

Safety and health alert

10/96 Fitter injured by earthmover tyre

Incident

A fitter received severe bruises to the chest and left collar bone area when an earthmover tyre pinned him against a truck.

The fitter used a "tyrehand" -- a truck-mounted self-loading crane modified with rotating arms for holding tyres -- to replace the tyre on the earthmover (scraper) in an open area of a peat farm in Stirling in October 1995.

He picked up the 950 kg new tyre with the tyrehand and manoeuvred the tyre into an upright position. The tyre swung inwards and pinned him against the truck.

Factors

1. The tyrehand controls were operated close to the lifting operation, exposing the operator to potential hazards.
2. The tyrehand was parked close to the earthmover, restricting manoeuvrability.
3. The tyre was held off centre by the tyrehand arms, which possibly caused it to swing towards the fitter when lifted.
4. The tyrehand was not stabilised in a level position. Much of the site was sandy and unsuitable for this task.

Recommendations

1. Tyre fitters must be adequately trained and assessed in the system of work before operating tyrehands.
2. Suspended loads must be carefully secured.
3. Wherever possible workers should stay well clear of suspended loads, and operate controls on the opposite side of the truck from the load being lifted or unloaded.
4. Employers and owners must ensure a safe system of work for replacing earthmover tyres using a tyrehand . The minimum operating distance between grab truck and machinery should be specified and complied with.

Further Information

Further information can be obtained from the WorkSafe internet site www.worksafe.wa.gov.au, or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email: safety@docep.wa.gov.au.

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