

Safety and health alert

02/01 Skid steer loader operator crushed by machine

Incident

In November 2000, a 50 year-old experienced owner/operator died after he was crushed by the lift arms of a skid steer loader on a residential construction site in Yallingup. The operator left the vehicle cabin with the bucket raised and the engine turned off.

The operator was then seen underneath the raised bucket with one hand inside the vehicle cabin. It appears that the deceased operated the hand controls, causing the bucket to descend by mistake. The deceased was fatally injured between the lift arms and the front of the machine.

Factors

1. The operator left the vehicle with the bucket raised.
2. The operator was outside the vehicle and probably operated the controls by reaching into the cabin.
3. Some controls functioned without the engine running when the seat bar was in the down position.
4. The operator was standing underneath an unsupported bucket.

Recommendations

1. Follow the manufacturer's safe operating and maintenance instructions.
2. Keep a copy of the operator's manual with the machine for the operator's information.
3. Before leaving the operator's seat, lower the bucket or attachment to the ground or support the lift arms.
4. Operate the skid steer loader controls from the operator's seat only - never from the outside.
5. Use the lift arm supports supplied or recommended by the manufacturer before standing underneath a raised bucket.

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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