



FATALITY NARRATIVE

Ranch Worker Dies When ATV Rolls Over *

Industry: Beef cattle ranching and farming
Task: Traveling on ATV to move irrigation wheel lines
Occupation: Ranch worker
Type of Incident: Machine-related/ATV

Release Date: September 19, 2011
Incident Date: July 21, 2008
Case No.: 08WA03601
SHARP Report No.: 71-104-2011

On July 21, 2008, a ranch worker died when the four-wheeled all-terrain vehicle (ATV) he was operating rolled over. The victim was employed at a cattle ranch where he had worked for over a year. He was an experienced ATV operator and competitive motorcycle racer. He was driving the ATV to access irrigation wheel lines and move them. He was on a rough dirt road alongside a hay field at the ranch when he lost control and the ATV rolled. A police report indicated that the ATV was traveling at high speed when it struck a small bump in the dirt road. According to the coroner, the victim died of blunt force impact to the abdomen as a result of being struck by the ATV.



Requirements

- Ensure that operators of ATVs wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). See [WAC 296-800-16055](#).
- Employers are required to comply with hazard-specific safety and health standards and provide specific PPE to protect their employees. See [WAC 296-307-10005](#).

Recommendations

- Employers should consider using a safer four-wheel drive off-road vehicle instead of an ATV. Examples are utility task vehicles (UTVs) or side-by-side vehicles equipped with rollover protective structures (ROPS) and seatbelts.
- Employers should ensure that ATV operators:
 - Drive at speeds safe for conditions and terrain.
 - Are aware of site-specific safety hazards, such as bumps, steep slopes, ditches, and streams.
 - Are competent in operating their specific ATV under the conditions and terrains in which they will be driving.
 - Review and understand the operator's manual.
 - Report any damage or mechanical failures so that repairs can be made.
- Operators should:
 - Drive ATVs at speeds safe for conditions or terrain.
 - Scan ahead for hazards and obstacles, such as dips or bumps in the road.
 - Always wear a DOT-compliant helmet.
 - Follow manufacturer safety guidelines.
 - Take a hands-on ATV safety training course.

State Wide Statistics: This was number 36 out of 72 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2008, and was number 4 out of 7 agriculture-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 Washington State [Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation \(FACE\)](#) 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.



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