



A SAFE OPERATION

SAFETY TIPS FOR LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS

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A safe jobsite is critical to the success of any landscape contractor. When employees work safely, they are on the job and helping you meet deadlines. Incidents resulting in injury and property damage not only yield lost productivity, but also lead to costly increases in workers' compensation and insurance premiums. Most jobsite accidents are preventable with careful attention to a few basic principles.

1. Wear seat belts.

Operators are rarely traveling at high speeds or in thick traffic on most landscape sites, but safety belts do far more than protect from impact in case of a collision. They also keep the operator inside the rollover protection structure (ROPS) of the cab. The truth is a landscaping machine traversing a steep berm or ravine, even at a low speed, can roll over. Always be aware of worksite terrain. Machines can also roll during loading and unloading. Caterpillar data shows that operators who consistently wear their seat belts, and thereby remain in the protective space of the ROPS, have a dramatically greater chance of walking away unharmed from a rollover, tip over or sudden stop.



2. Avoid slips and falls onsite.

Slips and falls result when crew members trip or slip because of poor footing. Good housekeeping is the best way to avoid tripping. Demand that all loose materials be put in their proper place; an empty sod pallet or leftover paver can do a lot of damage. Pick up the work area and make it clear others are expected to do the same. For footing, be aware of conditions that often lead to slips: rain, mud, steep terrain and oily boots. Immediately clean spills such as grease, water or oil.



3. Properly enter and exit machines.

Consider these three points. First, take the proper approach. Always face the equipment and use the access system provided by the manufacturer. Second, make sure contact areas are clear; steps and handrails are properly secured and free of mud, debris and defects; and landing areas are adequately lit. Be sure to check around the perimeter of the machine for people or objects that could be run over. Finally, maintain three points of contact when mounting or dismounting. Specifically, use either two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet. Keep hands free of tools and other objects when maintaining three points of contact and make sure footwear is free of potential hazards such as mud, dirt, oil and grease.



4. Dress for protection.

Always make sure proper footwear is worn — not only to protect feet from falling objects, but also to prevent you and your crew from slipping. Make sure boots are high enough to protect ankles. Shirtsleeves of at least 4 inches are recommended, as are gloves and long pants. They are the first line of defense from cuts, scratches and other injuries that can result from shrubs, tree branches or sharp objects on the jobsite. Shorts might seem appropriate when working in an isolated area, but plans often change and workers may get shuffled from one location to another. Hard hats and safety glasses are also recommended. How about wearing reflective vests or bright T-shirts?

Some landscape applications take crews to high-traffic areas, where bright shirts or reflective vests are a must. On jobsites where space is tight, bright or reflective clothing can make employees working on the ground more visible to equipment operators.



5. Establish a culture of safety on your landscape sites.

Provide regular safety training and conduct weekly safety meetings. Prepare a safety manual or brief safety sheet for the specific conditions encountered on each jobsite. Ensure that all equipment is used for its intended purposes and do not permit removal of safety guards or other protective gear. Retain material safety data sheets for fertilizers and chemicals. Copies should be kept in vehicles in the event of an accident. When appropriate, make sure instructions are translated and clearly understood by all workers.



6. Make safe attachment changes.

Specifics can vary by tool so refer to the Operations and Maintenance Manual (OMM) "Daily Inspection" for more information on examining the work tool attachments before use. In general, keep work tools in a level area for safe changing. Understand the warning labels that are on every work tool. They contain the exact location and description of the hazards. Know the maximum operating capacity of the host machine and its lift restrictions. Also, make sure you are aware of work tool clearance when working near obstacles, including those that are overhead: tree branches, power lines and building eaves.



7. Conduct walk around inspections.

These inspections only take a few minutes and they are one of the best ways to prevent mechanical problems and avoid safety hazards. Details are provided in the OMMs, which should be kept in machines. Operators need to understand the importance of completing the checks, and supervisors must allow time for a thorough evaluation. Basically, you are looking for leaks, cuts, cracks, rubbing, debris or excessive wear. Use your senses: sight, smell, hearing and touch. Don't limit the examinations to the start of the day. Have your operators do quick walk-arounds any time they get off the machines and again at the end of a shift. Landscape equipment often works around and in materials that can puncture hoses or tires and lead to leaks. Pass all relevant information on to other operators and make sure any new observations make their way to a supervisor.



