Importance of Organized Laydown Yard Fatality File

Hispanic Scrap Yard Worker Dies When Struck By Material Handler at Metal Recycling Facility–South Carolina

On September 14, 2012, a 47-year-old Hispanic worker died from crushing injuries received when he was struck by a hydraulic material handler. The scrap yard worker was a torcher whose duties were to cut up metal using a torch. The material handler involved in the fatality removed scrap metal off delivery trucks and onto trucks hauling to a metal recycling facility. There were no eye-witnesses to the incident, but it is believed that after directing a truck to the loading area, the torcher paused in front of the right-side track of the parked material handler, possibly for a cigarette break. The material handler operator put the equipment in forward gear. The torcher was caught in the track, knocked to the ground, and run over by the track. He was pronounced dead at the scene from multiple crushing injuries.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Cluttered worksite.
- Worker on foot in the equipment travel path and swing area.
- Operator unable to see worker in the equipment blind area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Investigators concluded that to prevent similar fatalities employers should:

Design work areas to limit hazards to workers on foot and implement procedures to ensure that workers on foot remain clear of moving equipment.

Consider installing operator assistance devices such as additional mirrors, proximity warning systems, or object detection systems on equipment.

Implement equipment operating and pre-check (walk-around) procedures to minimize exposure of workers on foot to hazards from equipment blind and swing areas.

Implement the use of personal protective equipment including high-visibility apparel, hard hats, safety boots, and hearing protection for all workers.