TELEHANDLER OPERATION BEST PRACTICES
For Supervisory Personnel and Operators

Pipeline contractors use telehandlers primarily to move material, including unloading and loading materials used on job sites. They are also used while making pipeline tie-ins to line up sections of pipe. Telehandlers can also be equipped with a bucket and used to move spoil piles, spread gravel, and other materials on site. Employers are responsible for training employees on the safe use of telehandlers and for ensuring that the vehicles are safe to operate and properly maintained. This fact sheet reviews some pre-operation, operation, and post-operation safety best practices for supervisory personnel and operators.

Best Practices for Supervisory Personnel

PRE-OPERATION

- Verify that the equipment chosen is suitable for the job. Review the operator manual for unique operational/equipment requirements. Consult applicable OSHA regulations to determine safe operation.
- Ensure there is an appropriate Emergency Action Plan to protect employees in case of fires, electrical storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc. Ensure that your plan is site specific for each job and that it is well communicated to employees.

- The operator and supervisory personnel must complete a hazard assessment prior to operation. Site-specific hazards such as overhead lines, traffic, excavations and work zones should be addressed.
- Ensure availability of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the tasks being preformed and as required per OSHA regulations.
- Verify the fire extinguisher location. Check and verify it is inspected and fully charged.
- Make sure the operator is qualified and has been properly trained/certified to operate the specific equipment.

OPERATION

- Only a person certified by the employer as properly trained and evaluated is qualified and authorized to operate equipment.
- Verify that all unnecessary personnel and equipment are prohibited from the work area.
- Ensure that all signals are given by one designated person at a time and are understood by all applicable personnel on site. Communication should be addressed during the pre-job assessment.

POST OPERATION

- Verify equipment is properly parked and parking brake set.

Best Practices for Operators

PRE-OPERATION

- Read, understand, and follow the operator's manual.
- Consult the manual and load charts mounted in the equipment to determine the equipment's operational capacities. Never exceed the load charts or other operational capacities of the equipment.
- Wear appropriate PPE for the tasks being performed and as required by OSHA regulations.
- When refueling, bond the supply tank with the fuel tank to prevent static discharge and possible fire.
- Conduct and document a walk around inspection, including a check of all fluids, and noting any items needing maintenance and repair. Ensure all critical repairs are performed before operation and noted in the maintenance log according to company policy. At the beginning of each shift and before

operating the equipment, check its condition, giving special attention to the following:

a. Condition of tires, check for cuts and gouges
b. If pneumatic tires, check inflation pressers
c. Warning and safety devices
d. Lights
e. Battery
f. Controls
g. Lift and tilt systems
h. Load-engaging means
i. Chains and cables
j. Limit switches
k. Brakes
l. Steering mechanism
m. Fuel system(s)
n. Additional items or special equipment as specified by the user and/or manufacturer

- Ensure all guards and access doors are in place and properly closed.
- Make sure all warning plates and labels are legible. If not legible or missing the operator must inform the supervisor and or company personnel for replacement.
- Remove debris and clutter in the cab that would prevent safe operation.
- Verify the fire extinguisher location. Check and verify it is inspected and fully charged. Make sure you are qualified to operate it.
- Use 3 points of contact to enter the machine.
- Get on the machine only at locations that have steps and/or handholds. If the machine does not have these, advise your supervisor immediately.
- Do not use any controls as handholds when entering or exiting the operator compartment.
- Check horn, lights and backup alarm for operation.
- Check parking brake and make sure it is operational.
- Check to ensure the seat belt is operational. Always use the seat belt.
- Check that controls are in proper/neutral settings before starting machine.

OPERATION

- Only a person certified by the employer as properly trained and evaluated is qualified and authorized to operate equipment.

- A competent person and/or supervisor shall appoint a trained spotter if there are overhead power lines or tight working conditions in the work area. Follow all OSHA regulations regarding overhead electrical hazards.
- When the equipment is in operation, the doors (when installed) must be closed or secured by latch in the open position.
- When necessary to park on a grade, do so according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Operate machine only from operator's station.
- If the operator leaves the seat of the equipment, the boom shall be lowered, the parking brake set and the machine turned off.
- Do not permit anyone to stand or pass under the elevated portion of any machine.
- Do not permit personnel to stand on forks.
- Keep all personnel away from equipment when removing loads from them.
- Do not overload, or handle offset, unstable, or loosely stacked loads. Use extreme caution when handling suspended, long, high or wide loads.
- Use load back/rest extension when required to support load. Adjust forks or attachment and completely engage load for maximum load support.
- Always maintain machine under control. Start, turn and brake smoothly. Slow down for turns, grades, slippery or uneven surfaces.
- Travel with load upgrade. Whenever possible, avoid turning on grades. If necessary, use extreme caution. In the event of a rollover, remain in your seat with your belt buckled.
- Always lower boom, with or without load, before turning or traveling. Watch out for overhead obstructions. Keep safe distance from electrical power lines.
- Always look and keep clear view of the path of travel. Avoid pedestrians, obstructions, and pot holes. Stay in designated paths and clear of ditches and other drop offs, and surfaces which cannot safely support the machine.
- Slow down and use extra care through doorways, intersections and other locations with reduced visibility.
- All unnecessary personnel and equipment shall be prohibited from the work area.
- All signals shall be given by the designated person and must be understood by all applicable personnel on site.
- All personnel on site can stop the operation using stop work authority in an emergency situation.
- Do not permit riders on forks or machine at any time unless they are in an approved personnel attachment.
- No lifting of personnel from or into trenches/excavations (riding slings).
- Do not operate this piece of equipment during extreme weather conditions. Seek shelter according to the company's Emergency Action Plan.

POST OPERATION

- Park and set parking brake and move the transmission selector to PARK/ NEUTRAL. Follow the operator's manual for any additional equipment-specific procedures.
- Before leaving the operators station, ensure that the boom is fully retracted and lowered and that the attachment is resting on the ground.
- Shut engine off, remove key, lock doors and engage security system (if applicable).
- Use 3 points of contact to exit the machine.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace and workers have rights. OSHA can help answer questions or concerns from employers and workers. OSHA's On-site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to small and medium-sized businesses, with priority given to high-hazard worksites. For more information, contact your regional or area OSHA office, call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742), or visit www.osha.gov .

Through the OSHA and American Pipeline Contractors Association (APCA) Alliance, APCA developed this best practices document for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. 09/14

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