

LARGE BALE HARVESTING EQUIPMENT SAFETY



The biggest hazard in working with these large machines is their physical nature. Large bales of hay or straw can weigh from 225kg – 1300kg and these can create additional risks.

Pre-Harvest

- Thoroughly clean baler to remove crop residues, mouse nests and any other debris
- Lubricate according to manufacturer's specifications
- Check for loose or missing nuts, screws, guards, or bent teeth
- Replace missing or damaged guards and shields
- Inspect belts and chains for evidence of wear or breakage
- Replace bent or missing pickup teeth
- Maintain belt tension according to manufacturer's specifications
- Ensure that hydraulic hoses are clean, in good repair and are hooked up correctly
- Check twine feeding and cutting mechanisms for proper operation

- Check slip clutch, roll scraper, and rear gate latch to make sure they are properly adjusted and functioning according to manufacturer's recommendations
- Check for smooth functioning of the slip clutch, roll scraper, and rear gate latch
- Check lights, reflectors, and slow moving vehicle (SMV) emblem
- Ensure there are fully charged fire extinguishers mounted on the trailer and baler

Operating the Machine

- Adjust the pickup to allow for adequate ground clearance
- Keep in mind the safety precautions when operating the (power take-off) PTO and hydraulic operated machinery
- Harvest material must contain 20% or less moisture content
- Travel at a speed the machine can handle keeping in mind the size of the windrow
- Avoid driving across a slope
- Drive slow and carry the bale low
- Avoid turning or stopping suddenly
- Conventional balers have a flywheel which keeps the machine operating even after the power is disengaged
- **Do not** turn the flywheel manually to view the knoter if someone else is working on the knives or other moving parts

Moving Large Bales

- Keep other workers and bystanders well clear of bale handling operations
- Ensure the tractor is large enough and equipped with sufficient counterweight to handle the weight of the bales
- Set wheels at maximum width to increase stability
- Front-end Loaders: always use a grapple hook (or proper bale handling device)
- Note that a rear-mounted loading spike is ideal – it eliminates the danger of roll-back and does not block the operator's front vision
- Keep the load as low as possible to prevent backward or side overturn of the tractor
- Lifting round bales with a front-end loader is discouraged unless a proper bale restraining device is used

Keep in Mind

- Moving machinery is much faster than human reaction time
- Wear close fitting clothing
- **Never** hand feed any material, including twine, into the baler
- **Never** leave the tractor seat with the engine running
- When ejecting bales, ensure that the area behind the baler is clear; do not eject on a downward slope
- Riders should never be allowed on the tractor or baler
- Always keep children well away from the baling operation
- If storing high stacks of hay, bear in mind that removing bales from heights could be hazardous
- Use recommended hand signals when using harvesting equipment especially when loading bales manually

- Match ground speed of the harvesting equipment with field conditions
- If the machine has a cutterbar (sickle cutterbars, rotary disk cutterbars, field combines), keep clear of the cutterbar when the machine is running and use the mower safety curtain or cover when the machine is in operation

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