Driver Drowns As Machine Burns



A heavy equipment operator drowned when his machine crashed and caught fire in a pit which had a small amount of water in the bottom.

He was operating a front end loader near the edge of an excavation. The sandy soil collapsed, and the machine cartwheeled to the bottom of the excavation, pinning the driver underneath. He was lying face down in the water at the bottom of the excavation. There was no gasoline cap on the machine, and fuel spilled during the incident. It caught fire. Rescuers were unable to reach the driver because of the fire, and he died of drowning.

Don’t operate a vehicle without a gasoline cap – not even your own automobile. A fire extinguisher must be readily available any time you operate motorized equipment. The operator must be protected by a seat belt and a rollover protection canopy on equipment such as this. Observe all safety precautions around excavations, including tests for soil stability and setback guidelines for material storage.