

Worker Killed in Farm Sprayer Roll-over



What happened?

The victim was driving a tractor with an attached 1,000-gallon water tank/sprayer between rows of apple trees and spraying water over the dirt to keep the dust down. The worker was traveling down an outside road that ran along the block he was working in.

As he approached another dirt road that required him to make a right-hand turn to continue spraying, he failed to make the turn and proceeded straight instead. The water tank then came off the hitch and overturned; the tractor itself did not roll over. It is surmised that the victim jumped, fell, or was somehow swept off the tractor seat. He was then crushed by the water tank as it rolled.

Upon examination, the hitch that held the water tank onto the ball of the tractor was found to be defective. The safety lock was attached to the tongue of the trailer in the correct position, but was missing the safety bolt or pin that keeps the receiver locked to the ball. There was, however, a piece of tie wire that ran through the hole where the safety bolt or pin should have gone.

What can you do to prevent this from happening at your workplace?

- Inspect all equipment before use.
- Remove defective equipment from service.
- Only use tractors with Rollover protection (ROPS) and wear seatbelts when ROPS are in use.
- Do not drive at speeds faster than conditions allow.
- Use workers who have been trained in the use of the equipment.

This bulletin was developed by L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) to alert employers, labor groups, and employees of a tragic loss of life. The information in this bulletin is based on preliminary data and does NOT represent final determinations of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality

Need more information?

Find information on [safety and health, rules and policies, sample programs, and general assistance](#).

Interested in a free safety consultation at your workplace?

The Department of Labor & Industries provides consultations, training, and technical assistance at no cost to employers. Call today to schedule a free confidential consultation or go to [Request Consultation](#) for more information. You may also call 1-800-423-7233 or visit a local L&I office and ask for the Consultation Manager.

How does an employee file a complaint?

Employees or employee representatives may file formal complaints with DOSH when they believe a safety or health hazard exists in their workplace. [Complaint forms](#) are available from your local L&I office in both English and Spanish, or on the Web.

Contact us. We're here to help.