

Well Driller Struck By Water Drill Pipe Sliding Off Back of Truck*

Industry: Water Well Drilling.

Task: Operating skid steer track loader.

Occupation: Well driller.

Type of Incident: Struck by.

Release Date: March 2, 2010.

Incident Date: July 8, 2008.

Case No.: 08WA03501.

SHARP Report No.: 71-90-2010.

On July 8, 2008, a well driller operating a skid steer loader was struck by water drill pipes that slid off the back of a flatbed truck. The 23-year-old victim had over three years experience as a water driller and was employed by a water drilling company. The victim and another worker were bringing drilling equipment to a well drilling site. The access to the site was by an old logging road or skid road of about a 12 degree grade. The two workers cleared the access road of brush and leveled it using a skid steer track loader. They were attempting to travel up this road with the coworker driving a service flatbed truck loaded with tools, steel well drilling rods, and steel well casing pipe. The victim was following behind operating the skid steer track loader. The flatbed driver lost traction, so he backed up and tried again. As he was spinning the truck's wheels the unsecured load of rods and pipe slid backwards off the flatbed, pinning the victim in the operator's cab of the skid steer loader. The victim was taken to a hospital where he died of his injuries several days later.



Requirements

- Securely tie down all flatbed truck loads of construction materials and supplies to be transported on public roadways or at job sites. See [RCW 46.61.655](#).
- Limit the height of material when transporting around the job site so that the load is stable and will not fall, slide or collapse. See [WAC 296-155-020](#).

Recommendations

- Maintain a safe travel distance when following a moving vehicle when either on a public roadway or job site.
- Do not modify or remove falling object protective guards that are installed to protect operators of skid steer loaders and other mobile construction equipment.
- Ensure that loads of materials transported by flatbed are securely tied down and guards or netting is used to prevent movement of objects off the rear of the vehicle.

State Wide Statistics: This was number 35 out of 72 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2008, and was number 9 out of 18 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 the Washington 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.