

# Safety and health alert

# 10/07 Excavator crush injury

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## Incident

While using an excavator to lift a water tank onto a tip truck, the operator engaged the hydraulic lock and stood up to get a better view of the load. He then sat down and moved the hydraulic lock into the operating position. As he sat down, his thigh-length jacket hooked itself over the bucket control lever. When he disengaged the lock, the bucket arm immediately retracted, pulling the tank into the side of the tip truck.

The truck driver was standing out of sight of the operator against the side of the truck, hooking back the tailgate. The tank struck him in the back, pinning him against the truck and causing life-threatening injuries.

## Factors to consider

- Long jackets and loose-fitting clothing can catch on the controls of machinery.
- If controls are not in a neutral position when isolation devices are released, the machinery will operate unexpectedly.
- Persons in the vicinity of freely suspended loads are at risk if anything goes wrong with the machinery or lifting gear.

## Recommendations

1. Always conduct a risk assessment before commencing a new task. The risk assessment should ensure that the plant to be used is suitable for the task and within the manufacturer's safe operating guidelines.
2. Ensure that clothing worn by machinery operators is suitable, close fitting and not left open to prevent contact with controls.
3. Operators should physically check that all controls are in neutral before releasing isolation devices.
4. When lifting, lowering or otherwise moving suspended loads, operators and doggers should ensure that all persons are clear of the area where the work is being conducted.
5. The person dogging a suspended load should ensure, wherever practicable, that they are within sight of the operator, able to communicate with the operator and don't stand under the load or walk between the load and any solid object.

## Further information

Further information can be obtained from WorkSafe's internet site [www.worksafe.wa.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au) or by contacting customer service on 1300 307 877 or email [safety@docep.wa.gov.au](mailto:safety@docep.wa.gov.au)

Date: September 2007

A412530