

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

71-173-2018

REPORT DATE:

July 3, 2018

INCIDENT DATE:

June 26, 2017

VICTIM:

73 years old

INDUSTRY:

Site preparation contractors

OCCUPATION:

Heavy equipment operator

SCENE:

New home development site

EVENT TYPE:

Fall/Struck by



Incident scene at a new home development job site. The "X" shows where the operator was found after he fell from the compactor roller and then run over by it.

[For a slideshow version, click here.](#)



This narrative is an alert about the tragic loss of life of a worker and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or 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 grant# 2U60OH008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/FACE.

Heavy Equipment Operator Run Over by Compactor Roller

SUMMARY

A 73-year-old heavy equipment operator died when he fell from the compact roller he was operating and was run over by it.

He was employed by a site preparation contractor for whom he had worked three months out of the year for the past 17 years. On the day of the incident, he was working at new home development job site. He and a coworker were working together filling housing lots with soil. The coworker operated a dump truck to deliver soil. The victim operated a bulldozer to spread the soil and then used a compactor roller to compact it.

Around three p.m., the dump truck driver left the site to retrieve another load of soil. When he returned he did not see the compactor roller. Then he noticed the victim lying motionless on the ground in the area where he had been using the roller. He contacted his supervisor and then called 911. The medical examiner determined that the victim had been run over by the roller and had died of blunt force injuries of the head and torso.

State workplace safety investigators found that he fell from the open cab of the roller as it moved in reverse. The roller was found several hundred yards away resting against a tree. No one saw what happened. Investigators could not determine what caused him to fall, or whether he had been seated or standing prior to his fall.

He possibly stood up to get a better view of the edge of the excavation on his right as he was backing. Evidence at the scene indicates that the side of the roller came in contact with the excavation wall, which may have jolted the roller and caused him to fall.

The roller's seat belt was found to be functional, unclipped, and retracted. The employer required employees to wear seat belts and coworkers told investigators that the victim was known to always wear his seat belt.

REQUIREMENTS

- Seat belts must be provided by employers and used by construction heavy equipment operators. See [WAC 296-155-615 \(1\)\(b\)](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences:

- Always use the provided seat belt when operating heavy equipment. Uneven terrain or unexpected movements may cause an operator to be ejected off the equipment.
- Consider purchasing or equipping compactor rollers and other heavy mobile construction equipment with a safety interlock device such as an Operator Presence Sensing System (OPSS) that prevents movement of the equipment when the operator is not seated at the controls.



Incident compactor roller