

Tear this out and share with your crew



SAFETY WATCH

by Marcia Gruver

Know when to park it

Steep slopes, unstable ground can put you in a perilous position on a roller.

The accidents:

A 41-year-old roller operator was working on a road extension when his machine rolled sideways down steep embankment. The man was partially ejected, crushed and killed by the machine as it rolled.

In another incident, a 23-year-old worker operating a 3-metric-ton roller fell down an embankment that gave way after the machine got too close to an unstable edge. The edge gave way, flipping the roller and crushing him.

The bottom line: Avoid operating a roller too close to an overhang, deep ditch or hole, warns the Association of Equipment Manufacturers. Be alert to potential caving edges, falling rocks and slides. If your machine gets too close to a tipping condition or drop off, stop, apply the parking brake and get off the machine. Carefully plan how you will proceed. Going in reverse is often the best move at this point.



Illustration by Don Lomax

When working on slopes, avoid side hill travel whenever possible. Instead, operate up and down the slope. The danger of sliding and/or tipping on steep slopes is always present regardless of how heavy or stable your machine may appear to be. In addition, always use seat belts if your machine is equipped with a ROPS (roll-over protection system).

To ensure adequate power or engine braking, always select the proper gear before climbing or descending steep grades. If your machine has a gear shift, select a low gear. If it has a hydrostatic drive, the speed control should

be in the slow travel position, close to neutral. (Make sure a hydrostatic drive is never in the fully displaced position when you're dealing with slopes.) And if your machine has both a gear shift and a hydrostatic control, both controls must be in their slow travel position.

Always make sure manually operating gear-type transmissions are fully engaged before starting onto a grade. Do not attempt to change the gear selection while traveling on a grade.

Finally, park a roller on level ground when possible. If that's not possible, position the machine at right angles to the slope. Make sure it's on a firm footing and there's no danger of sliding. Do not leave your machine until you are sure it's safely blocked in both directions and the parking brakes are engaged. Lower the blade and all other hydraulic attachments to the ground. **EW**

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

to order AEM's "Roller/Compactor Safety Manual" go to www.aem.org.