Heavy Equipment Operation Fatality Report



Bulldozer Kills Operator Standing on Track

A 33-year-old man, with eight years of experience, was crushed by his own bulldozer when he fell between the treads and the deck. The worker was giving a ride to a co-worker who needed to retrieve an all-terrain vehicle at the top of a hill. After the operator let the co-worker off, he saw that the other man had left behind a jacket. He stopped the bulldozer on a relatively level area of the hill, lowered the blade of the machine, and placed the bulldozer’s engine in idle, but did not set the parking brake. As he stood on the track to hand the other man his jacket, the machine moved backward. The bulldozer operator lost his balance, and fell feet first between the track and the deck. The machine continued to roll backwards another 8-10 feet (about three meters), and the operator was pulled below the bulldozer to his death. A follow-up examination found that the operator’s blood-alcohol content was 0. 08, above the legal limit for driving.

Heavy equipment operators should not operate equipment when drunk, even if the level of intoxication seems slight. Secondly, operators must become familiar with recommended safety procedures, such as applying the parking brake whenever they stop the machine. Finally, government safety regulations prohibit passengers on heavy equipment unless a proper seat has been installed for them to ride upon.