

Safety and health alert

10/04 Farmer run over by tractor

Incident

A farmer was fatally injured when run over while starting a tandem rear wheeled tractor. Evidence suggests that the farmer had either started the tractor in gear while standing in front of the rear wheels or had fallen into the path of the wheels as the tractor moved off. A similar incident occurred in 2002 when a farmer was run over by a tractor that was started in gear by shorting out the starter terminals with a bolt.

Factors

- Manufacturers design mobile plant and produce operating instructions and start up sequences for plant so persons who properly use the plant are not exposed to hazards.
- Changes to the intended design of the plant or variations from recommended operating procedures may have unintended consequences.

Recommendations

1. Mobile plant and equipment should receive regular routine maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's manual to ensure that its original design is maintained and all systems and safety interlock devices are working correctly.
2. Modifications to the equipment design or changes in the way in which it is operated should be accompanied by a risk assessment to avoid any unintended consequences.
3. Recommended start up and operating procedures should always be followed.
4. Plant should not be started from outside the driver's cab. The driver should be seated and in the recommended operating position with the doors closed.
5. Flat batteries should be recharged in a workshop. Jump-starting should be avoided.
6. Before starting any plant, the transmission should be in neutral or park and park brakes applied and working correctly.
7. Children or animals should not have access to plant controls.
8. Plant should never be started by shorting out the starter motor. This can bypass safety interlock devices on the transmission.
9. Persons should not stand in front of or behind the wheels when any mobile plant is being started.
10. If jump-starting from a second battery is necessary, any manufacturers' directions for jump-starting should be followed. Once leads are connected, all persons in the vicinity should move to a safe location.
11. Once the jumper leads are connected, the plant should be started from the normal operating seated position using the manufacturers' specified start up procedure.

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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