

Truck Driver Crushed while Loading Backhoe onto Trailer

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #: 71-219-2022s

REPORT DATE: April 18, 2022

INCIDENT DATE: September 27, 2021

WORKER: 64 years old

OCCUPATION: Truck driver/Equipment operator

INDUSTRY: General freight trucking/Construction

SCENE: Grounds of private residence

EVENT TYPE: Crushed/Equipment rollover



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.

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.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 1. Backhoe rolled over on its side as the operator was attempting to load it onto a lowboy flatbed trailer.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 2. Backhoe rolled over on its side and trailer ramps.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 3. Backhoe rolled over on its side and trailer ramps.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 4. Wet, muddy trailer ramp.

Requirements

Employers must:

Seatbelts must be provided and used by all operators on earthmoving equipment.

See [WAC 296-155-615\(1\)\(b\)](#)

Requirements

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.

Recommendations

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.

Recommendations

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](#)

FATALITY NARRATIVE



This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident 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.

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