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Ground Personnel and Mobile Equipment Safety

Construction sites pose many dangers for the individuals who have to walk through them. Trip hazards, dust, slick conditions, and dropped objects are just a few of the many possible hazards present for those individuals walking around a construction site. A major hazard that can result in serious injury or fatalities for workers on the ground is mobile equipment operations.

Mobile Equipment Hazards for Ground Personnel

Most insurance companies do not consider vehicles such as work trucks as “mobile equipment” for their purposes, but in this safety talk, we will lump in personal vehicles with other mobile equipment such as tractors and skid steer loaders. While property damage incidents are very common on construction sites due to mobile equipment operations, personal injuries to ground personnel are the most serious outcome of these operations.

Mobile equipment operation can easily result in struck-by incidents, caught-in or between incidents, crushed-by incidents, as well as run-over incidents involving ground personnel on construction sites. It is necessary to implement multiple safeguards to prevent these types of incidents from occurring.

Best Practices to Avoid Incidents Between Mobile Equipment and Ground Personnel

There are many factors that will affect what can be done to eliminate or mitigate the hazards relating to mobile equipment operations. Here are some general best practices that can be applied at most worksites:

- Eliminate mobile equipment operation when possible. Obviously, the less movement of this equipment equates to less chance an incident can occur. Elimination can be achieved through the redesign of work areas as well as better preplanning of work tasks.
- Eliminate backing as much as possible during mobile equipment operations. Backing is much more likely to result in an incident in comparison to moving forward.
- Separate ground personnel work areas or walking paths from mobile equipment operations whenever possible.
- Remove ground personnel from the work area temporarily if mobile equipment has to complete work in the area.
- Utilize spotters when it is safe to do so to communicate with the operators of mobile equipment.

Summary

Mobile equipment is necessary to get work done.

The construction industry especially utilizes mobile equipment to complete tasks efficiently.

It is critical for ground personnel to avoid complacency when working in the same area as heavy equipment and vehicles.

Consider utilizing the best practices mentioned here in conjunction with specific measures for your worksite and work tasks.