

**Bi-Weekly Safety Tool Box Talks**  
**James Peterson Sons, Inc.**  
**JPS, Inc. Utility Division**  
**Buteyn-Peterson Construction Co., Inc.**  
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## Working Safely with Skid-Steer Loaders

Skid-steer loaders are compact, bi-directional, earth-moving machines that can be found on many construction projects. They can move soil, bushes, trees, and palettes; grade sidewalks; muck out wet areas; mow along roadways; and dig holes. Bobcat is one of the major manufacturers of these machines, so many people just refer to all skid-steer loaders as "Bobcats."

As with any piece of heavy equipment, operators should use skid-steer loaders safely. To do so, make sure you read the operator's manual. It will provide you with warnings, cautions, and safe operating instructions. Before operating a skid-steer loader, take a walk around it. Sometimes looking, listening, and smelling can prevent an accident or severe damage to equipment. Look for obvious signs of danger such as loose or missing guards and equipment, leaks, and excessive tire wear. Next, check the engine oil and hydraulic fluid, look for leaks, and make sure you have enough fuel for the day's work.

When you climb aboard and sit down in the operator's seat, buckle your seat belt and pull down the safety bar. Check to make sure the transmission is in neutral. Then, you can reach up, turn on the ignition switch, and start up the loader. If your skid-steer loader is equipped with side mirrors, adjust them. Check your horn and lights to make sure they're working. Look at your gauges. Listen for excessive noise and check for smoke during startup. Check the transmission, steering, brakes, and hydraulic controls

for proper operation. **Ensure that the back-up alarm is functioning before you begin your work.**

When operating a skid-steer loader, remember to keep your limbs inside the operator's cab or area. Never stick fingers, hands, arms, or any other body part out of the cab, or the machine's bucket arm could come down and crush you. When you decide to exit the machine, lower the bucket, set the brake, and turn the machine off. Then, raise your safety bar, unbuckle the seat belt, and carefully exit the machine. Enter and exit according to the manufacturer's instructions. Watch for slick areas that could cause you to slip and fall.

If you're a bystander working around a skid-steer loader, remember that the operator has limited vision to the rear of the machine. Give the operator ample space to maneuver the loader. Don't let your guard down and always listen for the back-up alarm. Take responsibility for keeping yourself out of harm's way.

Skid-steer loaders make much of our work easier, **but operators and bystanders share the responsibility** to make sure that the work is done safely.

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**SAFETY REMINDER**  
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**When operated improperly, skid-steer loaders can overturn. Remember that attachments affect machine balance. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.**

Safety Manual Reference: *Page 40 Para.13.0 Tools & Equipment*

I have read the above safety topic.

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

"Return after reading and signing to the office with your time card"