

# Fatality Narrative

## Bulldozer Operator Killed in Rollover on Icy Slope \*

**Industry:** Heavy construction

**Occupation:** Operating engineer

**Task:** Clearing snow from roadway

**Type of Incident:** Machinery/struck by

**Release Date:** December 17, 2003

**Case No.:** 03WA020

**SHARP Report No.:** 71-16-2003

On May 14, 2003, an operating engineer was killed when the bulldozer he was operating slid on ice, overturned, and came to rest at the bottom of a 150-foot embankment. The 54-year old victim, a member of the International Union of Operating Engineers, was employed by a construction firm that was building a road through the mountains. At the time of the incident the victim was clearing a secondary road of snow with a D7 Caterpillar bulldozer. The bulldozer slid on ice and went down an embankment. The victim, who was not wearing a seatbelt, was thrown from the bulldozer and crushed beneath it when it came to rest. The bulldozer's rollover protective structure (ROPS) was not significantly damaged.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! Operators of heavy equipment must use a seatbelt when using equipment that is equipped with ROPS.
- ! Construction equipment must not be operated on any access road or grade unless the roadway or grade is constructed to allow safe movement.
- Operators should inspect slopes and plan a proper path of travel for the work area.
- When working on slopes, operators should avoid moving across the face of the slope. Try to operate up and down the slope face as much as possible.
- The operator needs to know the operational range and limitations of the equipment.
- Operators need to be aware that slippery surfaces such as mud, ice and snow can impact traction even for construction equipment with high traction capabilities such as bulldozers. Equipment operators need to adjust to those conditions for the safe operation and maneuvering of their equipment.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 20<sup>th</sup> work-related fatality in Washington State during the year 2003 and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> construction-industry fatality of the year.

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*\*This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees in a timely manner of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. We encourage you to consider the above information as you make safety decisions for or recommendations to your company or constituency. The information in this notice 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.*

Developed by the Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) and Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) Programs at the WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. For more information, contact the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, 1-888-667-4277, <http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety/research/face>.