

# Orchard Manager Dies When ATV Crashes into Apple Bin

## INCIDENT FACTS

**REPORT #:** 71-180-2019s

**REPORT DATE:** April 10, 2019

**INCIDENT DATE:** August 18, 2018

**VICTIM:** 43 years old, 6 years with employer

**INDUSTRY:** Apple orchard

**OCCUPATION:** Orchard manager

**SCENE:** Apple bin stacking area

**EVENT TYPE:** Machine/ATV



A 43-year-old orchard manager died when the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) he was operating struck an apple bin causing him to be thrown 32 feet from the point of impact.

He had worked for 6 years as the manager at his employer's apple orchard.

The manager was operating his personal ATV (he resided on the property) in the orchard while supervising a nighttime spraying operation. He stopped to speak with an employee at about 10:30 p.m. No one else saw him for the rest of the evening. An employee arriving for work the next morning found his body lying near his ATV. It was still running with the headlights on.

State investigators and the county Sheriff's office investigated the incident scene.

They found that the manager was operating the ATV along an orchard gravel and dirt road at a high rate of speed when the ATV went into a 58-foot straight skid and struck an apple bin. The ATV then rolled over and came to rest 20 feet from the point of impact. The manager was found on the road 12 feet from the ATV. He was not wearing a helmet. He died of massive head injuries. The employer did not ensure that his employees wore DOT approved helmets while operating ATVs. Investigators noted the operation of the ATV at an excessive speed as a primary cause of this incident.

# FATALITY NARRATIVE



**Photo 1.** ATV at the incident scene.





**Photo 2.** Orchard road along which the manager was operating the ATV. The painted blue “U” on the road indicates where the ATV went into a skid for 58 feet before striking the bin.



**Photo 3.** The incident scene showing the damaged apple bin after being struck by the ATV, where the ATV came to rest, and the location (indicated by the red circle) of the manager after being thrown from the ATV.



**Photo 4.** The manufacturer's decal on the ATV showing that DOT approved helmets are required when operating the ATV.

## Requirements

Employers must provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure that employees are protected from injury. Wherever appropriate, employers must ensure that employees use PPE.

See [WAC 296-307-10005\(1\)](#)



## Recommendations

- Operate ATVs at speeds safe for conditions and terrain.
- Employers should create and enforce a policy to ensure that employees use helmets when operating ATVs.
- Employers should consider providing and requiring employees to use company ATVs.
- Employers should consider installing governors on ATVs to prevent high-speed operation.
- Always wear a DOT approved helmet while operating ATVs.
- Take a hands-on ATV safety training course.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions and warnings for safe operation of ATVs.

*This bulletin was developed to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.*

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