

## Safety Note #162

# GENERAL BULLDOZER SAFETY



Photograph courtesy of  
Hopland REC

Bulldozers are designed to move large amounts of soil, rubble and other construction material with each push. Because of their enormous size, their operation can be dangerous. Bulldozers can cause serious injury or death if not operated properly. California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3668 requires the employer to ensure that each bulldozer operator is competent to operate a dozer safely, as demonstrated by the successful completion of the required training and evaluation.

**Only operators authorized by the employer and trained in the safe operations of bulldozers shall be permitted to operate them. This Safety Note is not a substitute for a complete training program.**

### Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the bulldozer operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Always perform a pre-shift inspection, including fluid levels, brakes, steering, lights and signals, tires, hydraulic cylinders/lines, horns, operating controls, seat belts and safety devices.
- If a dozer fails the pre-shift inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the dozer from service by attaching a red tag stating, "DO NOT USE." Note the reason, date, and name on the tag.
- Refresher training is required annually and an evaluation of each operator's performance must be conducted at least once every three years.

### Operating Precautions

- Before operating a dozer, check the work area for obstructions and hazards including, ditches, slopes, hills, excavations, streams, and underground and aboveground utility lines.
- Employees working within the dozer work area must wear flagging garments (i.e., orange vests) and at least, a hard hat, steel-toed boots, and long pants.
- Never carry passengers on a bulldozer and stunt driving is prohibited.
- Do not operate a dozer with a leaking fuel system or leaking brake system.
- Bulldozers must be equipped with rollover protection structures (ROPS).
- Operators must always use seatbelts when operating a bulldozer.
- Operators must mount and dismount using only the steps and handholds provided on the dozer.
- Dozer blades and attachments must be kept close to the ground while moving.
- Dozers should be parked on level ground whenever possible.
- The bulldozer must be equipped with an automatic back-up alarm.
- Shut off the engine whenever refueling.
- Never use a bulldozer to demolish structures that are taller than the dozer itself, unless there is sufficient overhead protection.
- Mechanics must follow proper lockout, blockout, and tagout procedures when a bulldozer is in repair.
- When parking, shift into neutral and set the parking brake to immobilize the dozer. Lower the blade and any other attachment to the ground then shut off engine.
- Operators must use proper towing procedures and equipment for bulldozer attachments.