



Jim Persons
jimpersons@safetypride.com
707-889-0881

CHECK BEFORE YOU MOVE

You have probably seen the havoc heavy construction equipment can cause. Maybe you know of someone who was killed or severely injured by being run over or backed over. And you may even have seen a parked car that had been crushed. Usually, this kind of accident happens because someone fails to take commonsense precautions.

BIGGER AND FASTER TODAY

Years ago, heavy equipment was big, bulky, and slow moving. The operator could see well in all directions. Today, this equipment is heavy, large, and fast moving. Often the operator's field of vision is restricted. So now the equipment operator has to be more alert than he did a few years ago to make sure he does not injure or kill a fellow worker.

TAKE A WALK BEFORE YOU RIDE

Before you climb aboard a piece of heavy equipment, walk completely around it. Then you will be able to see any persons or obstacles in the vicinity. And you will be able to warn anyone who is in the way that you are getting ready to move the equipment. With all the noise, it is sometimes difficult to hear one more rig startup or start to move. If mechanics have been working on a rig, be sure they have finished their work, and all have left. Make sure they have not left any tools or equipment behind either.

I know of a worker on a runway job, who ate his lunch in the shade of a large sheep's foot roller. Then he settled down to take a cat nap before going back to work. In the meantime, the operator got on the tractor, backed it up, and ran the heavy roller over the man. Thirty seconds of precaution on the part of the operator would have prevented this accident.

Another time, a service operator drove up to a dragline and got off his truck to tell the operator about a gas can he had previously placed in the rig. In a few minutes, he got back on the truck and backed up. He ran over the crane oiler, who was behind the truck and facing away from it. This shows why it is always necessary to have someone signal for you when you are backing equipment or trucks in places where people and equipment are working. We do not have many minor accidents involving heavy construction equipment. Most of them result in serious injury or death.

Admittedly, it takes a few seconds to walk around the machine or truck before you board it. And it takes a few seconds to have someone signal you when you back such equipment. But this time is well spent - especially if it saves someone's life. It also saves the many sleepless nights you would suffer if you were responsible for injuring or killing a fellow worker.

A FEW SECONDS CAN SAVE A LIFE

If you operate heavy equipment, remember that those working around it are at your mercy.

Before starting or backing the vehicle, take the few seconds it requires to be sure that no one is in danger.

You owe it to those you work with