

TOOLBOX TALK #36

OPERATOR CRUSHED BETWEEN BOOM AND STABILIZER

A 54-year-old worker died when the raised boom of a backhoe loader swung and crushed him against one of the machine's retracted stabilizers. He had worked for his employer, a new housing construction contractor and subcontractor at the site, for two years.

On the day of the incident, the worker was at a jobsite where new single-family homes were being built. He first used the backhoe to excavate around an electrical junction box. After doing this, he used the backhoe's loader to place gravel around the box.



He then moved the backhoe to the street where he parked it, leaving the engine running and the backhoe boom elevated. He exited the cab and walked to the rear of the backhoe.

Although no one saw what happened next, investigators determined that as the operator was standing at the rear of the cab where the backhoe boom attached, he reached into the cab to retrieve a metal tool called a post pounder.

As he was doing this, he apparently dropped the post pounder on one of the two-foot pedals that controlled the backhoe boom swing. This caused the boom to swing sideways towards him, pinning and crushing him between the boom and one of the machine's two retracted stabilizers.

To prevent similar occurrences:

- Lower the boom to a safe position with the bucket on the ground and turn off the machine before stepping off for any reason.
- Never place tools, parts or other objects in the cab that have the potential to activate the foot pedals or other controls.
- Never stand in the pinch points of the boom of a running or operating backhoe.