

Landscape Safety Series: Using Earth Compactors Safely¹

Lance Fluegel and Bradley Rein²

BEFORE USING COMPACTORS

- Study the owner's manual to familiarize yourself with the machine. See Figures 1, 2 and 3 for examples of compactors.
- Instruct all operators on how to use the machine safely. Do not allow anyone to operate the machine until you are sure they can do so safely.
- Check for loose bolts and damaged parts. Tighten, repair, or replace as needed, before using the machine. Make sure all guards are in place.
- Save your back! Never attempt to lift compactors by yourself. Use a mechanical lifting device or ask another person(s) to assist. Attach safety straps if mechanically lifting the unit more than 2 feet off the ground. Lighter backfill tampers (less than 35 pounds) may be handled by one person if proper lifting techniques are used (see unit on preventing back injuries).
- Fill the fuel tank out of doors with the engine stopped and cool. Do not fill the tank over three-fourths full to prevent vibration from expelling fuel from the tank. Never smoke while fueling, and wipe up spills immediately. Store fuel in a properly marked safety can.
- Wear proper personal protective equipment consisting of sturdy pants and shirt, eye and ear protection, safety shoes, and non-slip gloves.



Backfill compactor

Figure 1.

SAFETY DURING OPERATION

- Always start the engine out of doors. Never start it in a closed building due to possible deadly carbon monoxide buildup.

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2. Lance Fluegel, Safety Coordinator, and Bradley Rein, Engineering Specialist, the College of Agriculture, University of Arizona, Tucson AZ 85719.

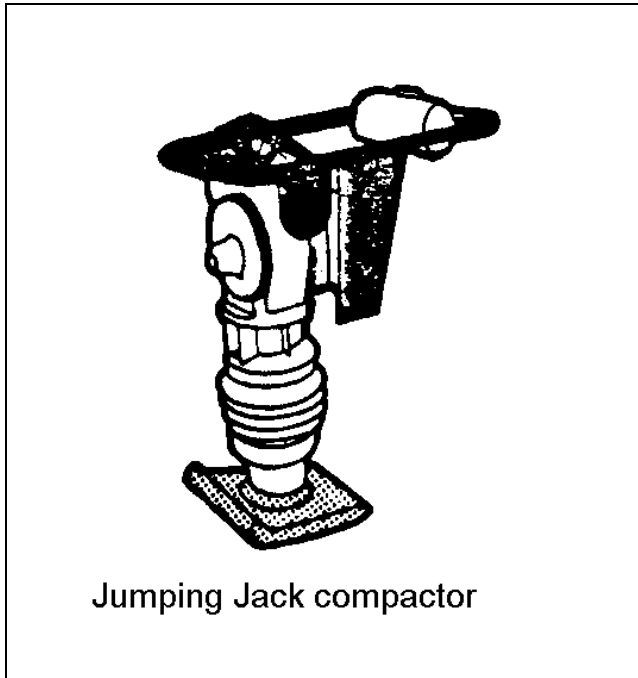


Figure 2.

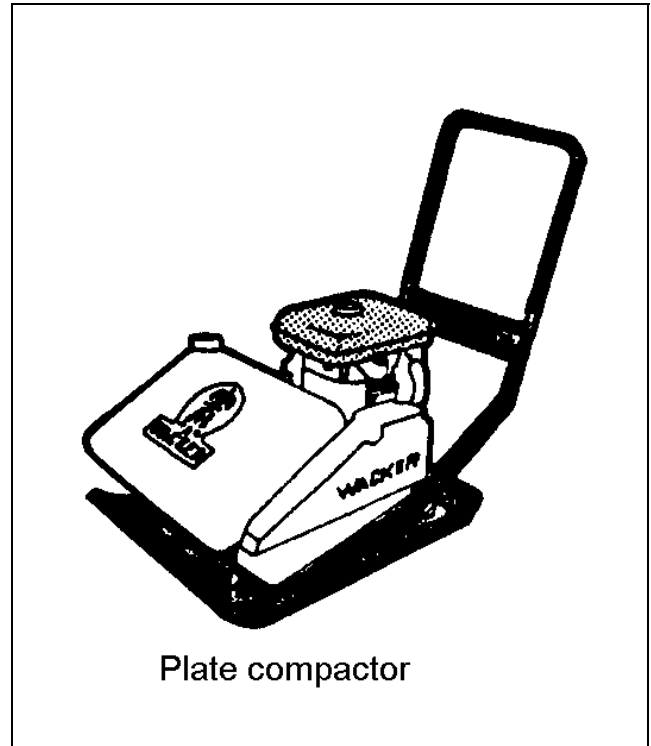


Figure 3.

- Clear the working area of bystanders, children, and pets.
- Keep your feet clear of the machine at all times to avoid the tremendous impact delivered by the machine. Grasping the machine lightly, but securely, lets the machine do the work while saving your back.
- Do not leave the machine running unattended.
- Position your body to prevent contact with the hot parts of the engine.
- Do not operate a compactor on concrete and avoid unstable surfaces that might be subject to cave-ins.
- Shut off the engine and disconnect the spark plug wire before making repairs or adjustments. Carburetor adjustments are the only exception to this rule.
- Store jumping jack types in an upright position.