

# Steer clear

## Be alert, aware and where you're supposed to be

**The accident:** A laborer was tasked with moving mortar from the mixer to the jobsite's staging area. The mortar was located under a tarp-covered area. Exiting the tarp area backwards and in a crouched position, the worker did not see a skid steer operating nearby. The skid steer operator struck and ran over the victim as the machine passed parallel to the tarp-enclosed area. A nearby worker signaled the skid-steer operator to stop; however, the operator failed to understand the instructions and placed the unit in reverse, striking the victim again. The victim was pronounced dead with the cause of death listed as blunt trauma injuries to the head and torso.

**The bottom line:** A post-accident investigation determined the tarp-enclosed area had no designated entrance or exit, and employees would have to crouch down to pick up the bottom of the tarp to crawl out, reducing visibility to machine operators. There were no traffic control devices to warn operators that workers might



Illustration by Don Lomax

be on foot in the area, and there was no internal traffic control plan in place for the site.

### Establishing patterns

Although being alert at all times is a crucial part of staying safe on the job, avoiding struck-by injuries on the jobsite is more than a matter of just being aware of your surroundings; know where foot traffic is inappropriate, and follow the internal traffic control plan specific to that jobsite.

**Designated entrances** – When using a tarp-enclosed area, make sure you use a specified entrance/exit opening, whether it be a vertical slit in the tarp or a tarp zipper. Never go under the bottom of the

tarp; machine operators will not be expecting foot traffic anywhere other than the designated entrance.

**Traffic control** – The project manager will have developed an internal traffic control plan that coordinates the flow of construction vehicles, equipment and workers on foot. Be familiar with the plan so that you can safely navigate the site.

**Training tools** – Take advantage of the training your employer offers. Your company will have a comprehensive written safety program, which will include hazard recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions. With targeted repetitive training, safe behavior will become second nature to you.

EW1113

Information for this Safety Watch is from an accident report and the Center for Disease Control's NIOSH Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation program. It is meant for general information only.

Date of safety talk: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader: \_\_\_\_\_  
Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsored by **BRIDGESTONE**