

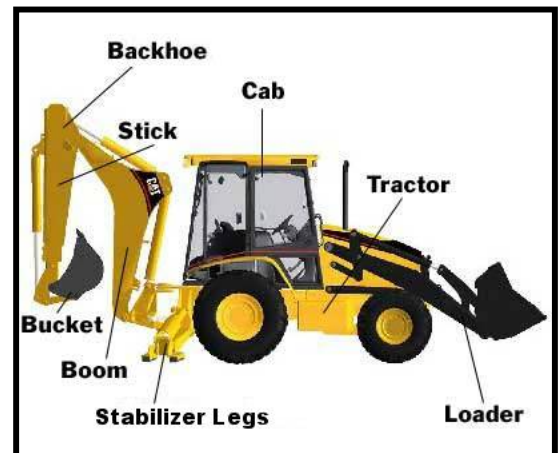
## BACKHOE ETIQUETTE

Danger, Danger, Danger! Don't take any chances. It only takes one smack with a backhoe bucket, stabilizing arm, or dozer track to break a bone, knock you out, or worse.

Problem is, you need to be close enough to see the ground following each pass of the bucket or grader. If there is just one piece of heavy equipment, the archaeologist will likely be right next to the heavy equipment. It might be your job to inspect the backdirt pile for cultural items. This is a very important position, as most cultural items show up in the backdirt pile before they are seen in the trench (and sometimes they are only discovered in the backdirt pile). If you see something, let the archaeologist know immediately so the trench can be inspected to see if it came from a feature (house floor, fire hearth, storage pit, or trash pit).

Backhoe etiquette:

1. Get to know your operator (your life is in his hands).
2. Never get between the trench and the backdirt pile (this is the bucket and boom swing zone).
3. The safest place is on the cab side of the stabilizer arms (the bucket can't swing behind these arms).
4. Stay out of the trench. If you see an artifact, do not jump in the trench and grab it. **First**, make sure you make eye contact with the operator. **Second**, let him know by hand signal that you need to look at something in the trench. **Third**, use your shovel to reach for and get the artifact (most of the time you won't need to get in the trench to get it). **Forth**, give him a hand signal to let him know it is safe to begin digging again.
5. After trenching in one area, the backhoe will need to move a few feet forward to extend the trench. During this move it is safe to jump into the trench and closely inspect the floor and walls. This is also a safe time to walk over the backdirt pile and inspect.
6. Be out of the trench and off the backdirt pile when the backhoe is in its new position and the stabilizer arms are lowered.



A backhoe has a rhythm. The bucket digs, scoops, swings, then dumps on the backdirt pile. When the bucket is digging and scooping, it is safe to closely inspect the backdirt pile. When the bucket swings to dump soil on the backdirt pile, it is safe to closely inspect the trench floor and walls. Safe monitoring involves learning this timing and being a part of the backhoe "dance".

Backhoe operators are hard-working guys who appreciate other hard working people. If you just stand around and lean on your shovel all day, they will not see that you are hard-working and deserving of their respect.

There are ways to get their respect: There are certain things that are difficult for the backhoe to do that need to be done by hand. Cleaning soil off the top edges of the trench are one of these. Another is the dirt that is stuck at a corner where two trenches come together. Don't hesitate to help out with your shovel by pushing dirt into the trench being dug. You will be in or near the trench looking at the soil anyway, why not make a friend in the process. Once you get some experience, you may even be trusted to hold the electronic leveling stick.