

FATALITY NARRATIVE

Bulldozer Operator Caught Between Track and Fender*

Industry: New single-family housing construction
Task: Operating bulldozer
Occupation: Site supervisor/heavy equipment operator
Type of Incident: Caught in machinery

Incident Date: February 4, 2010
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On February 4, 2010, a 68-year-old construction site supervisor and heavy equipment operator was fatally injured when he was crushed between a bulldozer's track and fender. For the past ten years he had been employed by a contractor that does site development, residential and commercial work. He had 48 years experience operating construction equipment. On the day of the incident, he was supervising a crew at a fill and compacting project. A dump truck driver arrived with a load of dirt and he got down from the bulldozer he was operating and walked over to the driver to give him instructions as to where to place the dirt. He left the bulldozer's engine running and did not set its parking brake. As he attempted to return to the operator's seat he was standing on the top of the bulldozer's tread when his elbow hit the transmission shifter lever out of neutral into reverse. As the bulldozer began to move backward his left foot was caught between the moving track and the underside of the fender. His leg was pulled in and crushed while the bulldozer carried him several yards before ejecting him onto the ground. Emergency responders took him to a hospital where he died of his injuries 15 days later.



Requirements

- Whenever equipment is parked, the parking brake must be set. See WAC 296-155-605(1)(c)(ii).
- Bulldozer blades must rest on the ground or on blocking when machines are not in operation. See WAC 296-155-615(1)(l).
- Employers must develop, implement, and enforce a written accident prevention program that includes, but is not limited to, procedures for operators entering, exiting, and securing bulldozers against unintended movement. See WAC 296-155-110.

Recommendations

- Before leaving a bulldozer unattended, operators should follow manufacturer recommended operating procedures to ensure that the equipment is secured from movement.
- Employers should consider buying mobile construction equipment installed with an interlock safety system or operator presence sensing system which will prevent unintended movement of equipment.

Statewide Statistics: This was number 9 of 89 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2010, and was number 1 of 7 construction-related fatalities.

**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. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). For more information, contact the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, 1-888-667-4277.*

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