Backhoe Driver Dies After Rollover

Could This Have Been You?

On average, 5,000 to 6,000 workers are killed each year. Learn from the following reports of real workplace fatalities to avoid a similar fate.

An equipment operator for an engineering firm was operating a backhoe without wearing a hard hat or seat belt. He had been at work for less than 20 minutes and was moving dirt from an upper to a lower embankment of a narrow mountain road. On its second turn, the backhoe went over the embankment and continued 30 feet (nine meters) downhill before flipping on its side. The victim’s unprotected head struck a corner of the rollover protective structure, ROPS about four feet (one meter) from the backhoe seat. A helicopter flew him to hospital, where he was pronounced dead. An autopsy revealed a high alcohol level in his blood.

Everyone operating large equipment must wear a seat belt and hard hat. This incident also underscores the danger of using alcohol or drugs before working. Investigating officials also recommended employers survey the job site beforehand and tell employees about any hazards, and that backhoes be designed with interlock systems to prevent operation unless the seat belt is fastened properly.