

Safety and health alert

08/01 Farm contractor crushed under cultivator

Incident

A 69 year old clover harvesting contractor died from injuries received when he was crushed under the frame of a light cultivator that he was servicing.

Factors

No maintenance or testing was undertaken on the cultivator prior to the equipment being transported to the paddock despite the cultivator not being used for approximately 4 years.

The frame of the cultivator had previously been damaged but not repaired, This damage prevented the bed from resting in the "over-centre" position when in the transport configuration.

The transporting safety tie down bar was missing and had not been replaced.

The hydraulic ram had not been serviced or tested despite the obvious leakage of fluid and the hydraulic hoses were missing. Leakage of fluid and/or replacement of hydraulic hoses had left the hydraulic cylinder empty of fluid. The lack of fluid rendered the flow limiting valve inoperative and allowed the bed to fall through a 90o arc without restriction.

The deceased had placed himself in an at risk position while lubricating the machine.

Recommendations

1. Regular maintenance and repair of plant and equipment, to manufacturer's specifications, is essential to maintain a safe, trouble free working environment.
2. Where practicable, always service mobile plant or machinery in the workshop environment prior to proceeding to the work area.
3. Where plant or machinery is folded or stored in a "transport" configuration, always place the equipment in the "operational" configuration prior to service or maintenance, or as recommended by the manufacturer.
4. Always test all of the working components of plant and equipment prior to placing them in service.
5. Always replace any safety equipment or guards if lost, or removed during servicing.

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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