

Safe trailering tactics

Proper planning and the right equipment can help you transport equipment safely

The accident: A paving company employee was transporting a compactor and paver to a construction site. The driver parked the tilt bed trailer on level ground and unloaded the paver, then started to unload the compactor by backing the machine down the ramp. After traveling approximately one foot, the compactor became unstable, started to slide off the edge of the ramp and then tipped over. The driver jumped from the compactor, but was struck by the ROPS and pinned to the ground. He later died from his injuries.

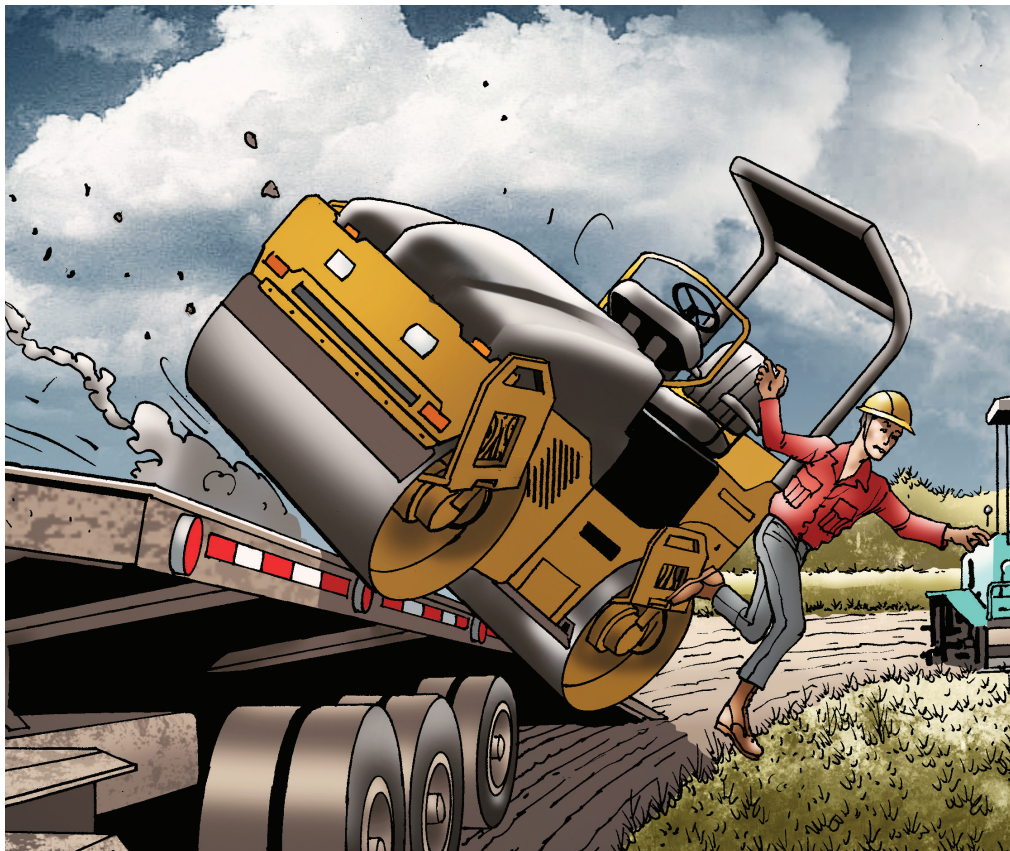


Illustration by Don Lomax

The bottom line: A post-accident investigation determined that, although the trailer had adjustable ramps to accommodate various axle lengths, the maximum adjustment on that particular model did not provide adequate support to safely load and unload the compactor.

Trouble-free trailering

When transporting equipment to and from the jobsite, using the correct procedure, as well as the right equipment, is important to maintain your safety and that of others.

Here are some tips to follow:

Know the limits. Before transporting any equipment, check to see that the combined weight of the machines will not exceed the trailer's carrying capacity. Also, the chains, hooks and D-rings will all have an established working load limit you must not exceed, as well. Inspect tiedown assemblies prior to loading the equipment onto the trailer.

Secure the seatbelt. When loading or unloading equipment, keep your seatbelt fastened at all times.

Resist the urge to unfasten the belt and jump from the machine, as you are likely to be injured or killed if struck by or pinned under the equipment. Stay within the operator restraints until the machine comes to a stop.

Use a second set of eyes. Since you're likely to be backing a machine off the trailer, never unload equipment alone. Ask for an assigned spotter to aid you by providing agreed-upon verbal directions or hand signals regarding the safe positioning on the ramp. **EW**

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

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