

Fatality Narrative

Construction Equipment Mechanic Killed While Working Under Truck*

Industry: Site preparation contractors.
Occupation: Mechanic.
Task: Repairing electric motor.
Type of Incident: Pinned between.

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On July 26, 2007, a construction equipment mechanic working under a truck was killed when the truck he was working on rolled forward, pinning him between the differential and the ground. The 49-year-old victim had thirty years experience as a mechanic and had been employed as a mechanic by a site preparation contractor for three years. The victim was working alone under a flatbed truck at a job site making repairs to a 2-speed electric motor. The electric motor was located under the front left half of the differential housing. He removed the motor from the housing and then removed the rear u-joint that attaches the driveline to the differential. The truck, which was parked on a 1% to 2% incline, was in gear and the parking brake was engaged, but the wheels were not chocked or blocked. The parking brake on this truck was a drum type unit, located behind the transmission, and when engaged it locks the driveline and the differential gears to keep the truck from rolling. When the victim removed the rear u-joint this caused the parking brake to disengage and the truck rolled forward, pinning the victim between the ground and the rear axle differential.

Photo shows the disconnected driveline.



Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- ! Chock, block, or otherwise secure vehicle wheels when parking vehicles on inclines at a construction site.
- ! Employers must implement and enforce a written safety program, which includes safe procedures for working under vehicles.
- ! Train employees in the hazards of improperly parked and non-secured construction vehicles.
- Equip all vehicles with chocks and ensure their use.
- Know where your employees are on the job site and maintain frequent contact.
- Assess each job for hazardous situations and, if necessary, provide a helper.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 48th out of 80 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2007, and was the 10th out of 16 construction-related fatalities.

**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. 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.*

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