

# Paving pitfalls

With multiple moving machines on a site, workers should be on guard

**The accident:** A paving contractor was working on a new parking lot for a commercial property. A skid steer operator backed into a worker shoveling asphalt from the hopper of a paver, pinning him between the skid steer and the paver and crushing his leg between the pieces of equipment. He was transported to the hospital, where his leg was amputated below the knee.

**The bottom line:** A post-accident investigation resulted in three OSHA citations: 1) the contractor did not furnish a place of employment free from hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm; 2) the contractor failed to initiate and maintain frequent and regular inspections by a competent person; and 3) the contractor did not adequately train employees about safe operating distances around vehicles. OSHA fined the contractor, and the injured worker filed a civil suit against the company.

## Wrong place, wrong time

The close proximity of construction workers to moving equipment is often to blame for jobsite accidents. Whether you're in a piece of equipment or on foot, following some basic guidelines will help to prevent avoidable accidents.

**Follow backing protocols** – Your firm will have established procedures in place for backing vehicles on construction sites. If you're a pedestrian on a site, stay alert and aware, and know what signals an equipment operator uses prior to backing. Listen out for horns and alarms, and keep an eye on the spotters. Familiarize yourself with the blind spots for each piece of equipment on the site, and stay out of those areas. If you're an equipment operator, don't start backing until you have the go-ahead from your spotter, and then use an agreed-upon signal, such as an air horn, to alert those around you that you're traveling in reverse.

**Adhere to the ITCP** – The project manager will provide the crew with an Internal Traffic Control Plan, which will create a traffic flow for equipment, vehicles and pedestrians. Designated walking zones will be provided by the ITCP, which will allow you to safely navigate the jobsite. If an area is designated as prohibited for foot traffic, do not cross barriers designed to keep pedestrians away.

**Use a buddy system** – Pair up with a fellow crewmember. A buddy system, where coworkers are assigned to spot one another, allows you to focus on your task while another worker is on the lookout for hazardous situations, including unexpected moving equipment in your area.



Illustration by Don Lomax

*Information for this Safety Watch is from an accident report, the Center for Disease Control's NIOSH Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Program and NIOSH's Workplace Solutions: Highway Work Zone Safety. It is meant for general information only.*

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

