

## INCIDENT FACTS

### REPORT #:

71-228-2022

### REPORT DATE:

October 14, 2022

### INCIDENT DATE:

July 10, 2021

### VICTIM:

68 years old

### INDUSTRY:

Landscaping services

### OCCUPATION:

Groundskeeper/caretaker

### SCENE:

Dirt access road to private residence

### EVENT TYPE:

Tip over/Roll over



UTV with seatbelts removed.  
The operator was crushed under the ROPS.

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



This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the injury. 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# 5U600H008487). For more information visit [www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face](http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face).

## Groundskeeper Crushed when UTV Tips Over

### SUMMARY

A 68-year-old residential property groundskeeper/caretaker died when the Utility Task Vehicle (UTV) she was operating tipped over. The UTV had no seatbelt.

Her employer was the owner of a vacation home who employed her to take care of the home and property. She had been an employee for 14 years and resided on the property.

On the day of the incident, the groundskeeper and her adult daughter, who was also an employee, were trimming grass and shrubs along a dirt access road. They loaded yard waste onto the dump bed of a UTV and brought it to a burn pile. The daughter then walked to another location.

The groundskeeper drove the UTV from where the burn pile was located, taking a right turn onto the access road. As she drove the UTV downhill along the access road, the UTV swerved, and the front driver's side tire hit a tree root on the roadside embankment. This resulted in the UTV tipping over onto its passenger side. The groundskeeper, unrestrained by a seatbelt, was ejected from her seat, pinned and crushed under the UTV's frame/rollover protective structure (ROPS). She died at the scene.

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The incident UTV's manufacturer provided lap-style seatbelts had been removed shortly after it had been purchased by the employer in 2007.
- The groundskeeper had been operating the UTV in order to carry out various tasks on the property without a seatbelt for 14 years.

### REQUIREMENTS

- Prohibit employees from using tools and equipment that are not safe. See [WAC 296-800-11030](#)
- Employers must develop a formal accident prevention program (APP) that is outlined in writing. See [WAC 296-800-14005\(1\)](#)

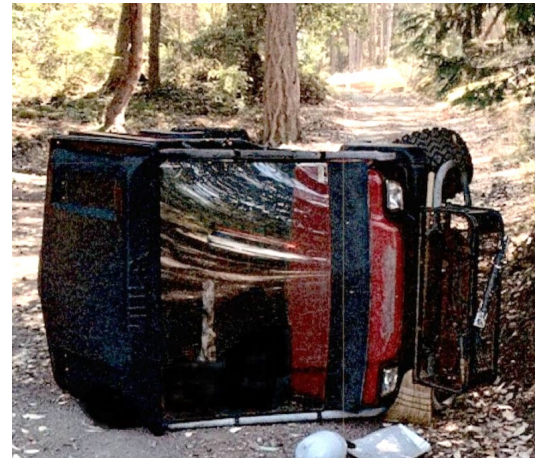
### RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar incidents:

- Do not remove or alter manufacturer provided safety features.
- Do a job hazard analysis (JHA) of tasks involving UTV vehicles as part of an APP. Workers should be involved in creating the JHA.
- Ensure that workers:
  - Always wear a seatbelt when operating or riding in a UTV.
  - Are trained and follow manufacturer guidelines for safe operation of equipment.

### RESOURCES

- [Safe Operation of Utility Type Vehicles \(UTVs\)](#)



Incident scene showing UTV tipped over on its passenger side.