

Fatality Narrative

Skid Steer Loader Operator Ejected and Crushed by Bucket*

Industry: New single-family housing construction.
Occupation: Equipment operator/Laborer.
Task: Moving dirt with skid steer loader.
Type of Incident: Struck by.

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On December 1, 2006, a skid steer loader operator was ejected from the loader's seat and crushed under its bucket. The 20-year-old victim had been working for a residential construction contractor, as a laborer and skid steer loader operator for two weeks. The victim was working at a new housing development site operating the skid steer loader to move dirt and level a small area in preparation for landscaping the yard. He was observed operating the loader at a rapid speed with the bucket raised and full of dirt. A short while later a worker found the victim unresponsive under the bucket of the loader. He was taken to a hospital where he was declared deceased. An investigation determined that the victim, who was not wearing the provided seat belt, had been ejected from the seat of the skid steer loader and was crushed under the loader's bucket. The victim had not been trained in how use a skid steer loader.



Photo: The skid steer loader and site after the incident.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- ! Train workers to safely operate skid steer loaders and to recognize hazards.
- Travel with the bucket in the lowest possible position, especially when the bucket is loaded. This will help maintain skid steer loader stability and to prevent the equipment from tipping forward and rolling over.
- ! Do not operate at unsafe speeds; especially be aware when operating on uneven ground.
- ! Always use the provided seat belt or operator restraint device
- ! Never disable the operation-interlock switch for the operator restraint.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 72nd out of 81 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2006, and was the 21st out of 23 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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