Plumber Killed By Tipping Skid Loader

A 50-year-old plumber working at a construction site was killed when a skid steer loader tipped forward and hit him on the head. Despite 20 years' experience, the man was not wearing a hardhat. The victim was in a trench 24 inches below ground level placing a PVC cuff around a cut-off valve on a water pipe. His co-worker was backfilling sand into the trench with the skid loader. The ground was damp and soft, and as the loader approached the edge of the trench, it shifted, fell forward and hit the plumber on the head. The plumber remained pinned in the trench for 10 minutes until the fire department arrived. The victim was transported by helicopter to the hospital where he died.

- Wear your PPE. A hardhat could have reduced the severity of the injury.
- Employees should be properly trained in written procedures and hazard recognition.
- Workers must stay alert to hazards, including not positioning themselves under potential overhead hazards.
- Employers should develop and implement written safety procedures for employees who work in excavations.

Source: Oklahoma Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 05OK011