

Fatality Narrative

Front-end Loader Strikes Worker in Trench *

Industry: Water, sewer, and pipeline construction **Release Date:** May 30, 2003
Occupation: Construction foreman **Case No.:** 02WA061
Task: Directing front end loader to sprinkle sand in trench **SHARP Report No.:** 71-12-2003
Type of Incident: Machinery

On November 6, 2002, a construction foreman was standing in a trench directing a front-end loader to sprinkle sand in the bottom of the trench when the loader slipped into the trench, striking the foreman with the bucket killing him. The victim was a 39-year-old male who was employed by a company that performed excavation and trenching work and installed water, sewer, and pipeline utilities. The incident happened at a job site where a parking lot was being constructed and water utilities were being installed. The construction crew was repairing a storm drain in a trench that was 95 feet long and at the site of the incident it was 3 feet 8 inches deep and 6 feet wide. The victim, the competent person on the site, was standing in the trench along with another worker and was directing the operator of the front-end loader to deposit sand in the trench. The loader was at a 90-degree angle to the trench and delivering a bucket of sand when it slipped into the trench, striking the victim with the bucket. It was raining and the ground was muddy and slippery.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates requirements)

- ! All trench related construction projects must have a competent person inspect the worksite prior to the start of work and then as needed during the day to determine if hazardous conditions exist. [See WAC 296-155-655(11)(a) for details]
- ! Employees are not to work in trenches until all identified hazards are eliminated or controlled, including hazards caused by wet soil or rainy conditions. [See WAC 296-155-655(11)(b) for details]
- ! Equipment that could pose a hazard to employees by falling or rolling into the excavation needs to be kept at a minimum of at least 2 feet from the edge of a trench. [See WAC 296-155-655(19)(b) for details]
- ! Equipment must never approach within 2 ft. of the edge of an excavation. When a vehicle approaches an excavation that the operator does not have a full view of, physical barriers, barricades, stop logs, or a vehicle spotter must be used. [See WAC 296-155-655(6) for details]
- Employees should stay out of the potential path of vehicles and their materials as they are being loaded or unloaded.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 47th work-related fatality in Washington State during the year 2002 and was the 11th construction industry fatality of the year.

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/sharp/face>.