Road Worker Crushed



A 54-year-old construction laborer died after a motor grader rolled over his upper back and head.

The man, who was one of a crew of nine workers, was helping to install a new road in a housing development. The victim and a co-worker were making an unplanned stop to drop off a piece of equipment along the road. They also made several stops to gather lunch orders from the others. They were standing behind a pick-up truck when the grader operator backed over the victim, pinning his head and chest.

Several mistakes led to this tragedy. First, the workers were not wearing high-visibility safety vests. A significant coating of dirt on the grader's cab windows and bright sunshine meant the driver could not see the victim standing behind him. Strobe lights
on pick-up trucks can help improve visibility, but glass should be cleaned often. If visibility is limited, dismount and visually check behind the machine before proceeding.

Also, the grader's back-up signal was not working. The mirrors were loose and would not stay adjusted. Equipment should always be inspected and only used after repairs have been made.

Lastly, changes in work plans – in this case, the decision to drop the equipment off along the roadway – must be communicated so others can remain away until the area is clear.