

Safety and health alert

02/99 Young worker injured hay bailing

Incident

A 17 year old farm hand only two weeks into his new employment, received a fractured ankle whilst attempting to disengage an industrial rake from a tractor.

The young worker was attempting to uncouple a large 20 wheel industrial rake from a tractor, using a bottle jack on blocks to lift the rake so that the pin could be freed from the draw bar of the tractor. The rake was equipped with a purpose-built jack which was inoperable at the time of the accident.

The work was performed on undulating ground and as a result, the tractor rolled back and knocked the rake off the bottle jack whilst the young farm hand was sitting on the rake. The rake fell onto the farm hand's ankle. The farm hand was not wearing safety footwear.

Factors

1. The employer failed to maintain the proper jacking equipment on the industrial rake and as a result used a bottle jack that was not sufficiently stable for the application.
2. The farm hand was not inducted, nor trained in the safe removal of the industrial rake from the tractor.
3. Lack of adequate supervision for such a new, young worker.
4. The farm hand did not wear safety footwear.

Recommendations

1. A fully retractable jack (similar to a jockey wheel arrangement seen on caravans) as designed by the manufacturer, should be used to lift industrial rakes on and off tractors.
2. Employers should provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision of young employees to ensure safe operating procedures are established and followed.
3. Employers should ensure employees are provided with and wear adequate Personal Protective Equipment.
4. Accidents that are prescribed in Regulation 2.4 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 must be reported to the WorkSafe Western Australia Commissioner.

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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