

Spot The Safety Violation: Mobile Equipment Safe Work Practices



I bet the worker sitting in the bucket of this equipment is having a lot of fun'for now. But is it safe for him to be sitting there'



Excavators, diggers, bulldozers and other devices are used in many workplaces to remove or carry materials. But these devices are *not* designed or intended to move or carry people.

In this picture, a worker is happily sitting in the bucket of this equipment, which is actually intended to be used to break up and remove dirt, concrete, etc. But if he falls'and it doesn't appear that he's wearing any fall protection'he could get seriously injured or worse.

Example: In the UK, two workers were riding in the bucket of an excavator while running cable through the roof structure of a building. When the bucket tipped, they fell to a concrete floor from a height of nine metres. One worker suffered severe head injuries and died in the hospital. The other worker suffered serious leg injuries.

The company and its owner pleaded guilty to safety violations. Health and Safety Executive Inspector Graham Goodenough said: 'Nobody should ever be lifted in the bucket of an excavator. Neither the bucket nor the excavator have the necessary safety devices nor fail safe devices that would prevent a person falling' [HSE, Nov. 3, 2015]

SAFE WORK PRACTICES FOR MOBILE EQUIPMENT

Backhoes, dump trucks, excavators and other mobile equipment pose a risk of serious injury or death to those who operate them and those who work around them'as well as passersby. So to protect everyone endangered by such equipment,

it's important to implement safe work procedures for it.

Your safe work procedures should comply with any requirements in your jurisdiction's OHS laws for mobile equipment and incorporate the manufacturers' instructions for such equipment. But in general, operators of mobile equipment should:

- Perform and record a pre-trip inspection of the equipment.
- Secure loose items in the cab.
- Ensure workers are clear of the equipment before operating it.
- Signal when backing up.
- Carry loads so as to not impair vision and travel in reverse if sight is blocked.
- Wear their seatbelts.
- Wear required PPE, such as hardhats, safety glasses and hearing protection.
- Not deactivate back up alarms or other safety devices.
- Be aware of overhead power lines and other hazards.
- Travel at a safe speed.
- Maintain focus and control at all times.
- Use a spotter or signaller when necessary.

In addition, workers working in the vicinity of mobile equipment should:

- Maintain eye contact with the operator'if you can't see him, he can't see you.
- Not take shortcuts across areas where mobile equipment is working.
- Spot for an operator whenever necessary and use clear hand signals.
- Avoid swing zones, pinches, bites and blind spots.
- Not ride on mobile equipment'that is, don't act like the worker in the picture.
- Stay out of the road or work path of machinery whenever possible.
- Signal the operator when entering a danger zone'don't act until the operator acknowledges your signal.
- Always respect the power and potential for harm from mobile equipment.

In addition, you can use this checklist to ensure that your mobile equipment is safe for use.