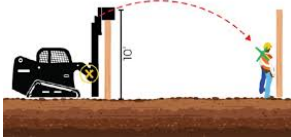


TOOLBOX TALK #41

LABORER DIES AFTER SKID STEER ATTACHMENT FAILS



regularly.

A 25-year-old general laborer had worked for his employer, a residential fence installer, for seven months. On the day of the incident, the laborer was tasked with setting wooden fence posts. To aid in the installation process, the company uses a hydraulically-powered post-driver that attaches to a skid steer. The post driver was purchased new in 2020 and had been used

Setting fence posts required the victim to lift each post and position it vertically while the skid steer operator positioned the hydraulic post-driver onto the top of the post. Once the post-driver was in position, the laborer would move to the next post to restart his task while the operator drove the post into the ground. Four hours after arriving at the jobsite, the post-driver suffered a catastrophic failure. For unknown reasons, its arm and driver head broke away from their mounting point when the post-driver attempted to drive a wooden post.

As a result, the hydraulic arm sheared off. The broken arm and driver head fell, striking the laborer, who was approximately 10 feet from the equipment, in the back and upper left shoulder. The laborer was reportedly on his cellphone with his back turned to the equipment, holding the next post to be installed, when he was struck. The strike knocked him forward and to the ground, bending him at the waist. The arm and driver head remained on the laborer after the strike; in the bent position his head and torso were touching the front of his legs.

The owner and two other crew members rushed to the laborer, who was unconscious, and lifted the arm and driver head off him. The owner called 911 while a crew member attempted to perform CPR. First responders arrived, but the laborer was already dead. Cause of death was listed as blunt force trauma.

To prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Establish a safe zone procedure to ensure workers maintain adequate distance from hazards presented by equipment operation.
- Implement and enforce a cellphone-free work environment.
- Implement a jobsite spotter program.
- Implement a daily inspection procedure for all equipment.
- Implement a formal health and safety program.