Poor Supervision Leads to Teen Death

A 14-year-old accidentally hung himself with an electric hoist as he played with the dangerous piece of equipment. The incident occurred at an equipment rental company where the boy worked, helping customers load and unload equipment with the hoist.

The victim and two co-workers were loading and unloading equipment from customers' vehicles and servicing returned equipment.

The three had just unloaded a vibrating plate tamper from a truck when one worker left to use the washroom and the other went to the office. Several minutes passed before co-workers realized the boy had not brought the tamper into the service area.

They investigated and found him hanging above the ground with a chain around his neck. He died in hospital six days later.

Later investigation disclosed that employees had previously witnessed the boy putting the hoist hook in the belt loop of his pants to lift himself off the ground.

Despite this, the boy was left unattended with the dangerous piece of equipment.

Adults working with inexperienced youth have a responsibility to provide adequate supervision and to intervene when they witness activities that are unsafe.

Young workers must be properly trained and monitored. They should not be working with hazardous equipment. In many cases, the law prohibits workers under a certain age from working with certain types of machinery.

Horseplay, such as toying with this hoist, must be prohibited among all workers, young and old.