

Bale, Baling and Handling Bales

AgSafe Safe Work Procedure

Identify the Hazards

Handling:

1. Ensure no children play near hay balers, carriers and stackers.
2. Properly train operators handling tractors, front-end loaders or forklifts.
3. Tractors with cabs, FOPS (falling object protective structure) or four-poster ROPS (roll-over protective structure) are highly recommended. Two-poster tractor ROPS offer no operator protection from bales falling back off of forks or bale-loading frames.
4. Ensure bale-loading attachments on tractors and forklifts are secure and well fitted.
5. Carry bales as low to the ground as possible.
6. Ensure sufficient counterbalance on tractor or forklift vehicle.
7. Hydraulic control valve should be specific to the front-end loader attachment.
8. Baler operation:
9. Ensure baler is properly connected to the tractor.
10. Make certain adequate safety guards are fitted.
11. Nobody should ever be allowed to ride on the baler.
12. Prevent others from getting too close to the baler.
13. Watch for and clear any build-up of loose, combustible material in the baler.
14. Ensure an updated fire extinguisher is fitted to the machine.
15. Stop engine, disengage PTO and apply fly wheel brake (on square balers) prior to making adjustments or repairs.
16. Extra care and attention should be made when reversing or turning the machine.
17. Work during the day when there is adequate lighting.

Stacking:

1. Land stack on even ground.
2. Stacks should be clear of overhead power lines.
3. Stacked round bales should be adequately chocked and the borders posted.
4. Watch for damaged bales at base of stack.
5. Stack bales tightly and at a stable height.
6. Do not stack bales higher than safe operating height of farm tractor or forklift.
7. Do not allow children to play on stacked bales, particularly during stacking or unstacking.

8. Do not handle more bales than is safe for the loader.

Transporting:

1. Carry heavy loads of bales with a sturdy trailer.
2. Ensure proper restraining frames on the back and front of trailer.
3. Use fitted hooks so ropes can be used to secure load.
4. Watch for overhead power lines on or near roads.
5. Avoid rough terrain that can cause bales to become unstable. Travel at safe speeds at all times.
6. People should never ride on loaded hay trailers. This is highly dangerous.

Additional safety tips when working with bales and baling equipment:

1. Keep children away from hay baling and stacking operations.
2. Make sure operators and handlers are properly trained and physically capable of tasks.
3. Consider fall-arrest protection for people working at heights.
4. Use tractors with four-poster ROPS, FOPS or cabs for protection against falling bales.
5. Replace risky attachments with manufacturer approved attachments.
6. Ensure loader or forklift operators transport bales close to the ground.
7. Avoid sharp turns and unsafe speeds.
8. Make sure vehicle controls are fitted specifically for the attachment in use.
9. Stacks should be on firm, level ground, away from fire hazards, sources of ignition, overhead power lines, dwellings, property line fences and footpaths.
10. Make sure stack and load heights do not exceed the lifting capabilities of the farm handling equipment.
11. Stack big rectangular, square or high density bales by overlapping to form a stable stack.
12. Do not use bale lifting equipment to raise people on or off stacks.
13. When transporting bales, be aware of overhead obstructions like trees, bridges and power lines.
14. Avoid rough ground that could cause bales to dislodge during transport.
15. Ensure loads being transported are adequately secured. Do not overload vehicles beyond legal limits.

Please use the following **Safe Work Procedures** as a guideline to building your own safe work procedures.