

Training Module: Safe Use of Harvesting Equipment with Cutterbars

Objective: To be able to safely work with and unplug cutterbar-equipped farm machinery.

Trainer's Note: Conduct this session in the shop or field. Have harvesting equipment available to demonstrate the proper way to unplug cutters. Review service and maintenance needs. Emphasize that **safety must always be the first priority.**

Background

Cutterbar-equipped harvesting equipment includes sickle cutterbars, rotary disk cutterbars and field combines. The operator should be familiar with the mechanisms and the safety precautions to follow when using harvesting equipment.

When working with a cutterbar:

- Keep hands and feet away from the cutterbar when the machine is running. Shut off the power before unplugging, servicing, or transporting the machine.
- Stand clear of mowers with rotating disks that can throw objects causing serious injury. Do not operate when bystanders are nearby.
- Use the mower safety curtain or cover when operating the cutterbar. Safety curtains prevent objects from being thrown by the rotating disks.
- Tractors with cabs offer additional protection from thrown objects.
- Keep knives and hardware in good condition, thus preventing knives from being thrown from the machine. Consult operator's manual for directions.

To safely unplug the cutterbar or remove trash, follow these steps:

- Stop and disengage the PTO.
- Raise the cutterbar and back up.
- Shut off the engine and with the parking brake engaged shift the transmission into park or neutral.
- Pull the plugged crop in the knives away from the cutterbar.
- Check the cutterbar for broken or damaged components.
- Return safety curtain or cover to their proper operating position.
- Start the engine and engage the PTO at low speed then increase it to rated speed.

Cutterbar knives and rotating disks can severely injure people or animals. Crop residue, rocks, or other debris that are thrown by rotating disks and knives, can cause serious injury to the operator or bystanders. Follow all safety precautions.

Review The Following Points

- Always disengage the PTO before attempting to service any cutterbar.
- Use and maintain all machine shields and covers.
- When pulling crops out of cutterbars, pull away from the cutterbar knives.

True or False Answer Key

1. T, 2. T, 3. F, 4. F, 5. T

Safe Use of Harvesting Equipment with Cutterbars Quiz

True or False

Name _____

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Cutterbar knives and rotating disks can severely injury people and animals. | T | F |
| 2. When pulling crops out of cutterbars, always pull away from the knives. | T | F |
| 3. There is no need to disengage the PTO before servicing a cutterbar. | T | F |
| 4. Shields that are lost or broken do not need to be replaced. | T | F |
| 5. It is best to use a tractor with a cab to avoid injury from objects thrown by the cutterbar-equipped machinery. | T | F |