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Heavy Equipment- Four Other Hazards to Consider

There is an endless list of possible hazards that result from the operation of heavy equipment. A few incident types in particular cause many serious injuries and fatalities each year.

Three types of incidents that result in these serious injuries and fatalities are struck-by incidents, caught-in or between incidents, and tip overs.

While these incident types deserve a lot of attention because of the harm they can cause, there are also many other hazards relating to heavy equipment operation that can result in frequent injury.

Four Other Hazards to Consider Relating to the Use of Heavy Equipment:

1. Slips, trips, and falls are some of the most common types of incidents that result in injuries to workers. Operators of heavy equipment are not exempt from these incidents occurring to them. Climbing into the cab of equipment or walking on the slick surfaces of a machine are two common occurrences that can result in a slip, trip, or fall injury for an operator.
2. Pinch points are located in many different places on a piece of heavy equipment. Door jams or equipment hoods are two common pinch point locations where operators injure fingers.
3. Loose cargo can lead to injury due to an operator losing control of their equipment. A loss in control results from an operator being distracted from their work due to objects moving around in their cab. Another way **loose cargo** can lead to an incident is when an object that is not secured gets stuck in a control or under a pedal of the equipment.
4. Leaks on equipment can lead to multiple different types of injuries or property loss. A leak in a pressurized line is especially hazardous. Hydraulic lines that are leaking can inject fluid underneath the skin of a worker. This kills tissue which often results in

amputation of the affected body part if not treated quickly. Leaking equipment can also lead to a slip incident for those workers who happen to step on the fluid.

Best Practices to Mitigate These Other Hazards:

- Always use three points of contact when climbing into the cab of heavy equipment.
- Clear boots and steps of any mud to avoid slick conditions.
- Watch hand placement and avoid pinch point areas. Ensure equipment guards are in place and functioning to avoid hands or body parts from being caught-in or between them.
- Maintain a clean cab. Ensure any items within the cab are tied down or secured properly.
- Always complete a pre-use inspection prior to using heavy equipment. Tag out equipment that has leaks until it is properly repaired.
- Never check for leaks on pressurized lines with your hands, even while wearing gloves.

Summary:

It is important to remember that there are many hazards present while operating heavy equipment.

While it is critical to eliminate the chance for struck-by incidents, caught-in or between incidents, and tip overs occurring, it is equally important to protect yourself from these other hazards mentioned in this talk.