# A screen shot of a computer Description automatically generatedBackhoe safety talk

Backhoes are one of the most prevalent types of equipment found on construction sites. Backhoe operators are required to follow stringent safety procedures. Failure to follow these procedures can put both the operator and other workers at risk.

*There are many risks that can occur while operating a backhoe loader and they can include:*

* Striking pedestrians when maneuvering or excavating
* Being struck when quick-disconnect buckets unexpectedly detach
* Collisions with other vehicles or structures
* Cable strike when excavating
* Toppling due to open excavations and ground failure
* Toppling due to turning with an elevated load and/or at speed
* Hydraulic failure
* Mechanical failure
* Striking overhead power lines

All these potential hazards can have life threatening results and great care must be exercised when using a backhoe loader

*The following best practices should be used when operating backhoes:*

* Read and review the operator's manual. Be familiar with the operator controls.
* Be familiar with the area where work will be performed. Locate ditches, stumps, debris, and undercut banks and avoid these hazards by keeping a safe distance away.
* Locate overhead and underground utility lines before beginning work. Avoid working near overhead power lines. If work must be done near them, develop a plan to avoid contact. Slow down when conditions are poor (ex. traveling on rough ground, going up or down a slope when towing or carrying heavy loads, when entering public roadways, and when turning with a load in the bucket).
* Operate backhoes only on grades specified by the manufacturer.
* Position machinery at a safe distance from excavations and trenches.
* Operators should be trained in the proper use of the equipment they are assigned to operate.
* Identify and label all machine controls and ensure they are working properly.
* Securely latch attachments, such as quick disconnect buckets, before work begins.
* Conduct visual and operational checks on all machine systems and operating controls before use including the hydraulics.
* Make frequent visual inspections of quick disconnect systems, especially after changing attachments.
* Use the rollover protection system (ROPS) and seat belts supplied by the manufacturer.
* Do not exceed load capacities when lifting materials.
* Lower the boom to a safe position with the bucket on the ground and turn off the machine before stepping off for any reason.
* Make all workers on the site aware of the backhoe’s presence.

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