting toolbox talks, including those on [SAFETY.CAT.COM](http://SAFETY.CAT.COM); participating in other forms of training; and showing a willingness to address the concern. In other words be committed; don't leave safety in the hands of someone else. It's your responsibility to take corrective action.

## **6. Secure loads properly**

Refer to the operator's manual for guidelines on proper loading and transport procedures. Make sure trailers are properly hitched to the towing vehicle. Use safety chains, and make sure signal lights work properly. Inspect tires before each use. If the trailer has brakes, inspect them daily and make sure all connections are intact. Always make sure the brakes are locked before

loading. Load and unload on level surfaces. Use tiedowns or chain binders to secure loads to the trailer.

### **7. Wear the proper clothing**

When it comes to clothing, keep it tight. Loose clothing can get caught in machinery especially when working around augers or implements. Wear the proper footwear not only to protect feet from falling objects, but to prevent falls. Construction sites can be slippery places, and boots with good traction are the first line of defense.

### **8. Make safe work tool changes**

Understand the warning labels regarding the forks, buckets, and other work tools on your jobsite. Know the maximum operating capacities and specifications of the host machine and its lift capacity restrictions. Also make sure you're aware of work tool clearance when operating near obstacles, including those that are overhead, such as tree branches and power lines. Before making a work tool change, check the hydraulic hoses and fittings on both the tool and the host machine. Once installed, operate the tool slowly in an open area to make sure all components are working properly (and not leaking).

### **9. Conduct pre-shift walk-arounds**

These inspections only take a few minutes, but they are one of the best ways to detect small problems before they become serious. Follow walk-around guidelines in the operating manuals, which should be kept on machines. (Supervisors must allow time for a thorough evaluation.) Start by making sure the machine is clean. That means no grease, oil, or hydraulic fluid on the steps, railings, or controls.

Keep windows clean inside and out for clear visibility. On the outside, check for accumulating debris such as straw, branches, and grass that could be susceptible to fire. Besides debris, you're looking for leaks, cuts, cracks, rubbing, or excessive wear. Use your senses: sight, smell, hearing, and touch. Have your operators do quick walk-arounds any time they get off the machines, and again at the end of a shift. Pass all relevant information to other operators and a supervisor.

### **10. Establish a culture of safety - and a commitment to training**

Prepare a safety manual or safety sheet for the specific conditions found on your site or in your shop. Ensure that all equipment is used for its intended purposes, and forbid removal of safety guards or other protective gear. Retain material safety data sheets for bulk fluids and chemicals. When appropriate, make sure instructions are translated and clearly understood by all workers. Provide regular safety training and conduct weekly training meetings even if you are working in the field.

Construction sites can be dangerous places. There can be electrical wiring (above or below) and workers who don't share your commitment thereby putting you and crew members in jeopardy. But there is good news: We're here to help make your construction site a safer place for you and your crew. At [SAFETY.CAT.COM/Rental](https://www.safety.cat.com/Rental), check out the toolbox talks and shop safety tips on this industry page. There are training videos, machine operating tips, personal safety guidelines and a lot more. We're not just about keeping you safe when you're on our equipment though that certainly is part of the effort. Our goal is to keep you safe period. That's why we recommend visiting [SAFETY.CAT.COM](https://www.safety.cat.com) on a regular basis.