

# Racetrack Worker Stumbles and Is Run over by Crane



A recent tragedy at a racetrack illustrates the dangers of working around mobile equipment and how something as simple as retrieving a dropped item can put workers at risk.

On June 9, 2013, a [racetrack worker](#) at the Canadian Grand Prix in Montreal was killed after being crushed by a crane shortly after the Formula One race ended.

The worker was escorting the crane as it moved a car that had gone off the track during the race. According to a race official, the crane had lifted the car to return it to the pits. The worker dropped his radio and, as he tried to pick it up, stumbled and was run over by the crane. The crane operator couldn't see the worker at the time.

Trauma workers at the scene stabilized the worker so he could be transported to the hospital, where he died from his injuries.

This incident raises several safety concerns.

The reports say that the worker was 'stabilizing' the car as it was moved by the crane. It's unclear what that means exactly and why it was necessary to have the worker walking alongside the moving crane, which is always hazardous. If the car was properly secured to the crane, additional stabilization shouldn't have been required.

It also appears that the crane operator couldn't see the worker, indicating that perhaps a signaller should've been used. The OHS regulations have [requirements on materials handling](#) using mechanical devices, such as hoists, cranes and forklifts. These requirements often include the use of signallers for situations exactly like this one.

Violations of signaller requirements are frequently fatal and result in high fines for the companies involved.

*Example:* When workers reversed a grinder, they saw that a third worker had been caught under it and crushed to death. Ontario MOL investigators found that the view of the grinder's operator was obstructed and he wasn't using a signaller. The company pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that the operator of a vehicle was assisted by a signaller and was fined \$110,000 [*Furfari Paving Co. Ltd.*, Govt. News Release, July 16, 2010].

You can use this incident to remind workers of the importance of staying alert when working around mobile equipment such as cranes and forklifts. Go to [Safety Smart](#) for a [safety talk](#) on pedestrian safety around workplace traffic. Not a Safety Smart member? Sign up for a [free trial](#).