

Step by Step

Selection, inspection and education are the keys to power buggy safety

As with any piece of equipment in your rental fleet, once a power buggy leaves your yard you lose control over where and how it will be used. In today's litigious environment it is important that you take the necessary steps to protect both yourself and your customer by ensuring the safe and efficient operation of the equipment.

Equipment selection

Equipment safety starts well before the job actually begins. Perhaps most important is determining the inherent safety level of any piece of equipment before it even goes into the fleet. Whenever possible, it's also a good idea to take into account any published safety standard that exists for the type of equipment being purchased. The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) publishes a number of standards dealing with industrial and construction vehicles which can help when comparing the relative safety merits of one product to another.

Equipment inspections

Before a power buggy leaves the yard, a quick inspection can go a long way toward minimizing problems down the road. Make a safety check with operators present so they are aware of the type of inspection they should make daily.

Mechanical brakes and brake linkages should be thoroughly checked for proper operation and adjustment. Remember that although the braking on most power buggies is dynamic through the hydrostatic drive, a loss of hydraulic pressure, due to a broken hydraulic line or stalled engine, will cause a loss of hydraulic pressure and the loss of dynamic braking. Tires and wheels need to be inspected for damage and proper tire pressure. Directional controls, dumping controls, and speed controls should be operated to verify they work as intended and are in proper adjustment. Items that are commonly overlooked, but are extremely important are safety



labels and decals, which should be checked to be sure the safe extremely important are safety labels and decals, which should be checked to be sure the safe operating procedures are legible and clearly visible. Remember, a different operator could be on the machine each day it's out.

Customer education

After going over the daily inspection procedure with the operator, it's important to take the time to make sure he or she is familiar enough with the equipment to operate it safely. In addition to universal safety procedures regarding fueling and transporting, it is important for power buggy renters to:

- Have a thorough understanding of all operating controls.
- Avoid pinch points on dumping mechanisms.
- Be sure the dump bucket is securely down at all times when not dumping.
- Not move the buggy with the bucket in the dumping position.
- Not mount or dismount the buggy while it's moving.
- Not leave the operator's station without shutting off the engine and locking the parking brake.
- Not allow riders.
- Avoid any condition of slope and/or grade which could cause the buggy to tip.
- Not exceed load limits in weight or height.
- Follow all procedures outlined on the safety labels and decals.

If you treat the issue of safety as a series of linked steps – equipment selection, safety inspections, operator education – you can forge a safety “chain.” Like any chain, though, this one will only be as strong as its weakest link.