Road Milling Machine Crushes Worker

A worker was crushed underneath an overturned road-milling machine.

The contractor was using a 80,000-pound (36,287-kilogram) milling machine, or profile-reclaimer, to remove an airport taxiway. It didn’t have a tip-over warning device. A bubble level to indicate the machine’s lateral incline was out of operator’s sight.

The victim was assigned to walk alongside the machine to adjust its cutting depth. The operator had set one of the front tracks on a higher surface and the second track on a sand subsurface. As it then backed over debris, the machine exceeded its slope limit. The operator jumped off when the machine began to roll. The victim, however, was trapped underneath, with water from the water tank pouring on him. A co-worker crawled under to lift his head away from the pooling water. An excavator hoisted the machine off the victim. He died before reaching the hospital.

If you’re involved in operating heavy machinery, you need to be trained to operate it within manufacturers’ design specifications. Milling machines, such as the one in this fatality, can have visual and audible devices to warn when it approaches its slope limitations.