

Impaled on rebar

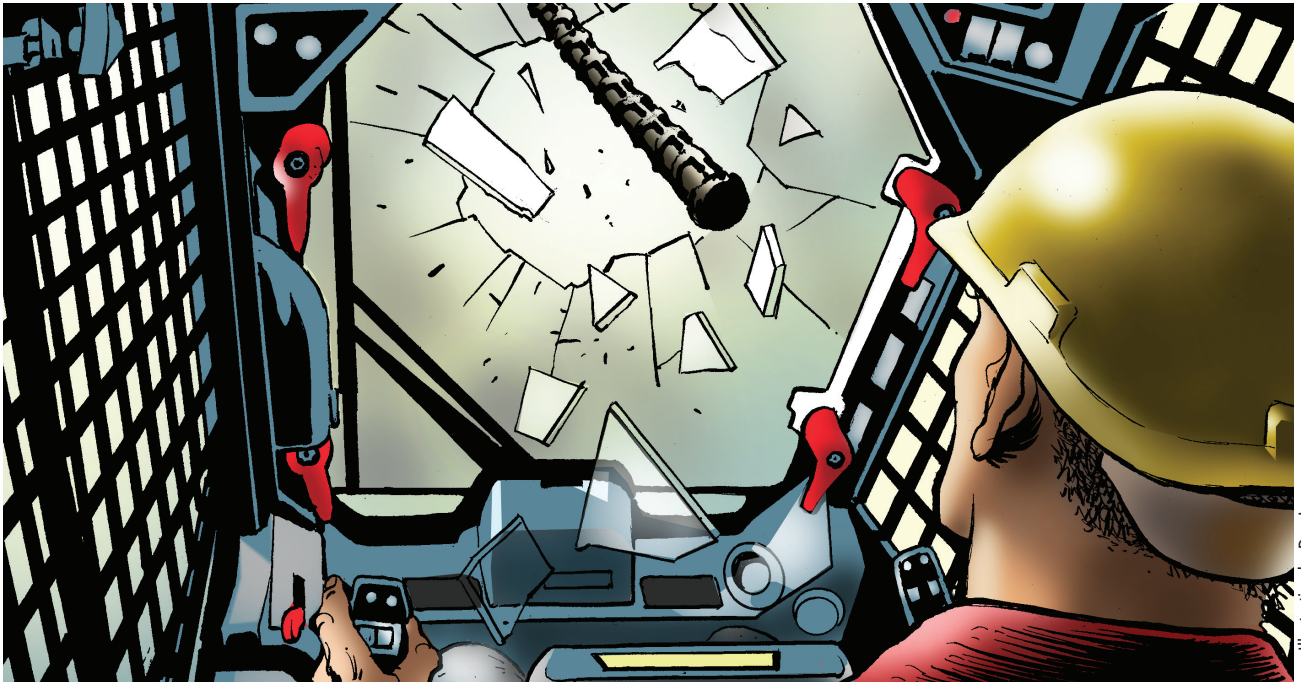


Illustration by Don Lomax

It was a high-rise job, using a skid steer loader to remove demolition debris on the 21st floor of a building. Above a worker, remote-controlled demolition machines punched holes through the floors to start the demolition process.

The worker was 41 years old and a 14-year veteran of the local Laborers International Union. He had been employed by the contractor for two months during the demolition of a 26-story apartment building.

As the remote-control machines hammered away at the concrete above the skid steer, cables, chunks of concrete and rebar were left hanging from the ceiling. Three workers used torches to cut the cables and rebar, while the worker and another skid steer operator scooped up the debris and dumped it into a chute.

As the worker was maneuvering the skid steer, he inadvertently

drove into a 7-foot-long piece of No. 4 rebar suspended from the ceiling. The rebar came through the cab and impaled him in the neck. Despite the injury, the victim was able to reverse the skid steer and shut it down. Another worker came to his aid and applied pressure to his neck wound. Emergency medical service was called to site, but the victim died at the scene due to trauma and blood loss.

How this accident could have been prevented.

- Never get in a hurry during a demolition job. Falling objects and other hazards can spring up out of nowhere, surprising operators and workers, especially those in cabs where visibility might be limited.
- Do not permit workers to perform demolition operations that will expose people on lower

levels to hazards.

- Provide sufficient manpower so that those removing the hazards (the welders cutting the rebar in this case) can stay well ahead of the other crews on site.
- Establish, supervise and enforce effective hazard recognition training programs that allow employees to perform their tasks safely.
- Do a site and task-specific hazard analysis of any demolition site and communicate those findings to everyone who works on that site, including subcontractors.
- In demolition operations, make sure the cabs of your machines have adequate front and side guarding packages (rear guarding, if necessary) installed to prevent objects from penetrating the cab.

For more information on this accident and how to prevent it see: <http://bitly/OSHAimpaled>.



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