



Hydraulic Hoses: What You Need to Know

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The extra reach they'll provide will boost my lift from four feet to five, just enough for me to dump mulch and other material into my pickup.

Switching cylinders will be a great time to check my hoses for wear points and abrasions. (It will also give me a couple of extra cylinders for some projects I've been toying with, such as a grapple fork for the loader ...)

Back to the hoses...don't take them for granted.

They are vital components and also represent one of the greatest potential farm machinery hazards. There is a reason that hydraulic hoses are multiple walled with metal reinforcement.

Depending on the size of the pump and the load it is bearing, hydraulic fluid can be under thousands of pounds of pressure.

A well cared for hose can last for years without a problem. However, excessive kinking, stretching or abrasion can cause a hose to fail.

A massive rupture can be messy, but a pinhole leak can be of greater concern. Even under low pressure it can cause problems, but under high pressure, it can cut like a knife, penetrating multiple layers of the skin and requiring immediate medical care.

Hydraulic fluid caused wounds quickly lead to gangrene and amputation.

If I have scared you, good.

If I have convinced you to give more thought to how you treat your hoses, even better: Make sure they never bind, kink or stretch. Treat them with care and watch for rubbing or signs of abrasion. If you see signs of fluid leakage, replace the hose immediately. Do not, under any circumstance, run your hand across a suspect hose under pressure! Consider covering potential wear spots (not leaks) with an abrasion resistant wrap like Tite Seal Hydraulic Hose Protector. It will protect against problems, and if signs of chafing or abrasion appear, the wrap is easier (and cheaper) to replace than the hose.

Remember, take care of your hydraulics and they will take care of you.

Let me know if you've had any "special" experiences with hydraulics. Submit your comments and questions.

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