

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:
71-219-2022

REPORT DATE:
April 18, 2022

INCIDENT DATE:
September 27, 2021

WORKER:
64 years old

INDUSTRY:
General freight
trucking/Construction

OCCUPATION:
Truck driver/Equipment
operator

SCENE:
Grounds of private residence

EVENT TYPE:
Crushed/Equipment rollover



Overturned backhoe and trailer. The driver was not wearing the seatbelt and was crushed under the ROPS.

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Truck Driver/Equipment Operator Crushed while Loading Backhoe onto Trailer

SUMMARY

A 64-year-old truck driver/equipment operator attempting to load a backhoe onto a lowboy flatbed trailer died when the backhoe rolled over, crushing him.

The driver was employed by a trucking company that hauled gravel to worksites and moved other companies' heavy equipment to and from sites. He had experience transporting and operating construction equipment.

A construction contractor doing residential site preparation work had hired the employer to transport a backhoe from their premises to a job site and return it when they were finished using it.

On the day of the incident, the driver drove his employer's dump truck with an attached flatbed trailer to the job site. His task was to load the backhoe onto the trailer and transport it to another site.

While the incident was unwitnessed, evidence at the scene suggests that the driver was operating the backhoe in reverse, as the backup warning alarm was sounding when first responders arrived on the scene. It is possible that the driver had started moving the backhoe up the trailer's two metal ramps, and then backed up to better position its wheels. As he was doing this, the wet, muddy tires may have slipped on the ramps resulting in a rear wheel going off the ramp, causing it to rollover on its side.

Either the driver, who was not wearing the backhoe's seatbelt, attempted to jump from the operator's seat or he was thrown from it as the backhoe rolled over. He was crushed under the backhoe's rollover protective structure (ROPS). The backhoe had a seatbelt that was functional. If he had used the seatbelt, it would have kept him in the seat as the backhoe rolled on its side.

REQUIREMENTS

- Seatbelts must be provided and used by all operators on earthmoving equipment. See [WAC 296-155-615\(1\)\(b\)](#)
- Develop and implement a formal, written Accident Prevention Program (APP) tailored to the needs of the particular plant or operation and to the type of hazard involved. See [WAC 296-155-110\(2\)](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Train equipment operators and ensure they always use a seatbelt when operating equipment, including when loading and unloading onto or off a transport trailer.
- Use a spotter to provide directions to the equipment operator during loading and unloading to ensure that the operator positions equipment correctly for safe movement on and off the trailer.
- Create a job hazard analysis (JHA) for safely loading and unloading construction equipment on and off trailers.

RESOURCES

[Operating Heavy Equipment Hazard Alert, CPWR](#)

[Dangers in Loading and Unloading Heavy Equipment, DOE](#)



Overturned backhoe and the trailer onto which the driver was attempting to load the backhoe when it rolled over, crushing him.