

Excavator Quick Coupler Device Fatality Report

Construction worker killed by hydraulic excavator while working in trench.

A 26-year-old construction worker was killed while trying to remove a concrete sewer casing in an 8-foot deep trench. He was part of a crew constructing new sanitary sewer lines along a residential street. The victim was standing inside an iron trench box, while a hydraulic excavator was being used to remove the concrete casing around a sewer pipe. The victim was giving hand signals to a co-worker operating the excavator above him because it was impossible for the operator to see the bottom of the trench where the casing was located. While prying off the casing with sideways pressure, the bucket teeth slipped off the edge of the concrete and the excavator arm and bucket snapped toward the victim, crushing him against the metal side of the trench box (see diagram). The excavator operator immediately moved the bucket away from the wall and went to aid his co-worker, who was still conscious. The man soon became unresponsive and was pronounced dead approximately one hour later in a local hospital from severe internal chest injuries.