8. Keep machines clean.

Clean means no grease on the steps, railings or controls. Keep windows clear so you can see. On the outside, check for accumulating debris. Landscape contractors work in materials highly susceptible to fire (straw, woodchips and mulch). Check the undercarriage to make sure it is free of these materials, which could ignite or damage hoses containing hydraulic or other fluids.



9. Make a commitment to operator training.

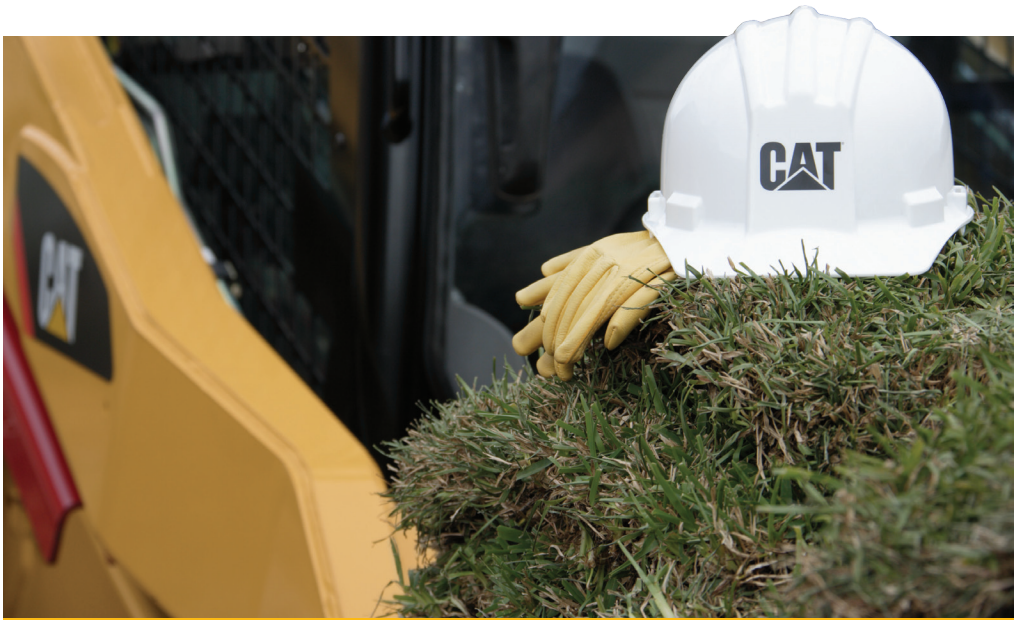
Practice makes perfect. Make sure new operators have been trained before they start working on your jobsites. Some landscaping contractors have the mistaken impression that training is less essential because they typically use smaller machines. This is not the case. An operator who is not properly trained is a potential jobsite hazard, regardless of machine size. Give experienced operators a chance to adjust to new machines and complete all training necessary for them to be comfortable. Have operators review the OMM to make sure they understand the basics before putting machines to work. Also, if you don't have the resources available to provide training yourself, Caterpillar and Cat Dealers provide a spectrum of resources to assist you. You can develop your own safety program or ask your Cat Dealer for help. In addition, safety materials are available to you at [SAFETY.CAT.COM™](https://www.safety.cat.com).



10. Secure loads properly.

Refer to the OMMs 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 tie-downs or chain binders to secure loads to the trailer. Check bindings after you have traveled some distance to be sure the load has not shifted. Load trailers properly - put about 60 percent of the load toward the front. (Too little weight in the front will cause the trailer to fishtail. Too much weight will cause the hitch to drag and may raise the front of the towing vehicle, which reduces steering control.) Sweep the decks free of dirt, stones and debris before traveling. Wipe up any oil.





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The equipment training and safety teams at Caterpillar have spent decades working with customers around the world, across a wide spectrum of equipment applications and jobsite conditions. The key lesson learned is, when it comes to jobsite safety, no amount of equipment technology or advanced machine design can replace caution and good safety practices.

The primary contributors to safe jobsites are awareness, proper training, and attention to detail on the part of business owners and their employees. Safety must be a priority and an ongoing part of your company culture. We hope this booklet is helpful as you strive to profitably grow your business.

We also invite you to view and utilize additional Cat® safety training resources by visiting **SAFETY.CAT.COM™**.

This pamphlet is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of all hazards related to CAT® products or to your specific application. More complete information is provided in the Operation & Maintenance Manual (OMM) for specific models. Caterpillar recommends you and your employees read and understand the OMM before operating or working on any machine.

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