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# What is a Shovel Loader?

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In construction, a shovel loader is a piece of heavy machinery that is used to move material and load it into another piece or machinery or to another location. The shovel loader features a large bucket, or shovel, that is attached to hydraulic arms that can manipulate the shovel into different positions. Because the shovel is often very large and heavy, the shovel loader itself must by necessity be built to be a very large machine capable of carrying large amounts of weight over rough terrain common at construction sites.



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Due to the harsh environments in which a shovel loader is likely to be used, it often features large, heavy-duty tires that resist puncture. Other types of shovel loader feature metal tracks instead of tires, much like an army tank. The shovel loader is considered a type of tractor and therefore is not designed to move quickly; rather, it is designed to move a significant amount of weight over short to medium distances. The loader is designed to pick up material with the large shovel rather than push it, and the shovel can be lifted to different heights depending on the size of the loader. This is especially helpful when loading material into tall trucks.

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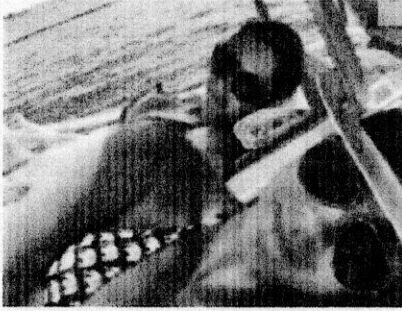
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While some loaders have a shovel permanently fixed to them, other loaders are designed so that the shovel is removable. This allows other attachments to be used with the loader's hydraulic arms. Logging machines are a type of loader that use a pair of arms instead of a shovel so that the arms can wrap around large trees to move them. The shovel itself can also be modified; some shovels act like a clamshell, with a second plate on top of the shovel clamping down to contain the materials inside.



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Shovel loaders vary in size, from very large for massive construction projects, to quite small for home projects. The shovel size will vary along with the size of the tractor hauling it. It is important to use the correct size of shovel for the loader; too large of a shovel and the tractor may not be able to handle the weight. Too small of a shovel will prevent the tractor from performing at its peak. Some of the larger loaders in existence have engines dedicated to each wheel because of the torque and strain placed on each wheel; most medium and large sized loaders are driven by a diesel engine, while smaller loaders can use a gas-powered engine.



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