

## **TOOLBOX TALK #47**

### **OPERATOR KILLED WHEN EXCAVATOR BUCKET DETACHES**

A 21-year-old heavy equipment operator died after being struck by an excavation bucket that became detached from the quick-coupling device attached to the end of a boom. The victim was operating an excavator to dig trenches for a sewer system.

After removing a few loads of dirt from a trench, the victim swung the boom over to the side of the trench and exited the cab, leaving the boom elevated.

As he approached the bucket and positioned himself under it, the bucket detached from the quick-coupler and fell to the ground, striking him.

Although it is unknown why the victim exited the cab, investigators believe he may have been alerted by an alarm on the control panel and got out of the cab to check the bucket.

A supervisor who witnessed the incident immediately called 911 and performed CPR. First responders arrived and transported the victim to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Cause of death was listed as blunt trauma.

#### ***To prevent future incidents:***

- Always lower excavator buckets to the ground before exiting the cab.
- Never walk/traverse beneath an excavator boom swing radius or elevated load.
- Educate hydraulic excavator operators on the proper procedures for engaging excavation attachments and include these procedures in the company's safety and health program.

