

September 2023

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9-11-2023 PART I



S.C. SWIDERSKI LLC
EXPERTISE | EXPERIENCE | INTEGRITY

Suicide Prevention Month

Part I: Being Proactive

If you or someone you love is feeling suicidal or facing an immediate or life-threatening mental health or substance abuse crisis, call 988 – or in some cases 911 – are the best resources to use.

Each week for the remainder of the month our Toolbox Talks will be centered around Suicide Awareness, Prevention & Dealing with Loss. Topics we will be covering include but not limited to: Statistics, Recognize Warning Signs, Resources, and Coping with Traumatic Event.

The following are several resources at your disposal to aid yourself, family, friends, co-workers, etc.

- As an employee of SCS you're a member of ESI EAP (Employee Assistance Program), you have 24/7/365 access to a helpline and to an online self-help portal to access counseling, coaching, and a wide array of benefits/resources. Visit www.theEAP.com – or [988: The Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - ESI Group \(theeap.com\)](https://988lifeline.org/) – or call 1-800-252-4555.
- Visit [Lifeline \(988lifeline.org\)](https://988lifeline.org/) or find online chat at 988lifeline.org/chat
- [Resources - Construction Suicide Prevention](https://www.facebook.com/AFSPGreaterKS/)
- <https://www.facebook.com/AFSPGreaterKS/>
- <https://afsp.org/get-help/>
- [Seize the Awkward | Talk With A Friend About Mental Health](https://seizetheawkward.org/)
- https://seizetheawkward.org
- OSHA Suicide Prevention Poster (5 Things You Should Know) [OSHA4180.pdf](#)

Please, scroll back up and take a few minutes reviewing some of the links. Save the 988 Suicide Prevention Hotline in your phone. Be prepared in case someone you know needs your help one day.

If you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to reach out.

BACK TO SCHOOL



Back to School Toolbox Talk

Children, teens, and young adults are heading back to school this week. Some will be riding the school bus for the first time. Some of the buses will have rookie drivers. Many students will be driving themselves. Others yet will be traveling via foot or bicycle.

Statistically speaking, driving to and from work is the most dangerous activity you will partake in today. Now, 76.8 million students are going back to school. That's just shy of ¼ of the entire US Population. Get ready to share the road...

Please take into consideration these driving tips:

Distracted Driving

- In 2019, over 3,100 people were killed and 424,000 were injured in crashes involving a distracted driver.
- Cell Phone use (texting, email, Facebook, videos, etc, etc, etc)
- Eating, grooming, reading, reaching for something, changing radio station, adjusting navigation.....

Understand School Bus Signs

- Flashing Red Lights & Stop Sign Extended = You must Stop
- Flashing Yellow Lights = Bus is preparing to stop
- Remember signals must be observed in both lanes of traffic.

Watch for pedestrians and students waiting for bus.

- Slow down in low light & when the sunrise blinds you.

Leave Early

- Your bound to catch up with one of these students/buses.

Be aware of School Zones.

Be prepared to Encounter Student Drivers.

How many times have you heard?

"Why do you work safely, who is waiting for you at home?"

Let's make sure our young ones make it home to us!!!

Share comments, pictures, stories of those you are going to drive safe for today!

PART I: BEING PROACTIVE



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CONSTRUCTION & SUICIDE

PART I & II



Construction & Suicide Part II

We know the dangers that come from working on an active construction site, as employee's we talk about them frequently during Toolbox Talks, but what about those dangers that are not work related when you're off the job?

By The Numbers

- In multiple years, the CDC and Prevention found construction to be the number one occupational group with male suicides (15% in 2012, 16% in 2015)
- In the general population, suicide occurs in 27 out of every 100,00 people. In construction, the number is 53.3 suicides per 100,00 workers.
- In the U.S., there are approximately 123 suicides per day which breaks down to one death every 12 minutes.

Take this opportunity to expand your awareness, skills, and resources to help save lives! Do everything in your power to help save our fellow teammates.

Suicide is one of our industries "best kept secrets," and it's killing us. Literally.

Reducing the Stigma around Mental Illness **Part III**

Struggling with mental health can be extremely challenging. You may find yourself resorting to the old school mindset of being tough & fighting through it on your own. This is unhealthy and is contributing to suicide deaths.

By The Numbers

- In 2020, nearly 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. were living with a mental illness.
- Among U.S. adults, more than 12.5 million people had serious thoughts of suicide.
- Substance abuse counts, too. In 2020, 1 in 15 adults struggled with both a substance use disorder and other mental illnesses.

