Floating Pile Driving Rig Safety Fatality File

Massachusetts Pile Driver Dies When Struck by Pile in Trench

A 47-year-old male construction worker was fatally injured when he was struck by a wooden pile weighing approximately 1500 pounds. The 50-foot-long pile was suspended within the leads of a pile driving crane while the victim was setting the bottom of the pile. He was working in a 15-foot-deep trench at the time of the incident. According to co-workers, the hammer was lowered by the crane operator and struck the pile before it was set causing it to swing into the victim. The victim was pushed into the wall of the trench box and killed. Emergency medical assistance was immediately summoned while co-workers attempted to assist him. The victim was pronounced dead at the scene and transported to the medical examiner's office.

To prevent future similar occurrences, the MA FACE Director concluded that employers should:

- employ only competent crane operators experienced in the type of equipment to be operated, in this case, a piledriver.
- develop and maintain a health and safety program which includes but is not limited to regular consultation with employees on safety issues.

Also, the state and/or other certifying agencies should:

- consider issuing a special license for the operation of cranes as piledriver's.