



Work Safety Alert **Operator Pressed to Death by a Toppled Excavator**

1. **Date of Accident :** July 2019
2. **Place of Accident :** A construction site
3. **Summary :**

An excavator while being operated on a slope toppled sideways and pressed against its operator. The operator sustained serious injury and passed away on the same day.

4. Work Safety Alert for Contractors/ Employers :

To prevent any workers from being endangered by the operation of an excavator or a similar loadshifting machine for earth moving operation (“machine”), contractors/ employers should provide and maintain a safe system of work which should include, but not limited to, the followings:

- appointing a competent person to conduct task-specific risk assessments of the operation of the machine and identify all associated potential hazards, taking into account the ground conditions, the working environment and the safety precautions recommended by the manufacturer’s manuals;
- formulating safe work methods and procedures for the operation of the machine with due regard to the results of risk assessments, and following the requirements of safety legislation, relevant codes of practice and guidelines;
- ensuring that the machine is in safe working order and has been so certified where applicable through tests and thorough examinations by a competent examiner and regular inspections by a competent person before it is put into operation;



- selecting a machine, as far as reasonably practicable, equipped with roll over protective structure/ tip-over protective structure and operator restraint system for operation on slopes;
- ensuring that the machine is only operated by a person who holds a valid relevant certificate and is able to operate the machine safely by virtue of his experience and competence;
- taking steps to prevent the machine from working or travelling on a slope exceeding maximum angle of inclination recommended by its manufacturer;
- ensuring that the machine travelling on a slope is driven straight up and down the slope at low speed but not across the slope;
- for maximum stability while at work on a slope, ensuring that the crawlers and the undercarriage of the machine are placed along, instead of across the slope;
- where necessary, adopting safety measures as appropriate, such as leveling or compaction of ground, or provision of load-bearing supports, before operating a machine on slopes, rough terrain or soft ground for operation;
- ensuring that an excavator in particular and the position of soil to be reached by its bucket are at sufficient distances away from the edge of the excavation during excavating and the distances are determined by a registered professional engineer competent in geotechnics;
- taking preventive measures such as provision of a signaler or erection of fencings, stop blocks, warning signs, etc. at the edge of a slope to alert the operator;
- taking measures to ensure that the operator does not operate the machine on unstable surface;
- taking reasonable steps to ensure the proper use of the seat belt so provided to the operator;



- providing all workers concerned with necessary safety information, instruction and training, and ensuring that they are familiar with the safe work procedures and safety measures; and
- establishing and implementing an effective monitoring and control system to ensure all safety measures are strictly followed.

5. Reference :

- [Safe Systems of Work](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Risk Assessment](#)¹
- [Five Steps to Information, Instruction and Training](#)¹
- [Code of Practice on Safe Use of Excavators](#)¹
- [Guidance Notes on Safe Use of Loadshifting Machines for Earth Moving Operations on Construction Sites](#)¹

DISCLAIMER

This Work Safety Alert (“the Alert”) is issued at the earliest possible opportunity after a serious accident with a view to drawing the attention of interested parties to the general safety precautionary measures necessary to protect people engaging in similar work activities. The material contained in the Alert constitutes general guidance only. It does not reduce, limit, or replace, any legal obligations upon any person to comply with any statutory duties under relevant legislation. Users such as Managers and Supervisors should make their own evaluation of the information contained in the Alert to determine if it can be applied to their own situations and practices. The Labour Department does NOT accept any responsibilities for any loss or damage resulting from the use of or failure to use of the information on the Alert.

Note: The material contained in the Alert is not exhaustive, and will be supplemented/ adjusted where necessary if more relevant information comes to light.

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