If you are struggling, know this. You are not alone. Your mental illness is not your fault, nor is it anything to be ashamed of.



Ignore The Stigma, Do What's Needed!

- Ask for help. If you are struggling, talk to your doctor. Therapy and/or medication or just two possible treatment options.
- Avoid self-blame. Your mental illness is not a weakness. Educating yourself about your illness, can help you realize that you're not alone – no matter how isolated you may feel.
- Find your friends and family members. Talking with others that are going through similar issues can be extremely helpful. Don't keep those feelings to close to you that your loved one get caught off guard or can't trust yourself in the dark with your struggles. Many times, they are wanting to help and just need that moment when the window is opening.
- Know when to make the call. If you are at a low point, help is always available.
- Learn more about depression by logging in at www.theEAP.com/TotalCare-EAP, click on the "Emotional Wellness" tile and choose **Depression** from the drop-down menu. Or scroll to the menu at the bottom of the page and click "Assessments" to take a brief, confidential online **Depression Screening**.
- (There are other screenings you can take for your physical or mental health there, too.)
- If you or a loved one are in crisis or need immediate help, **call, text, or chat 988 for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**. This 3-digit number offers a memorable, easy path to access services. The Lifeline offers free, confidential support to people in suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the U.S.

Just as you seek care for your physical health, it's equally important to care for your mental health. Don't wait to get help if you are in pain.

We're all in this together. Make sure the people around you know it!

SUICIDE PART IV & V



Recognize Warning Signs Part IV

By and Large suicide is preventable. If you pay attention to possible warning signs – in yourself and others – you may be able to help save a life. Remember: Talking about your concerns with someone is more likely to save them than to drive them to see their plans through.

Verbal Warning Signs

- Talking about being a burden, or the word being better without them.
- Expressing the desire to no longer exist or die.
- Frequent mood swings.
- Giving away their belongings.
- Sleeping all the time or changes in eating habits.
- No longer able to find joy or pleasure in things they once enjoyed.
- Emotional outbursts (anger, sadness, anxiety, etc.) happen frequently or without warning.
- Sudden joy or excitement after prolonged periods of depression.

How To Listen Part V

Active listening helps build trust and empathy between people. Active listening is more than just hearing someone speak; it requires attention, concentration and listening with your senses. By striving to understand and empathize rather than reply or solve, the other person can feel inspired to heal from their own mental health challenges. Active listening is an effective way to provide emotional support and validation.

- **Minimize Distractions**
Not only is it important to set down your phone. It's also important to quiet your inner dialogue and pay attention.
- **Reflect what you Hear**
Without interrupting to give advice, paraphrase what they have told you. For example, saying "I'm hearing that you're having a hard time with this situation."
- **Focus on Nonverbal Communication**
Nod and make eye contact to show that you care when someone open to you. Your body language should indicate that you are not passing judgement.

SKID STEER SAFETY



Skid Steer Safety

Skid steers are a common piece of equipment on SCS jobsites. While they are small, the danger these machines pose can be large.

Hazards Associated with Operation

There is a magnitude of possible hazards for skid steer operators, including those who work around these machines. Some of the major and more common hazards to consider:

- Struck-by hazards. Operating in high traffic areas (vehicle &/or pedestrian), reversing and blind spots increase this hazard.
- Crushed-by hazards. Workers who are on the ground around this equipment can be pinned, ran over, and crushed between skid steer and another object.
- Tip-overs or rollovers
- Pinch points

Best Practices for Safely Operating Skid Steer Loaders

- Always adhere to the manufacturer's guidelines for operation.
 - Become familiar with that specific machine's controls. Review the manual, understand its capabilities and its limits.
- Inspect the equipment prior to operating it each day!
 - Take out of service immediately if it doesn't pass inspection & **report it**.
- Do not work under the raised arms or bucket of a skid steer. Always lower the bucket all the way down before exiting the machine.
- Set up work areas in such a way that ground personnel activity is not going to overlap.
 - Stop working anytime sight is lost of anyone working nearby.
- Never, overload the skid steer. Travel with bucket or load low to the ground.
- Always wear seat belt or engage the restraint bar.
- Never carry riders or lift anyone with the attachment.

Summary

While skid steers are not as imposing as some other equipment out there. They can be equally as dangerous, take time to evaluate the hazards associated with their operation.

Note: A study performed by NIOSH looked at 37 fatalities involving skid steers. They found that 78% of those resulted from "pinning between the bucket and frame or lift arm and frame". Not specified if these victims were operators, mechanics or other trades. Stay out of the line of fire.

Please share in the comments section any other hazards or Precautions we can take to prevent injuries involving skid steers.