

EQUIPMENT

USING TELEHANDLERS IN AGRICULTURE



STOP AND THINK

SAFE

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

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Introduction

As with all lifting equipment, work with telehandlers should be properly planned and the risks assessed to ensure the work can be carried out safely.

Most machines feature a side-mounted cab, with the boom mounted to the right of the machine chassis. Some machines have a centrally mounted cab and boom. These pivot steer or articulated machines are known as teleloaders.

Telehandlers and teleloaders should only be driven by authorised, trained and competent people who have completed appropriate training and testing (see HSE Approved Code of Practice L117 to find out more).

Hazards of machine operation

- overturning during travel or when lifting on slopes or flat ground
- electrocution from contact with overhead power lines (OHPLs)
- unsecured loads falling from height, e.g. bales
- using inappropriate or poorly maintained handling attachments
- unsafe procedures, e.g. using a grain bucket to push in fence posts
- people falling from height, e.g. when using attachments as work platforms
- attachments not secured properly or becoming detached in use
- unintended movement of the machine

Before using a machine

- make sure it is of a type suitable for the environment in which it is to be used and is capable of performing the required tasks safely
- ensure attachments are compatible with the machine, properly maintained and safe to use
- check visibility aids such as mirrors are in good condition, properly adjusted and the cab windows are clean - the glass for the window nearest the boom must always be intact to prevent the risk of crushing from the boom
- ensure the machine is properly maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and thoroughly examined at recommended intervals
- make sure the operator is familiar with the controls and has read and understood the operator's manual
- check all recommended pre-use checks have been carried out, including a check that the overload indicator is in working order
- ensure the machine is fitted with a lap belt or similar operator restraint
- wherever possible, ensure pedestrians are separated from telehandler operations

When using a telehandler

- travel with the boom lowered to make sure that the centre of gravity of the machine and the load is as low as possible to maximise stability
- try to avoid travelling on routes which take you over very steep slopes or near OHPLs
- if working on a slope cannot be avoided, ALWAYS follow the manufacturers recommendations / instructions and NEVER exceed the machines capacities
- when a load is carried on a slope, the load should face uphill - when no load is carried the attachment / fork toes should face downhill
- avoid turning on or traversing a slope and always descend straight down the most manageable area of the slope (gentlest gradient), instead of driving diagonally across it
- avoid loading / unloading a load on a slope where you can
- never work under a suspended load
- use suitable supports if any work (including maintenance) has to be carried out under a raised boom

The operator should always look around and check for the presence of pedestrians before moving off and while manoeuvring and travelling.

Visibility

Drivers of loaders, lift trucks and telescopic handlers suffer from poor forward visibility when carrying loads in front of them. Position the load so it does not obscure your vision. If this is not possible, or it compromises stability, it may be safer to travel in reverse. Take extra care and be vigilant when it has not been possible to exclude people from the work area. Take a good look around the vehicle and sound the horn before moving off.

- use a banksman to guide you when reversing if necessary
- a banksman should stand in a safe place where the driver can see them
- telescopic handlers can have blind spots created by the boom so check for pedestrians before manoeuvring
- ensure mirrors are fitted and properly adjusted - repair mirrors if broken and fit additional mirrors or a camera, for example, to the rear to help improve visibility
- mirrors and cab windows should be kept clean
- windscreen wipers should be fitted and working

Lifting operations

Properly plan and organise the lift, using appropriate equipment and competent people to minimise the risks. Make sure:

- all lifting equipment is thoroughly examined and adequately maintained by a competent person - independent inspection organisations, including insurance companies, can help provide advice on thorough examination and test



- safe working loads (SWLs) are marked on lifting equipment - never exceed SWLs or use damaged, makeshift or worn items
- never use grain buckets, pallets or other makeshift equipment for lifting people off the ground

The operator should always look around and check for the presence of pedestrians before moving off and while manoeuvring and travelling.

Attachments

A wide range of attachments are available for agricultural work e.g. pallet or muck forks, buckets, bale spikes, block cutters and grabs. Key points to remember are:

- fitting an attachment may alter the characteristics of the machine and should be considered when determining revised lifting capacities (a process known as de-rating)
- always select attachments compatible with the telehandler and suitable for the task to be performed
- attachments need to be regularly inspected and properly maintained
- operators will require training for the attachments they use
- always operate isolation switches, hydraulic valves, or other measures provided on the machine to secure and/or isolate attachments safely



Fencing work

Using a telehandler boom to drive in fence posts is hazardous as the person holding the post or standing nearby may be at risk of serious injury. Risks include:

- being struck or run over by the telehandler
- being struck by the boom, or the attachment mounted on it e.g. a grain bucket, if either the machine, boom or attachment move unexpectedly
- being crushed or trapped by the attachment if it becomes detached from the machine

The action of pushing down on the fence post will tend to lift the attachment out of the mechanism securing it to the boom. Anyone in the vicinity is at risk of being struck or crushed by the attachment, should this occur.

Never use a telehandler boom, or an attachment as a tool for driving in fence posts. Always use equipment suitable for the job such as a tractor mounted post-driver.

More information

For more information on Workplace Transport safety, please visit the HSENI website at: www.hseni.gov.uk/topic/workplace-transport

Or for specific agricultural information you can find this at: www.hseni.gov.uk/topic/agriculture

HSENI, 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FR

Phone: 028 9024 3249

Helpline: 0800 0320 121

Email: mail@hseni.gov.uk

Web: www.hseni.gov.uk/farmsafe

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