

Baling and Compacting Safety

Introduction:

WARNING! Workers loading, operating, or working near baling or compacting equipment are at risk of serious injury or death.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is responsible for making recommendations for preventing work-related illness and injuries. Balers and compactor are used in several industries to compress waste materials, including cardboard, metals, and plastics.

Discussion Points:

- Point-of-operation guarding must be used on balers and compactors at all times
- Conduct inspections and maintenance of equipment and safeguarding devices
- Workers must be trained in safe operation of equipment
- Workers must understand the risks and hazards with operation of balers and compactors
- Always follow safe work practices and manufacturer's recommendations

Discussion:

NIOSH recommends three criteria to be satisfied to protect workers from injury during the operation of balers and compactors:

- ✓ Point-of-operation guarding, such as an interlocking gate, must prevent workers from placing any part of their body into the hazardous areas of the equipment.
- ✓ Periodic inspection and maintenance of equipment and safeguarding devices must be conducted to ensure proper operation and safe performance.
- ✓ Workers must be trained in safe operation of equipment, understand the hazards related to bypassing safety devices, and recognize the limitations and effective operating ranges of safety devices.

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) sets several requirements to prevent hazards caused by the motion of the ram when gates or access doors are open in "Baling Equipment-Safety Requirements" ANSI Z245.5-1990.

OSHA standard 29 CFR 1910.147 addresses requirements for controls of hazards before and during maintenance on balers. It covers steps in using a blocking device to control the downward motion of the ram.

Inexperienced workers who are unaware of baling and compacting hazards are at risk of serious injury or death. This may be the result of reaching inside or falling into the equipment. All workers must understand how the equipment works. They must receive adequate training before working around baling and compacting equipment. Employees younger than 18 years of age are not allowed to operate a baler or compactor.

Always follow safe work practices and manufacturer's recommendations when inspecting, operating, and maintaining the equipment.

As always, stay safe out there!

July 05, 2021

