

Safety and health alert

05/96 Skid steer loader injuries

Incident

In two separate incidents:

- a 19 year old worker trapped his right leg between the bucket and arms of a skid steer loader trying to attach a firewood bucket at a Forrestfield garden centre in June 1995. Sitting inside the cockpit, he stretched his right leg forward to operate the locking bar with his foot, and accidentally stepped on the hydraulic controls with his other foot. The loader arms lowered, trapping his leg.
- a maintenance worker's foot was crushed when he tried to attach a skid steer loader's bucket by stretching forward and operating the locking bar with his foot, at an Armadale workplace in June 1995. He accidentally placed his other foot on the hydraulic pedal which lowered the loader arms onto his foot.

Factors

1. The workers extended their bodies beyond the cockpit.
2. The workers slid underneath the power cutoff safety bar to reach the locking bar. If the cutoff safety bar had been raised the machine would have been inoperative and the accidents would not have happened.
3. The Forrestfield worker was unsupervised.

Recommendations

1. Employers must properly train and supervise skid steer loader operators. Operators must undergo an induction program that includes practical instruction.
2. Operators must follow safety instructions and safe work procedures.
3. **Operators must not extend any part of their body outside of the cockpit. The loader must be inoperative before any contact with the outside of the machine is attempted.** Safety locks ensure that the machine is inoperative when the operator is out of the driving seat. Safety screens ensure that the operator's head or arms cannot extend out of the sides of the cockpit. Under no circumstances should operators attempt to evade these safety devices.

"Skid Steer Loader Safety", a video available from WorkSafe Western Australia (telephone (08) 9327 8760), includes practical demonstrations of safe and unsafe practices, and is recommended for employee induction.

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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