



National Grain and Feed Association

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NGFA Alert: Powered Industrial Trucks vs. Skid-Steer Loaders

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Grain handling facilities may operate mobile equipment, such as pay loaders, tractors and skid-steer loaders, that require specific training and precautions. Skid-steer loaders are widely used within the grain, feed and processing industry, and are a type of compact tractor with a wide, pronged “bucket” on the front used to move grain or feed from ground level and deposit elsewhere. For example, grain often is moved from a ground pile, bunker or flat storage structure with a skid-steer loader and deposited into a truck or other conveyance. Currently, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has no operating standard for skid-steer loaders. The only existing OSHA documents that provide further clarification between a powered industrial truck (PIT) and a skid-steer loader are a Safety and Health Information Bulletin and a Letter of Interpretation.

Powered Industrial Trucks (PITs)

PITs (pictured top right), commonly called forklifts or lift trucks, are used in many industries, primarily to move materials. They also can be used to raise, lower or remove large objects or a number of smaller objects on pallets or in boxes, crates or other containers. Powered industrial trucks can be ridden either by the operator or controlled by a walking operator.



PIT OSHA Resources: [1910.178](https://www.osha-slc.gov/dts/shib/shib011209.html) and [1910.178 App A](https://www.osha-slc.gov/dts/shib/shib011209.html)

Skid-Steer Loaders

Skid-steer loaders (pictured middle right) include a steering system that allows the wheels on opposite sides of a machine to turn independently of each other, which gives the vehicle the ability to make a complete rotation within its own length.



Skid-Steer Loader OSHA Resources:

- Safety and Health Information Bulletin: “While OSHA does not have a standard requiring employers to use control interlock systems or seatbelts on skid-steer loaders, it is important for employers to understand that under the General Duty Clause of the OSH Act ((section 5(a)(1)), employers must provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm. OSHA may cite an employer for a violation under the General Duty Clause if recognized hazards exist and the employer does not take feasible, effective measures to abate such hazards. See OSHA’s Safety and Health Information Bulletin 01-11-2009 Hazards Associated with Operating Skid-Steer Loaders with Bypassed and/or Improperly Maintained Safety Devices (<https://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib011209.html>).”
- Letter of Interpretation: In the March 4, 2000 letter, OSHA states that a “skid-steer loader...would not be considered a powered industrial truck under §1910.178.” However, some skid-steer loaders are considered to be powered industrial trucks, if the “...vertical mast skid-steer loaders are designed as powered industrial trucks meeting ANSI B56.6 Rough Terrain Forklift Trucks. These skid-steer loaders would be considered powered industrial trucks under §1910.178.”

Rough Terrain Forklift Trucks

These machines (pictured bottom right) are **defined** as a wheeled-type truck designed primarily as a fork truck with a vertical mast and/or a pivoted boom, variable reach or of fixed length, which may be equipped with attachments. This truck is intended for operation on unimproved natural terrain, as well as the disturbed terrain that may exist at construction sites. This definition **excludes** machines designed primarily for earth moving, such as loaders and bulldozers, even though their buckets and blades are replaced with forks; as well as machines designed for use primarily as over-the-road trucks equipped with lifting devices.



More safety and regulator information at www.ngfa.org.

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