

Tear this out and share with your crew



## SAFETY WATCH

by Marcia Gruver

# Asphalt paver precautions

**These wide machines require the paving crew's attention – both when operating and cleaning.**

**The accident:** One crew member started to move an asphalt paving machine, and struck another laborer, who became trapped under the machine. The paver operator left the site before emergency personnel pronounced the laborer dead.

**The bottom line:** Approximately 75 percent of "struck-by" fatalities involve heavy equipment, says OSHA. Large asphalt pavers, which have a significant width, require operators to pay special attention to the surrounding area before they are moved.

Anyone operating a paver should know the emergency shut-down procedure, and familiarize themselves with warning devices, gauges and operating controls. Start and operate the machine only from the operator's station. Check the parking brake and service brakes according to the manufacturer's instructions. Test steering – right and left – while moving slowly. If an unsafe condition cannot be remedied immedi-



Illustration by Don Lomax

ately, notify your supervisor and tag the machine.

Always signal your intent to move, and don't jump – either on or off – the machine. When loading material into the hopper, make certain that personnel are clear.

Keep all personnel clear of the auger any time the engine is running or about to be starting. Never let personnel reach into an operating auger or conveyor, or climb into the hopper when the engine is running. Although it occurred on a concrete paver, an accident on an airport paving job underlines this point: A veteran construction worker, cleaning a paver at the end of the shift,

caught his shirt sleeve on the paver's auger. The auger pulled him into the machine and killed him.

Make sure your asphalt paver cleaning and wash-down procedures include the following:

- Lower or secure the screed in the raised position with the screed travel locks or with blocks.
- Lower or securely block hopper wings.
- Keep in mind that the wash-down fluid may be flammable. Never use the wash-down system when the screed heaters are operating. Do not smoke or allow others to smoke while using the wash-down system.
- A qualified operator must be in the operator's station anytime the engine is running during cleaning and wash down. Cleaning personnel should remain in full view of the operator.
- Never reach into an operating auger or conveyor or climb into the hopper when the engine is running. **EW**

Information for this Safety Watch was gathered from news reports, OSHA and the Association of Equipment Manufacturers. It is meant for general information

only. To order AEM's "Asphalt Paver Safety Manual for Operating and Maintenance Personnel," go to [www.aem.org](http://www.aem.org).