

Skid Loader Safety Concerns Near Manure Storages

Listed below are common concerns and considerations when operating skid loaders near manure storages.

Concerns

- Skid loaders tip easily, especially when loaded buckets are raised high off the ground.
- Movement increases the tipping risk of skid loaders
- Owners should not use over-sized buckets to “increase” work production rates.
- Some equipment manufacturers rate their equipment for bucket weight capacity to only one-half of the tipping weight.
- All skid loader operators should be trained, experienced adults.
- Neither youth nor inexperienced operators should operate a skid loader near manure storages. Only skilled operators should be near such hazardous locations.
- Skid loaders should be used with appropriate rear stability weights.
- Chain link fences are designed to deter people and animals from entering manure storages. Manure should never be dumped over a chain link fence.
- Heavy safety guards are needed to provide the safe loading of manure into storages.
- Skid loaders need to be operated in accordance with a manufacturer’s operator manual.

Considerations

- Manure storage planners/designers need to have specific conversations during project planning/designing with the landowner/operator to discuss methods for safely handling manure loading into the storage.
- A safe design for moving manure into storage never includes manure being lifted over a chain link or other type of fence.
- Use a safety sign to reinforce skid loader safety at manure storages.
- Encourage the use of 2’ +/- concrete curbs/tank wall extension between the concrete manure storage walls and the concrete barn yard (and other areas of safety concerns). This wall extension is not designed to keep a loaded skid loader from toppling into the manure storage, but is intended to provide a general overall safety barrier to deter animals, provide a visual barrier, prevent slow moving vehicles from coasting or rolling into the storage, provide a means to raise the base of the fence away from most of the manure increasing fence life, etc.
- Continue to use chain link fences to protect people and animals.
- Continue to use safety gate push-in structures to safely load manure into storages.
- If dumping manure over a wall into the storage is the only available option, use concrete walls with special guards on top of the wall (or equal). These access locations must be designed to guard against equipment toppling into the storage. Also include protection to keep people and animals out of this access location.

