

A bump and a fall



Illustration by Don Lomax

The victim was 73 years old, semiretired and had worked part time for the contractor for 17 years.

On the day of the accident, he and a coworker were filling in and compacting soil on a housing development site. The coworker brought in loads of dirt in a dump truck, and the victim spread the dirt with a dozer and then switched to a roller to compact it.

Late in the afternoon, the coworker left the site for another load of dirt. When he returned, he found the victim lying motionless on the ground and the roller several hundred yards away stalled out against a tree at the edge of the site. The coworker contacted his supervisor and then called 911. Emergency personnel responded, but the medical examiner determined the victim had been run over by the roller and died of blunt force injuries to the

head and torso.

Accident investigators believe the victim fell from the open cab while the roller was in reverse. The seat belt was functional but unfastened and retracted. The contractor required all operators to wear seat belts and the victim was known to do so. Investigators think he may have undone his seat belt, stood up and leaned out of the cab to get a better view behind the machine. Evidence suggests the roller hit the side of a berm causing the victim to fall.

How this accident could have been prevented:

- Require all operators and drivers to wear seat belts anytime a key is in the ignition of a machine or truck.
- Consider purchasing equipment with a safety interlock system that disables the machine anytime the operator is not seated

at the controls or the seat belt is not fastened.

- Consider purchasing or retrofitting equipment with rearview cameras, so operators can see behind them without having to get out of their seat. Many of today's Tier 4 Final machines have large exhaust emissions components that raise the height of the engine, obscuring rear visibility.
- Avoid having operators working alone on a site. A second person should be used as a spotter when visibility is limited or difficult.
- Be cognizant of the limitations of older operators who may become forgetful or take things – like safety – for granted because they've been doing the job for so long.

For more information on this accident see:

<http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Face/Files/HeavyEquipment-OperatorRunOver.pdf>



Date of safety talk: _____ Leader: _____
 Attending: _____