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An innovative, alternative solution for onshore pipeline contractors

A patented adaptation of its standard crawler excavators, Volvo pipelayers offer advantages in stability, manoeuvrability, productivity, safety and environmental impact.

Unlike conventional pipelayers, they provide ease of directional change and can work through 360°, with full lifting performance and functionality at all radius positions and, can work on steep grade slopes. The excavator-based design is also better able to handle heavier loads, with a maximum tipping load of 150 metric tons on the largest model.

The cyclical nature of pipeline projects can result in low fleet utilization. While excavators and rough terrain cranes are routinely used for specialized lifting on pipeline projects they have been limited in manoeuvrability such that they could not be more broadly applied. Volvo pipelayers can be used in various heavy lift applications or, can be converted as excavators.

This versatility allows use between projects in non-pipelayer applications and / or potential for second life or, to improve resale value, and maximum return on investment.

Safety features include a raised cab and asymmetric boom design, for unimpeded visibility on site / to the trench, a mechanical swing lock for added safety on severe side slopes and an anti-two-block device.

An industry first, they also feature a Load Management System. This computes load charts for 360 degree rotation and infinite machine geometries up to a 35 degree grade slope, comparing these with current operating conditions and displaying information on an in-cab monitor, along with a wide variety of warnings and operational aids. Load indicating light bars, located on the boom tips, provide visible warning to the operator, adjacent operators and ground personnel, allowing quantum improvements in safety and site management.

Volvo Pipelayers exceed global design and safety requirements for pipelayers as well as cranes; most significant are OSHA regulations, ASME B30.14, ASME B30.5, ISO8813, and DIN 15018 and 15019.

Wide gauge and track shoe widths reduce ground pressure, soil disturbance and provide greater ability to work in softer underfoot conditions. The ability to lay pipe off both sides of the machines can allow narrowing of right-of-way, saving time, material, and landscape.



Where transportability can limit optimum machine sizing for a project, Volvo pipelayers offer variable gauge or easily removable track side frames, counterweights and booms. Machines can self disassemble and reassemble independently to roadable weight / width modules, with no requirement for other lifting machine assistance.

Volvo Pipelayers can improve productivity, lower operating costs, increase site layout flexibility and improve safety and environmental impact; important areas for improvement in pipelining unachievable with any other solution.

Bernard Quereilhac joined Volvo Construction Equipment in 2007 and has 42 years experience working with pipeline contractors in more than 50 countries around the world.