

MAFES Dawg Tracks



February 11, 2008 *Dangers of By-Pass Starting Equipment*



By-pass starting equipment or “jump-starting” has been practiced for probably as long as we have had tractors, vehicles and implements on the farm. But, it is no less dangerous now than it’s always been.

Serious injuries and sometimes death occurs every year as the result of attempting to “jump-off” a tractor or other implement from the ground. This can happen to anyone, regardless of the length of experience they possess. It can happen when we get careless and forget to check all elements involved. By-pass or “jump-starting” can be compared to playing “Russian Roulette,” as you don’t readily know when the unit is in gear and could run over you.

A true story regarding a jump start incident occurred when a farmer, with over 20 years experience, was attempting to jump start his tractor. He connected the cables to the starter instead of the battery. The tractor started and obviously, it was in gear. He was standing in front of the rear tire and with no one on the tractor, was seriously injured, with his pelvis bone broken in three pieces. One would think that with all the experience he had, this wouldn’t have happened. This is another case in point that shows what can happen when we lose focus or get in a hurry.

TIPS TO START A TRACTOR:

- Check around all sides of the equipment to see that the area is clear of bystanders.
- Mount the implement in the operator’s seat, sit down and fasten the seatbelt (if the unit is equipped).
- Neutralize the hydraulic controls.
- Disengage the Power Take Off (PTO).
- Push in the fuel shut-off.
- Place the transmission in neutral or park, and depress the clutch and brake.

On a cold morning, it may seem too cold to get the engine started without a battery boost or it may be easier to use a screwdriver to arc the terminals to start the engine. But the safe way is to climb up in the operator’s seat.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE EMPLOYEE:

- Orient and educate the employees on the dangers of by-pass starting and prevention.
- Enforce a “No-Bypass Starting” policy.
- Purchase warning labels to affix to the tractors and implements as reminders. Also labels can be attached to the starter/solenoid to warn of using screwdrivers to arc across terminals.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Only start and operate equipment on which you have been trained.
- Never by-pass start equipment from the ground.
- Always start equipment with the parking brake on and the transmission in park or neutral.
- Look around the area of the equipment before starting to be sure that no one is around or near it.
- Always start equipment when seated in the operator’s seat.

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Excerpts: www.thezenith.com

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