

Fatality Narrative

Laborer Electrocuted When Truck Mounted Boom Contacts Overhead Power Line^{*}

Industry: Water and Sewer Line and Related Construction

Occupation: Laborer

Task: Strapping irrigation pipe on bed of truck

Type of Incident: Electrocution

Release Date: November 9, 2006

Case No.: 06WA01801

SHARP Report No.: 71-52-2006

On March 24, 2006, a construction laborer was electrocuted when a truck-mounted boom contacted an overhead power line. The 18-year-old victim had worked with his present employer for two months. Three employees, including the victim, were using a truck-mounted boom to load a 30-foot long section of irrigation pipe on to a truck bed. The pipe was to be used in a pivot irrigation system. The pipe had been lifted by the boom and set on the truck bed, and the boom replaced in the cradle. The victim was standing on the ground near the front of the truck bed strapping down the pipe. The base of the pipe pushed down the boom control located behind the truck cab, causing the boom to raise straight up. The boom contacted the energized outside phase of a three-phase 7620 volt overhead power line. The electric current traveled through the boom to the truck and to the victim, who died at the scene. The two other workers received electric shock injuries.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! When the boom is cradled for transport, make sure that the clutch is disengaged to render the boom controls inoperative.
- ! Evaluate the job site for potential electrical hazards. In this incident the truck was placed directly under an energized overhead power line, exposing workers to an electrocution hazard.
- ! Train employees to recognize overhead electrical hazards.
- ! Maintain a minimum of 10 feet distance from power lines.
- Consider guarding the crane controls to help prevent accidental engagement of the controls or incorporate detent or safety interlock switches onto the levers in order to prevent the unintentional activation of the boom truck controls.
- When loading materials on the bed of a boom truck, make sure the material is positioned so it will not be able to make contact with the boom truck controls.

**This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees 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) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) at the WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported 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, <http://www.LNI.wa.gov/Safety/Research/FACE/>.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 17th out of 65 work-related fatalities in Washington State to date in 2006, and was the 4th out of 18 construction-related fatalities to date.



Photo: The crane and site after the incident, showing the boom arm in contact with the high-voltage line.

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