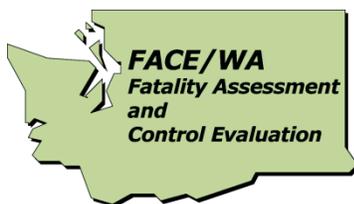


Orchard Laborer Dies when Crushed Between a Motor Grader and Semi-Truck in Washington State



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SUMMARY

On September 27, 2009, a 38-year-old orchard worker was fatally injured when he was crushed between a motor grader and a semi-truck with a trailer. The semi-truck, which was at the orchard to pick up apple bins, was unable to maintain traction and got stuck while attempting to travel up a gravel orchard road with a 6-7% grade. The worker and the semi-truck driver were attempting to tow the stuck semi-truck with the assistance of a motor grader operator.

The operator was reversing the motor grader downhill into position so the worker could attach the chain from the front of the semi-truck to the rear of the motor grader. According to the operator of the motor grader, he attempted to use the brakes about 40 feet uphill from the semi-truck but they failed, causing the motor grader to collide with the front of the semi-truck.

According to witnesses, the motor grader momentarily stopped about seven feet from the semi-truck, and then suddenly moved backwards crushing the worker and semi-truck driver between the two vehicles. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was contacted and the worker and truck driver were transported to the hospital. Approximately 1 hour after the incident the worker died.

To prevent similar incidences the Washington State Fatality and Control Evaluation Team (FACE) recommends:

1. Employers should implement and enforce the use of job hazard analysis (JHA) tools and techniques to identify and eliminate hazards.
2. Employers should create and enforce comprehensive standard operating procedures (SPOs) for towing vehicles.
3. Employers should ensure that all heavy mobile machinery is equipped with functioning safety systems and alarms.
4. All operators of heavy machinery should perform a safety inspection before operating machinery. Inspections should include functional testing of safety devices.

Designers and manufacturers of motor graders should:

5. Design and manufacture motor graders with safety features that notify the operator that there are workers near or in the path of the motor grader.

To access the full version of this investigation report along with the detailed recommendations and discussions section, go to www.lni.wa.gov and enter **52-27-2013** into the search box. Your opinion is valuable so please take a moment to complete and mail the self-addressed stamped evaluation card.