



Toolbox Talk

Falls from Trucks and Heavy Equipment

Simply climbing in or out of your truck, bulldozer, crane or other heavy equipment can be one of the most dangerous tasks you perform. Falls during mounting or dismounting such equipment are the most frequently reported source of injury involving equipment operators. In some cases, these falls are not the result of operator error but are caused by poor equipment design and/or maintenance. Recognition of any deficiencies in design can help save you from painful injury. Some common problems include:

- Hidden steps – not readily visible to the operator
- Lack of uniformity in the design of steps and other parts of equipment
- Excessively high steps
- Lack of, or poorly placed, side steps
- Lack of, or poorly placed, handrails
- Poor tread surfaces, either by design or wear and damage
- Miscellaneous design problems

Miscellaneous design problems can be anything from steps that hang from unstable support systems (such as chains) to a total lack of steps or ladders for access.

As an operator, to minimize the risk, it is important you make getting in and out as safe as possible. Understand the vehicle manual and heed any vehicle safety labels.

- Always use the “three-point method” when mounting or dismounting your vehicle. This means making sure that one hand and both feet or both hands and one foot are in positive contact with the vehicle when climbing in or out
- Wear proper footwear and avoid loose, baggy or bulky clothing
- Do not hurry to climb into, nor jump out of, equipment
- Never ascend or descend moving equipment
- Always face the vehicle when getting in or out
- Do your part in keeping steps, ladders and handrails in good, serviceable condition. Do daily inspections and promptly report deficiencies. Repair before using again. If there is doubt, ask your supervisor to determine whether it is safe to use the equipment
- Observe the environmental conditions. Steps and handrails may become wet, muddy or oily. Also, observe the landing area where your feet will be placed. Avoid rocks, debris, uneven and slippery surfaces. All of these increase the likelihood of a slip and fall



Given the potential deficiencies that could result in an injury, it is possible that the action of the operator will not be the **primary** reason the accident occurs. Your awareness and safe actions are the best defense against unwanted injury.

- Observe your vehicle or equipment for the design problems listed above
- Always use the “three-point method” when climbing into, or out of, equipment
- Be aware of the potential hazards both on and off of the equipment

