

Maintain Three-point Contact to Prevent Falls

Mounting or dismounting a large truck or piece of equipment without hurting yourself seems simple, but many accidents involve this type of injury. The best way to prevent falling while getting into or out of a truck, tractor cab or heavy equipment is to follow the three-point contact system.

The Three-point Contact System

Three-point contact is exactly that: three of your four limbs are in contact with the vehicle at all times. That can be two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.

No matter what type of access system available on your vehicle or equipment, the three-point system will significantly reduce the chance of a slip or fall because it allows you to maintain maximum stability and support when entering and exiting the equipment. The three points work to form a triangle, distributing your body's weight at the center.

Remember, the only person who can prevent a fall is you. Here are some simple dos and don'ts to follow when entering or exiting a large vehicle or other construction equipment to avoid injury.

Do's

- Always exit and enter your vehicle facing the cab.
- Slow down and use extra caution in bad weather.
- Get a firm grip on rails or handles with your hands.
- Use parts designed by the manufacturer for mounting and dismounting. This includes steps, running boards, traction strips, footholds, handgrips, etc.
- Look below for obstacles on the ground before exiting.
- Wear safe non-slip shoes with good support.
- Clean your shoes off; mud, grease and oil can cause you to slip.
- Inspect hand holds and ladders/rungs to ensure they are in good condition.
- Only climb on and off when the equipment is stationary.

Don'ts

- Never carry anything with your free hand when mounting or dismounting. Put the object on the vehicle floor and reach up for it when you get down on the ground.
- Don't rush to climb out of your vehicle or machinery after a long period of sitting. Climb down slowly to avoid straining a muscle or losing your balance.
- Never jump out of construction equipment or vehicles. You may land off balance or on an uneven surface and fall.
- Don't use tires, wheel hubs or machine tracks as a step surface.
- Do not use door frames, door edges or door handles as a handhold.

Familiarize yourself with these do's and don'ts, and always maintain three-point contact when entering or exiting a large truck or heavy construction equipment.

